The Politics of Salvation: an Introduction to the Political Philosophy of Nikos Kazantzakis.

James Franklin Lea

Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College

Follow this and additional works at: https://repository.lsu.edu/gradschool_disstheses

Recommended Citation
https://repository.lsu.edu/gradschool_disstheses/2477

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at LSU Scholarly Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in LSU Historical Dissertations and Theses by an authorized administrator of LSU Scholarly Repository. For more information, please contact gradetd@lsu.edu.
INFORMATION TO USERS

This material was produced from a microfilm copy of the original document. While the most advanced technological means to photograph and reproduce this document have been used, the quality is heavily dependent upon the quality of the original submitted.

The following explanation of techniques is provided to help you understand markings or patterns which may appear on this reproduction.

1. The sign or “target” for pages apparently lacking from the document photographed is “Missing Page(s)”. If it was possible to obtain the missing page(s) or section, they are spliced into the film along with adjacent pages. This may have necessitated cutting thru an image and duplicating adjacent pages to insure you complete continuity.

2. When an image on the film is obliterated with a large round black mark, it is an indication that the photographer suspected that the copy may have moved during exposure and thus cause a blurred image. You will find a good image of the page in the adjacent frame.

3. When a map, drawing or chart, etc., was part of the material being photographed the photographer followed a definite method in “sectioning” the material. It is customary to begin photoing at the upper left hand corner of a large sheet and to continue photoing from left to right in equal sections with a small overlap. If necessary, sectioning is continued again — beginning below the first row and continuing on until complete.

4. The majority of users indicate that the textual content is of greatest value, however, a somewhat higher quality reproduction could be made from “photographs” if essential to the understanding of the dissertation. Silver prints of “photographs” may be ordered at additional charge by writing the Order Department, giving the catalog number, title, author and specific pages you wish reproduced.

5. PLEASE NOTE: Some pages may have indistinct print. Filmed as received.

Xerox University Microfilms
300 North Zeen Road
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106
LEA, James Franklin, 1945-
THE POLITICS OF SALVATION: AN INTRODUCTION
TO THE POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY OF NIKOS
KAZANTZAKIS.

The Louisiana State University and Agricultural
and Mechanical College, Ph.D., 1973
Political Science, general

University Microfilms, A XEROX Company, Ann Arbor, Michigan

THIS DISSERTATION HAS BEEN MICROFILMED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED.
The Politics of Salvation: An Introduction to the Political Philosophy of Nikos Kazantzakis

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in The Department of Political Science

by James Franklin Lea
B.A., Southeastern Louisiana College, 1969
M.A., Louisiana State University, 1971
August, 1973
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My intellectual debts are many, therefore, I acknowledge only the most important. To Dr. Cecil L. Eubanks, who directed this dissertation, is owed more than can be repaid. Beginning with my initial graduate studies and continuing to the present he has combined the roles of teacher, scholar, and—if I may—friend, to provide vital, compassionate intellectual stimulation. Further, he has been unsparing of time and energy in both substantive criticism of the ideas expressed within and editorial suggestions as to the manner of their presentation.

My special thanks are due to Dr. James J. Bolner who gave a most helpful reading of the text. I should also like to extend my appreciation to Professor Rene de Visme Williamson whose courses in the History of Political Philosophy enhanced greatly whatever merit this exercise may have, and to my wife, Cynthia, and my son, Christopher, who underwent travail and hardship in my behalf.

I am grateful to Livingston State University and the United States Office of Education for financial support of my endeavor during the period this project was in progress.

As is customary and correct, I wish to absolve all those mentioned from blame for flaws, errors, misinterpretations, etc., for these are my own contributions.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. NIKOS KAZANTZAKIS</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical-Political Environment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decisive Steps: Twentieth Century Masks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Cretan Glance: Transubstantiation and the General</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concepts of Kazantzakis' Philosophy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. WORDS: WEAPONS IN THE BATTLE</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radical Vitalism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Responsibility of Means</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mature Idealism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. POETRY, PROPHECY, AND POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transitional Age: A Philosophy of History</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science As Deliverance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art As Deliverance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. ORDER FROM CHAOS</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saving God: A Political Metaphysics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Human Condition and the Classical View</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christianity: Criteria of the Spirit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. A POLITICS OF FREEDOM AND HOPE</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freedom: The Essence of Man</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Odysseus: A Higher Truth</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Theory and the Hope of the Present</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>226</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ABSTRACT

Nikos Kazantzakis is one of the most intriguing figures in twentieth century art and thought. He displayed in his writings and in his life an intense, unwavering concern for bettering the lot of man. The political, philosophical, and religious culmination of this concern was his doctrine of "saving God."

This study of Kazantzakis' politics entails: (1) a brief examination of Kazantzakis in the context of his age and culture, with particular attention to the influence of the dominant ideas current in his lifetime, and of his basic philosophical viewpoint--the Cretan glance; (2) a general explication of the logical development of his social and political thought which will include an analysis of the interrelationality of his desire for both objective literary excellence and political involvement with his view of means and ends in politics; (3) an exploration of his philosophy of history, his diagnosis of the contemporary human predicament, and his theory of the relation of art to politics in history; (4) an inquiry into the empirical import of his prognosis for improving the human condition, i.e., into his "new decalogue," based on the insights of Christianity, Hellenism, and Marxism; (5) judgemental evaluation of the validity and meaningfulness of his views for our time with special examinations of his concept of freedom and the importance of hope and despair in his politics and in the political philosophy of the modern era.

Since Kazantzakis' mysticism, pantheism, or other interests are not our concern in this study those writings which are oriented to an expression of his political theory are most extensively utilized. This includes selections from
his letters, essays, newspaper articles, verse, plays, and--most importantly--novels. This approach will include an analysis of the role and function of Kazantzakis' major literary characters. All are expressive, to varying degrees, of his religious, mystical, philosophic, literary, political, and moral ideas.

One of the major results of this study is the demonstration that Kazantzakis is an important but neglected figure in twentieth century political thought. This neglect stems partially from Kazantzakis' place, as a Greek whose personal and intellectual origins are traceable to Africa, Asia, and the Orient as well as to the West, outside the main channel of Anglo-American/European thought. It derives also from Kazantzakis' undeserved reputation as an apolitical individual concerned primarily with self-salvation in a literary and religious sense. Another factor mitigating against the legitimate recognition of Kazantzakis' rightful stature as a political theorist of some magnitude is the emphasis on his literature as art rather than as depicting a provocative and creative political philosophy. In his prolific writings this man of letters levelled invaluable criticism at his age and proffered remedies for the excessive materialism, despiritualization, despair, murderous violence, and societal and governmental wrongs of his day. His themes are instilled with knowledge attained through study of the major figures of world art and thought and reverberate with increasing intensity down to our complex times. When Kazantzakis' politics are evaluated in the contemporary framework one sees a shining alternative to ideology and a basis for a politics of freedom and hope beyond illusory scientific faith and destructive nihilistic despair.
INTRODUCTION

Nikos Kazantzakis is certainly one of the most intriguing and controversial figures in the twentieth century. His social and political ideas entail some of the most unique and provocative concepts to be found in modern thought. These concepts and an exploration of the general philosophy which they compose is the subject matter of this essay. In endeavoring to understand this uncommon man and his philosophy the following approach will be utilized: (1) a brief examination of Kazantzakis in the context of his age and culture, with particular attention to the influence of the dominant ideas current in his lifetime, and of his basic philosophical viewpoint, the "Cretan glance"; (2) a general explication of the logical development of Kazantzakis' social and political thought which will include an analysis of the interrelationality of his desire for both social activism and literary accomplishment with his view of means and ends; (3) an exploration of Kazantzakis' philosophy of history, his diagnosis of the contemporary human predicament, and his theory of the relation of art to politics in history; (4) an inquiry into the empirical import of his prescription for improving the human condition which includes his "new decalogue," his "tragic optimism," and is based on classical Greek and Judaeo-Christian insights; (5) judgemental evaluation of the validity and meaningfulness of his views for our time with special examination of his concept of freedom and his view of the importance of hope and despair to political philosophy in the contemporary era.

A most difficult part of the endeavor will be the attempt to place Kazantzakis in his correct relation to the more important philosophies
and systems which shaped his thought. These are the "decisive steps" of which he spoke--Christianity, Buddhism, Nietzsche, Bergson, Giorgos Zorba, and Marxism-Leninism. However, such an undertaking is essential if one aspires to analyze and understand Kazantzakis' thought. Also in the beginning section the main issues and conflicts of Crete, Kazantzakis' birthplace, and Greece--which to a large extent gave rise to his "Cretan glance"--will be discussed. This discussion will inevitably be rather superficial due to the complexity of that era and since the main purpose of this exercise is an analysis of Kazantzakis' thought and not an essay on the history of his age. The major concern with which this paper will deal then will be to set forth a general explication of Kazantzakis' political thought, to analyze and to evaluate his views, and to discuss the meaning and relevance of his beliefs for our age.

Kazantzakis was an abundantly prolific man of letters who lived by his pen. He was widely published and read during his lifetime and, although his ideas generated much opposition within his beloved Greece and from various sides of the political spectrum in Europe, he enjoyed rising fame during his later years. Writing most often in modern demotic Greek but sometimes in French and English Kazantzakis composed essays, newspaper and encyclopedia articles, scenarios and screen adaptations, verse, plays, a French-Greek dictionary, and novels. In addition he translated various classics and carried on a rich correspondence with his first wife, his second wife, and his many friends. Since the purpose of this inquiry is to examine Kazantzakis' political thought, and not his mysticism, pantheism, or other interests, those writings which are oriented to an exposition of his philosophy will be emphasized in the research. These are The Fratri-icides, the most political of all Kazantzakis' works, The Odyssey: 
Modern Sequel, which gives perhaps the most artistically comprehensive picture of Kazantzakis, Report To Greco in which he reflects on his intellectual and existential odyssey and that of the modern world, Zorba The Greek, and other novels which collectively contain a comprehensive and systematic statement of his thought, "The Immortal Free Spirit of Man," and other essays which also contain statements of his political beliefs, and his letters which are of immense importance. Fortunately, since we lack expertise in Greek, all of Kazantzakis' major works have been translated into English. Kazantzakis, who was fluent in several languages, collaborated in the translation of The Odyssey thereby enhancing the literal accuracy of the English edition. Also appearing in English in increasing volume are translations, interpretations, and summations of his articles and essays. Some secondary sources will be used though there is a marked lack of analytical material on his philosophy. For biographical detail the above cited Report To Greco, an autobiographical account written one year prior to his death, will be used as will Helen Kazantzakis' Nikos Kazantzakis and Pandelis Prvelakis' Nikos Kazantzakis And His Odyssey for they were closest to Kazantzakis and most familiar with his work. Some analyses of Kazantzakis' thought have been published in the form of critical essays the best of which are Peter Bien's Nikos Kazantzakis and his "Kazantzakis And Politics," in The Politics of Twentieth Century Novelists edited by George A. Panichas, Will Durant's "Nikos Kazantzakis" in his and Ariel Durant's Interpretations of Life, and W. B. Stanford's chapter on "The Re-Integrated Hero," in The Ulysses Theme. In addition articles will be extensively utilized, particularly those found in the November 1971 issue of the Journal of Modern Literature which is devoted entirely to Kazantzakis, as will unpublished dissertations by Andreas K. Poulakidas,
"The Novels of Kazantzakis And Their Existential Sources," and Saralyn Poole Hadgopoulos, "Odysseus' Choice: A Comparison And Contrast of Works By Albert Camus and Nikos Kazantzakis." While these and other works on Kazantzakis will be consulted, the primary emphasis will be on those writings of Kazantzakis' which have been discussed above.

In view of the general ascendancy of Kazantzakis' reputation in recent decades, it is surprising how little philosophical examination of his thought has been done. The major reasons for such an oversight seem to be twofold in nature: (1) his reputation as being an apolitical individual; and (2) the emphasis on Kazantzakis as a literary person, rather than as an imaginative social philosopher. The reputation of being apolitical has clung to Kazantzakis, even though it is not an accurate portrayal of his life, and has inhibited analysis of his thought from the standpoint of political philosophy. Actually Kazantzakis, as a Greek and a humanist, was very much concerned with the enduring issues of political philosophy, was in the thick of very bitter debates over various political ideologies, was a member of the Greek Society of Social And Political Sciences, held cabinet level offices twice in Greek governments, and served with UNESCO.

The interest in Kazantzakis as a literary artist is legitimate for he was first-rate in this category. He took great pride in his literary output and ranks among the most imaginative of all modern writers as evidenced by the fact that he was repeatedly proposed for the Nobel Prize. Kazantzakis left quite detailed accounts of his view of the role and duty of the artist in society and of the contribution which art can make to improving the human condition--valuable guides for the writer who is involved in socio-political themes. There is, however, another equally important aspect of Kazantzakis which has been obscured by the above concerns and
remains relatively unexplored. This is the invaluable social and political criticisms which he levelled at his age and the philosophical beliefs which he expounded as remedies for the excessive materialism, despiritualization, despair, murderous violence, and societal and governmental wrongs of his day. There is a tendency for the philosophy of those not in the mainstream of Anglo-American/European political thought to be neglected in political inquiry. This may reflect a bias on the part of some political theorists against those whose personal and intellectual origins are traceable to Africa, Asia, and the Orient as well as to the West. Whatever the reason it seems as if few have been willing to pay heed to this prophet of the soul. With the increased awareness of the timeless value of Eastern thought characteristic of our age, with the growing indications that the nations of East and West are moving toward more mutual understanding and cooperation, and with the rapidity of translation today, perhaps thinkers like Kazantzakis who have attempted a synthesis of Eastern and Western thought will receive their due share of attention.

The social and political thought of Kazantzakis is understandable and meaningful for the twentieth century moreso than that of many of the brighter stars in the philosophical galaxy. Kazantzakis explored the entire range of the major ideologies in an age of ideology. He foresaw with surprising clarity that the secularization and material fervor of life in the modern West threatened to extinguish the spark of exuberance and freedom that gives vitality and beauty to the human soul. He railed against injustice whether carried out by left or right, East or West, and in an age of despair, sought rigorously for a higher synthesis of socio-political life, a "new decalogue" to provide meaning and purpose to replace the anxiety and absurdity of contemporary life. Drawing from many sources and harmonizing antimonies
with a burning humanistic vision Kazantzakis' politics represents an alternative to ideology and the basis for a politics of hope beyond illusory secular faiths and destructive nihilistic despair.
CHAPTER I

NIKOS KAZANTZAKIS

There are individuals, notes Walter Kaufmann in his introduction to The Portable Nietzsche, "who can write too well for their own good—philosophers. Plato wrote so dramatically that we shall never know for sure what precisely he himself thought about any number of questions. And Nietzsche furnishes a more recent and no less striking example."¹ Kaufman's statement certainly applies to Kazantzakis whose works are characterized by an innovative, experimentalist style and fanciful phraseology. Indeed, even if his style were simpler Kazantzakis' very prolificacy inevitably leads to contradictions and paradoxical puzzles. This makes difficult the logical reconstruction of his political theory. In order to fully understand such an individual's political philosophy we must know the life, character, interests, etc., of that person. We must know the principles, personalities, and circumstances which influenced his politics. This knowledge can illustrate his significance by making clearer the strengths and weaknesses, insights and oversights, of his thought. The first two sections of this chapter are concerned, therefore, with fulfilling the necessary prerequisite to analyzing Kazantzakis' politics of pinpointing the people, philosophers, and events instrumental in the construction of his basic outlook. Influences examined are ancestral—

Kazantzakis attached much importance to his parental lineage, historical milieu, which includes scientific, commercial, and religious developments of his age, socio-political environment, education, and dominant intellectual stimulants, i.e., decisive steps. The third section describes, with these facts as a foundation, Kazantzakis' essential and over-riding viewpoint--the Cretan glance.

Historical-Political Environment

Nikos Kazantzakis was born at Heraklion, Crete, on Friday, February 18, 1883.2 His mother, Maria, of the Christodoulaki family, "was a saintly woman . . . she had the endurance, patience, and sweetness of the earth itself."3 The Kazantzakis family relations were in keeping with the traditional European view of the male dominated, almost master-slave

2Until two years prior to his death Kazantzakis mistakenly thought he was born in 1885. His wife Helen Kazantzakis, Nikos Kazantzakis: A Biography Based On His Letters, trans. Amy Mims (New York: Simon and Schuster, Inc., 1968), p. 532, relates that on February 18, 1955, we celebrated Nikos' seventieth birthday--at least, so we thought. In reality he was already seventy-two years old. After his death, we discovered by chance the exact date of his birth, inscribed in his own hand, in a schoolbook. 'I was born on February 18, 1883, on a Friday.'

'A great joy, for me at least. We had won two years from Death.' For a chronological account of Kazantzakis' life and work see Saralyn Poole Hadgopoulos, "Odysseus' Choice: A Comparison and Contrast of Works by Albert Camus and Nikos Kazantzakis" (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Emory University, 1965), pp. 164-70. As indicated in the Introduction the most extensive factual material is to be found in these plus the works cited immediately below. All works will be footnoted, unless otherwise indicated, by the date of their translation into English.


3Kazantzakis, Report, p. 34.
relationship. Curiously, Kazantzakis, a rebellious figure who flaunted conventionality, was never to break with this sexist orientation. In fact he is the male chauvinist par excellence whose female characters are forever submissive, secondary, almost dehumanized persons whose primary function is procreation. However, he was drawn to the opposite in his sexual relations. Vital, involved women who willingly embraced life exerted a magnetic appeal on Kazantzakis—as did, in a similar manner, vitalistic political movements—who often agonized over what he perceived as a lack of dynamism in his own life. This appeal was evident in his relations with Galetia, his very strong-willed first wife; Eleni, his

---

As great a literary talent as Kazantzakis is and as empathetic as his views are to many segments of the world-wide counter-culture movement one is compelled to conclude he would receive little sympathy from the Women's Liberation arm of the movement for his belittling the potentiality of women. Will Durant describes Kazantzakis' views on the subject in "Nikos Kazantzakis," in his and Ariel Durant's, Interpretations of Life: A Survey of Contemporary Literature (New York: Simon and Schuster, Inc., 1970), pp. 278-79; Kazantzakis "interrupted his ascetic moods with cautious forays into feminine charms. He liked everything about women except marriage. He was especially fond of their smell, which aroused him to enervating heat; their armpits, he thought, exuded ambrosia. He suspected that women were similarly excited by the odor of man; the Circassian dancer in Freedom or Death 'could not have enough of the stench of men.' He celebrated the 'wide loins' of women, 'containing whole yards of noisy children'; and he seldom mentioned young women without speaking of their 'firm breasts' and shining thighs. He believed that the breasts of healthy women hurt when desirable men appeared; and he was sure that babies lay hidden in every mature womb, itching to get out. He praised men for having many children, but he himself acknowledged none. He had many intimacies, but he resented their permanence. He felt that women checked his grand designs. 'They're a pest. Forward!' you say, and they say, 'Stop!'" (Some pundits have thought the opposite.) 'The age-old heart inside me . . . repulses women and refuses to trust them or permit them to penetrate deeply within me and take possession. Women are simply ornaments for men, and more often a sickness and a necessity.' In healthier moments he listed four gifts as basic to a man's life: earth, water, bread, and woman; or, again, 'food, drink, woman, and the dance.'"; pp. 280-81, "Zorba says 'You keep teasing me and saying I'm too fond of the women. Why shouldn't I be fond of them, when they're all weak creatures who . . . surrender on the spot if you just catch hold of their breasts?'"; and finally Durant says on p. 288 when discussing The Odyssey, "Women play only incidental roles in the epic—Penelope, Helen, Krino, Phida, Rala; it is in the main a story of marauding men and slaughtered gods."
beloved second wife, an active socialist and literatist in her own right who overcame periodic physical difficulties to pursue her career; Frieda, a political activist whom he met in Vienna in the early 1920's; and Itka, Rachel, Elsa, Leah, and Dina, revolutionary idealists active in the burgeoning Marxists-Leninists movement in Berlin between the two world wars. Kazantzakis' mother occupies in his life and writings a place similar to that of Camus' mother in his life, a much revered, much loved, idealized figure who provided in abundance the warmth that was lacking on the paternal side. He wrote, on being told of the death of his mother: "The loss of my mother was an utterly emotional embitterment: the complaint of a child left alone in the dark when the well-loved hand's out of reach." And, "I hold myself in firmly so as not to cry out. Yet I know that only if I shouted like a wild animal would I find relief." From his maternal ancestors, peasants close to the soil, the seasons, and the rhythm of life, Kazantzakis inherited a sensuous and at times pantheistic love of nature with a profound sense of the relationality of man, plants, and animals the unity of the organic with the inorganic. He also gained a unique, first-hand comprehension of the flavor of peasant life which was later explored thoroughly and beneficially in such works as The Greek Passion and The Fratricides.

Kazantzakis' father, Michael, was, by Nikos' own account a rather forbidding figure. He was well thought of by his neighbors in Heraklion:


7Kazantzakis, Report, pp. 31-33. While Report is invaluable as a
People respected him . . . Some, the most inferior, rose and bowed when he passed . . . " As a father he was unloving: 'I cannot recall hearing a tender word from him—except once . . . But he felt angry with himself immediately; this display of emotion was a self-betrayal." Michael was exceedingly somber and "never laughed . . . his heart never lightened."

The elder Kazantzakis was religious though intolerant of priests:

He hated priests. Whenever he met one on the street, he crossed himself to exorcise the unfortunate encounter . . . He never attended Divine Liturgy---to avoid seeing priests. But every Sunday when the service was over and everyone had left, he entered the church and lighted a candle before the wonder-working icon of Saint Mina.

The father's influence on Kazantzakis is one source of the larger-than-life characters that people his works. This is especially so in Freedom or Death whose central character, Captain Michalis, is based on a fictionalized portrait of Michael Kazantzakis. The father-son relationship is illustrated well by three bold and undoubtedly dramatized tales which

guidebook to the development of Kazantzakis' thought it is not a precise, detailed work but an artistic, novelistic effort characterized by many factual inaccuracies. Prevelakis, Nikos Kazantzakis And His Odyssey, p. 167, notes that "Kazantzakis has here made a myth of his life. 'Poetry and Truth.' He has confused the dates, put ideal order into his struggles, given harmony to his life. Imagination has given him whatever life denied him." As Kazantzakis, Report, p. 15, concedes, "My Report To Greco is not an autobiography." He is "mixing truth with fantasy." This obviously creates problems for the aspiring analyst of his thought and its development. Rather than quibble over detail we choose, however, to do as Kazantzakis did and pass "over many ephemeral things . . . ." (Letter to Iannis Kakridis, 1956, H. Kazantzakis, Nikos Kazantzakis, p. 547), in hopes of grasping the more important personalities and issues which shaped his development. Thus, if there are some modifications on his part, we take our stand with Alexander Eliot who reviewed Report, "The Widening Gyre," Bookweek, XI (August 8, 1965), p. 13; "Well, why not? The warm breath of life itself is bound to cast a mist over cold facts. And memory is a living thing. Therefore anybody's autobiography will contain 'some small modifications.'" Equally important as facts for our purpose is Kazantzakis' interpretation of them!
depict the ethic of the pallikaria the father sought to impart to his son: (1) when told once that his son had caused some difficulty in religion class the father answered he cared only if he tells lies or gets a beating. "As for all the rest, he's a man, let him do as he pleases;" (2) during an uprising on Crete against the Turkish rulers with bloody repercussions, Nikos' father made him promise not to be afraid and told the family that "if the Turks break down the door and enter I plan to slaughter you myself, before you fall into their hands;" (3) the next day the father forced the child of seven years to touch several Greek Christians hanged in a tree, reasoning that "was to help you get used to it." Nikos was all-too-human and never to be a true pallikaria. His painful awareness of this occasioned continual soul-searching throughout his life. Kazantzakis' compassion and sensitivity is traceable, at least in some part, to the lack of these qualities in his father. The father's influence is highlighted by the fact that the year of Michael's death, 1933, coincides with the beginning of the period which the adult Nikos will label his period of freedom. Kazantzakis' closest friend points out the impact of the death of the elder Kazantzakis:

The man-beast whom Kazantzakis had feared all his life and had regarded as deathless had collapsed. He had symbolized, while he lived, the roots, the original beast; the mud of which the son was destined to make spirit. . . . All his life the son had struggled to raise the beast

---

8 In the translator's note to Kazantzakis, Report, p. 13, Bien gives this definition: "A true man, i.e., brave and strong, able to resist pain, etc. The term was originally applied to the foot soldiers accompanying mounted knights, later to any soldier, now to any young man who has soldier-like qualities. In Greece today it is an unqualified term of praise."

9 Ibid., (1) p. 117; (2) p. 87; (3) p. 90.
up on his wings; suddenly it had fallen to earth and the two parts had separated. 10

And Kazantzakis wrote of his feelings to his wife in such disturbing terms that he requested she destroy the letter: "It was not love that united me with Father, but a thick deep root, which has been cut now. . . . I feel. . . . the unholy, horrifying feeling that I have been liberated." 11

From imaginative reflection on the lives of his paternal ancestors Kazantzakis, envisioning them as piratical, war-like figures who boldly roamed land and sea beyond good and evil, derived a keen love of adventure and travel. He gained a sense of life-long struggle for their lives had been touched deeply by the numerous uprisings on mountainous Crete. He also acquired from his ancestors insight into the primitive and savage in man. Moreover, Kazantzakis obtained from them empathy, love, and a measure of understanding for non-Western cultures for he thought his line traceable ultimately to the Arabs who had once conquered Crete which, if true, would make him truly the child of East and West which he fancied himself to be.

He never forgot his diverse ancestry and paid homage as he looked back on his life near the end: "Both of my parents circulate in my blood, the one fierce, hard, and morose, the other tender, kind, and saintly. I have carried them all my days; neither has died. As long as I live, they too will live inside me. . . ." 12 His ancestors lived not only "inside" Kazantzakis but came to life in various characterizations in his works. He forever

10 Prevelakis, Nikos Kazantzakis And His Odyssey, p. 150.

11 Kazantzakis, Letter to Eleni Samios, 1933; H. Kazantzakis, Nikos Kazantzakis, pp. 266-67. Kazantzakis would say many years later in Report, p. 30, "the secret hatred I felt for my father was able, after his death to turn to love."

12 Ibid., p. 49.
examined and re-examined their personalities and seemed to believe that through constant refinement of these personages he could gain not only greater self-understanding but perhaps even greater insight into the universals of the human psyche. Just as these dramatic figures were visibly influenced in Kazantzakis' work by the time in which they lived so was he influenced by his age, which brings us to another aspect of our investigation.

In endeavoring to further our understanding of Kazantzakis, a complex man whose concerns at various periods of his life were those of a Greek nationalist, religious ascetic, philosopher, left-wing sympathizer, litteratist, and practical politician, it is desirable at this time to examine—though of necessity somewhat superficially—the socio-political environment of his age, stressing the more important issues and conflicts which composed the swirling panorama of the formative years of his life. Many issues and events of the socio-political and intellectual milieu of the era, both in the immediate environment of Crete and Greece and in the cultural developments of the broader world environment which would eventually become as familiar to this world citizen as his native Crete, influenced Kazantzakis' thought profoundly.

An understanding of the years of Kazantzakis' childhood and adolescent period is crucial for the political analyst for although Kazantzakis was relatively uninterested in politics until he began his graduate studies in Paris in October 1907, his writings prior to this "exhibit themes and concerns which were to be subsequently repeated in a political context."13 These themes grew primarily from the confrontation of a sensitive, intel-

13Peter Bien, "Nikos Kazantzakis," The Politics of Twentieth-Century Novelists, ed. George A. Panichas with Foreward by John A. Aldridge (New
lignant child with the harsh reality of life on Crete. The impact of his childhood existence was such that he would later say of Crete: "This soil I was everlastingly; this soil I shall be everlastingly. Of fierce clay of Crete, the moment you twirled and fashioned me into a man of struggle has slipped by as though in a single flash."\(^{14}\)

Heraklion, which was Meghalo Kástro during Kazantzakis' childhood and in his fiction, is a small port town and the chief city of Crete nestled between the sea and the mountains. In his youth it was, if there is truth in his account, organized along the lines of a garrison by the Turkish rulers who controlled passage into and out of the city during times of rebellion. Both Greek Christians and Turkish Moslems lived in well-defined quarters rather like the inhabitants of nearby Cyprus live today. The protector of the city was the wonder-working Saint Minas whose icon Kazantzakis' father worshipped. Kazantzakis draws upon and magnifies the singular traits of the people of Heraklion for his literary characters. Madame Penelope, fat, greasy, and continually laughing, and her husband Dimitrós, meek and hypochondrical, who escaped periodically to the mountains, reappear in Kazantzakis' novels as does Manousos, a merchant who beat his sister regularly at noon, and Andreas the Feeler, who always stepped on the same stones when he walked down Meghalo Kástro's

---

streets. The inhabitants were poor yet so inordinately proud that they went to extraordinary lengths to prevent anyone from discovering their poverty.¹⁵

As a child in the earthy, sensuous, and vital Crete Kazantzakis first developed his concern for the knowledge of the senses and his abiding adherence to the strictures of the basic elements. He recounts how, in his childhood, the senses grew strong, captured their respective sphere of existence, and began to establish order from chaos. And how the first contact with earth, sea, woman, and the star-filled sky filled him with fright and joy:

Every one of my emotions, moreover, and every one of my ideas, even the most abstract, is made up of these four primary ingredients. Within me, even the most metaphysical problem takes on a warm physical body which smells of sea, soil, and human sweat. The Word, in order to touch me, must become warm flesh. Only then do I understand—when I can smell, see, and touch.¹⁶

Kazantzakis' youth fell in the period when the Greek Christians were finally able to drive the hated Turks from their land. Time and time again they had attempted this feat:

in 1821, 1866, 1878, and 1889; in this last rebellion Kazantzakis' father fought, and Nikos himself, then a boy of six, began to learn the facts of life. (The Turks departed in 1898, and in 1908 Crete joined the Kingdom of Greece.) That long subjugation and resistance forged the Cretan temper: pious and somber in the women, violent and morose in the men; all lusty and passionate, all waiting for a

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 60-62, 80-81.
¹⁶Ibid., p. 43, see also pp. 44-46.
This political struggle for freedom on the part of his oppressed people so impressed the young Nikos that throughout his life he championed the cause of the oppressed and the downtrodden. It instilled a sense of rebelliousness in his make-up, a rebelliousness that was to take religious and metaphysical as well as political forms. The struggle also conveyed a stark picture of human suffering, degradation, and a sense of duty to humanity, all ideas that Kazantzakis later translated into more cosmopolitan and philosophical political terms. And perhaps most important of all, Kazantzakis gained a burning thirst for liberty: "Freedom was my first great desire." 

17 Durant, "Nikos Kazantzakis," in his and Ariel Durant, Interpretations of Life, p. 270. Morton P. Levitt, "The Cretan Glance: The World and Art of Nikos Kazantzakis," Journal of Modern Literature, II (November 1971), pp. 165-66, finds the intriguing history of Crete in many ways "unlike that of any other Western nation, a long and virtually unbroken succession of foreign domination and unsuccessful revolts. It is said that from the early thirteenth century, when the island became part of Venice's commercial empire, to the end of the nineteenth, when her Turkish successors were finally driven out, each generation of Cretan men married, raised a son to continue the line and went off to the mountains to fight the invaders. The first uprising broke out in 1212, the year the Venetians came to power. . . . The most recent foreign conquest of Crete took place in April 1941, when the 7th German Parachute Corps landed on the island. The elite troops suffered fearful losses—their nation's worst in the war to that date—many of them to untrained natives armed only with their traditional knives and with ancient guns hallowed in other battles. The resistance movement which developed during the occupation was perhaps the most widespread in Europe; it was so effective that the Germans were driven to retaliate by destroying dozens of villages, some of which had been burned down by the Venetians and Turks as well. . . . It was only on Crete that the recent military coup was resisted with armed force: it was not for monarchy that the islanders fought, but for the principles of freedom which underlay their entire history. The new military government responded by preventing the planned celebration of the tenth anniversary of the death of Nikos Kazantzakis: the dictatorship recognized its enemy even in death."

18 Kazantzakis, Report, p. 71.
In addition to Kazantzakis' first contacts with nature and politics there were important religious concepts and ideas current during his childhood period which influenced him profoundly. He had a mystic sense of his religious mission in life—being born on "the day of souls" which expressed itself in periodic stays in monasteries, and in profound explorations of Christianity, Buddhism, and messianic Communism. Although religious questions would later take on a multifold complexity, the teachings of his youth on religion were simple; the two central tenets were that among various mysteries and miracles God "did His share of killing," and as for deciphering God's action's and motives, "We're not supposed to understand. It's a sin!" But for a child with a restless spirit, this admonition only led to further questioning of religious dogma. Another important religious aspect of this period was the intense intolerance all-too-present among the Greek Orthodox, Catholic, Jewish, and Turkish Moslems on Crete. It is logical to assume that the bitterness of this bigotry was one impetus to Kazantzakis' consistent and overriding concern for unity among peoples. There also occurred during this time his introduction to the innumerable Saints' legends. This was important first because, just as the political struggle for civil freedom from Turkish rule imparted in Kazantzakis the ideal of a hero, the religious struggle of the Saints' legends for virtue and Christian freedom from the baser side of man's nature imparted a complementary ideal, leading to the second great wish, "the desire for,

19 Ibid., p. 74.
20 Ibid., p. 55.
sainthood." The unity of vision and purpose of the hero and saint becomes a lifelong quest for Kazantzakis. The Saints' legends had another significant influence in view of Kazantzakis' later direction—the introduction to creative writing.

These inspiring Saints' tales were augmented with stories of adventure passed on by his ancestors and with the stories of travel and exploration in his schoolbooks. Kazantzakis also attended theatrical presentations, one of which was Schiller's play "The Brigands," by various touring troupes. These awakened in Kazantzakis a boundless imagination;

I read the saints' legends, listened to fairy tales, overheard conversation, and inside me all this was transformed—deformed—into dazzling lies. . . . Much, much later, when I started writing poems and novels, I came to understand that this secret elaboration is termed 'Creation'.

Such stories had, for Kazantzakis, the delightful essential quality of transcending the mundane limits of logic, ethics, and rationality. Contrasting this tendency to "Creation" with the immediate necessities for struggle on Crete in which his family and friends were involved Kazantzakis early became aware of the conflict between writing and action, between physical participation in the quest for freedom and theoretical, literary involvement. Once, while at school at nearby Naxos in 1897 during one of the reprisals on Crete, he requested an opinion from a monk friend of his family on the value of his ambitious translation of the French dictionary into Greek and was given this warning of the pitfalls of the road of art:

Take it from me that if you follow this road, you'll never amount to anything--never! You'll become some miserable round-shouldered little

---

21 Ibid., p. 71.

22 Ibid., pp. 72-73, see also pp. 74-79.
teacher with spectacles. If you're really a Cretan, burn this damnable dictionary and bring me the ashes. Then I'll give you my blessing. Think it over and act. Away with you!

I went away completely confused. Who was right, what was I to do? Which of the two roads was correct?  

Fortunately Kazantzakis did not heed the monk, Père Lelièvre, but he never forgot the advice as witnessed by his continuous examination of the two roads of art and action. This examination constitutes one of the most valuable such exercises of any modern thinker.

Another event of importance during Kazantzakis' childhood and adolescent period was his confrontation with birth, death, and the mortality of man. Unlike the more sterilized West of today, during Nikos' childhood the children were not isolated from the realities of birth, death, and the terror and enigmas surrounding same: "These two, birth and death, were the very first mysteries to throw my childish soul into a ferment. . . ."  

The initial chapters of Report abound with instances of youthful confrontation with life and death. These "first mysteries" would lead, with supplementary elaboration by Nietzsche, to a lifelong inquiry into the abyss of mortality, the twin voids of pre-life and after-life constituting key concerns of Kazantzakis' mature thought. The question of death and man's attitude toward death is explored repeatedly throughout his work.

It is on the basis of these various influences and events discussed above--political, religious, moral--that Kazantzakis was to build his metaphysics. At this early stage of his development it was basically a metaphysics of rebellion: first a political rebellion against Turkish rule;  

---

23Ibid., p. 97. The reader is reminded this is most probably a fanciful tale yet it does convey insight into one of Kazantzakis' abiding concerns.

24Ibid., p. 109, see also pp. 38, 50, 66.
secondly a religious rebellion against Christian quietism and church hypocrisy--

I grew bigger... The saints' legends were too confining; they stifled me. It was not that I had ceased to believe. I believed, but the saints struck me now as much too submissive. The continually bowed their heads before God and said yes. The blood of Crete had awakened inside me, and thirdly, a far-ranging metaphysical rebellion which received expression when Kamantzakis was told that as he grew older he would understand why people died--"I never did find out. I grew up, became old, and never did find out." This was Kazantzakis' basic outlook when introduced, during his adolescent education, to the dynamic intellectual and cultural environment beyond Crete. Truly startling developments were occurring in the world beyond Crete during this period with important implications for the future shape of Kazantzakis' thought.

At the French School of the Holy Cross at Naxos, directed by Franciscan monks, Kazantzakis studied from his fourteenth to his sixteenth year; "This refugee boy from Crete was suddenly introduced to another world. He learned French and Italian and assimilated the rudiments of Western culture. After the first months of 1899 he continued his studies at the gymnasium of Herakleion." Kazantzakis tells of the importance of his studies at Naxos:

This was the first and perhaps the most decisive leap in my intellectual life. A magic portal opened inside my mind and conducted me into an astonishing world. Until this time Crete and Greece had been

---

25 Ibid., p. 78.
26 Ibid., p. 51.
27 Prevelakis, Nikos Kazantzakis And His Odyssey, p. 15.
the confined arena in which my struggling soul was jammed; now the world broadened, the divisions of humanity multiplied, and my adolescent breast creaked in an effort to contain them all. Before this moment I had divined but had never known with such positiveness that the world is extremely large and that suffering and toil are the companions and fellow warriors not only of the Cretan, but of every man. Above all, only now did I begin to have a presentiment of the great secret; that by means of poetry all this suffering and effort could be transformed into dream; no matter how much of the ephemeral existed, poetry could immortalize it by turning it into song. Only two or three primitive passions had governed me until this time; fear, the struggle to conquer fear, and the yearning for freedom. But now two new passions were kindled inside me: beauty and the thirst for learning. I wanted to read and learn, to see distant lands, to have personal experience of suffering and joy. The world was larger than Greece, the world's suffering was larger than our suffering, and the yearning for freedom was not the exclusive prerogative of the Cretan, it was the eternal struggle of all mankind. Crete did not vanish from my mind, however. Instead, the entire world unfurled within me to become one gigantic Crete which was oppressed by all sorts of Turks but continually leaping to its feet and seeking liberty. In this way, converting the entire world into Crete, I was able in the early years of adolescence to feel the suffering and pain of all mankind.28

Kazantzakis' "passion for learning," kindled by the Fransiscan monks at Naxos, confronted a world culture experiencing some of the most dramatic and startling intellectual innovations of any similar epoch in the history of man. The time from the mid-nineteenth century until World War I, the outbreak of the latter being approximately the time Kazantzakis completed his formal education and embarked on systematizing and expressing his basic themes into a coherent political philosophy, was a vital one. Kazantzakis recognized the importance of birth in such times:

The Chinese have an amazing curse: "May you be born in an interesting epoch." ... We are living at a cosmic rate—not years—weeks, days, hours. Truly every moment nowadays has the value of a century ... may you be born in an interesting epoch.29

---

28 Kazantzakis, Report, p. 96.

The era under discussion has been characterized as the "Age of Industrialism," for with a surge of technological and scientific development industrialization spread from Western Europe, the northern United States, and Japan, to the Balkan states, Italy, Spain, Russia, Canada, and the remainder of the United States. Continuing developments are, in our day, carrying industrialization into the former colonies of the world empires—the reputed Third World. Mark Twain, talking primarily of the American social scene, termed the period a "Gilded Age," for acquisitive materialism was, in his view, the dominant ethos of the time. The bourgeoisie and the nouveaux riches were seizing political and social control and manifesting their often boorish taste in atrocious monuments and architecture. It has also been termed the "Age of Nationalism and Power Politics," for Italy and Germany became unified and national boundaries led to national chauvinism. As the imperialists' empires became increasingly vulnerable to the Marxists-Leninists' critique and the rising consciousness of the colonized, power politics and an amoral "balance of power" experienced its greatest failure in a war of nationalism—the First World War. Yet none of these terms expresses the essence of those years from 1850 to World War I as well as does "The Age of Science." The more important scientific advances of the age were made in the fields of astronomy, biology, physics, chemistry, psychology, and economics. These, combined with the important political, religious, and artistic developments, have shaped, either directly or indirectly, both the form and substance of Kazantzakis' and other thinker's political philosophy in the twentieth century.

Early in his studies in the gymnasium at Heraklion Kazantzakis had come upon the importance of scientific studies to ethics and morals; "My soul
has been thrown into a ferment by two terrible secrets our physics teacher had revealed to us... I believe the wounds he inflicted have festered ever since."30 The first "terrible secret" was heliocentric astronomy—that the earth is only one of the many planets revolving around the sun. This revelation had immediate, personal, and religious implications for Kazantzakis and provided further fuel for his questioning mind: "What was this fairy tale our teachers had so shamelessly prated about until now—that God had supposedly created the sun and moon as ornaments for the earth, and hung the starry heavens above as a chandelier to give light!"31 The second "great secret" was the evolutionary hypothesis put forth by Charles Darwin in 1859. Applying the principle of natural selection to human beings the conclusions were reached that man's ancestors were monkey-like animals. This was a marked shortening of the distance between man, plants, and animals, or, as Kazantzakis would say in more dramatic fashion:

Man is not God's darling, his privileged creature. The Lord God did not breathe into his nostrils the breath of life, did not give him an immortal soul. Like all other creatures, he is a rung in the infinite chain of animals, a grandson or great-grandson of the ape. If you scratch our hide a little, if you scratch our soul a little, beneath it you will find our grandmother the monkey!32

Because of his intense concern with the divine element in man Kazantzakis defied the belittling implications of evolutionary biology through following Nietzsche and consistently emphasizing the boundless potentiality in man—the great soul rather than the meek qualities of man. In a like manner Kazantzakis followed Bergson and attributed to man, and particularly to

31Ibid., p. 115.
32Ibid., p. 115.
the artist, the elevating capability to grasp the meaning of the creative life pulse in the world.

Great scientific strides were being made during this period in the fields of chemistry and physics. In chemistry the foundation for the technological society of the twentieth century was being laid with the increasing sophistication in understanding the atom—evidenced by Dmitri Mendeleyev's drawing up a periodic table of chemical elements based on their atomic weights. In physics the rational stability of the mechanistic worldview was being undermined by: (1) research into thermodynamics which resulted in the First and Second Laws that disproved the presuppositions of Newtonian physics and accurately depicted the relation between heat and motive power which provided the technological base for subsequent industrial inventions; (2) research into electrical phenomena which made possible inventions that revolutionized man's life and which led, in 1889, to the Curie's work in radioactivity and discovery of the structure and potentiality of the atom—the consequences of which Kazantzakis, with many others, was to address himself. The final blow to the Newtonian universe came with Einstein who, in 1905 and 1915, advanced his theory of relativity which reoriented man's attitude to the structure and mechanics of the universe and—with its relativistic implications being carried into realms other than science—further eroded the possibility of believing in the "truth" of philosophical, moral, and even aesthetic concepts.

Still another area of science in which developments were occurring which would be important for the development of twentieth century thought was psychology. In 1900 Ivan Pavlov demonstrated with dogs the influence of physical stimuli on involuntary processes which, when adopted in the United States and other countries as the basis for a social psychology,
gave rise to a school of behaviorism that reduced man to a machine responding to stimuli. Sigmund Freud, on the other hand, discovered the unconscious in man's psychological make-up and revealed the intricacies of the human mind; intricacies which Kazantzakis, like his spiritual predecessors Dostoevsky and Nietzsche, would explore in brilliant fashion.

Viewing these discoveries in their cumulative impact one can easily see why, as one observer has said, they were to prove shattering to man's self-esteem and confidence. The evolutionary theory seemed to have divested man of his traditional heritage of having been created by a special act of divine grace. Freud's plumbing of man's unconscious mental processes seemed to shatter the cherished belief in man's power of reason. The busy dismantling of Newton's clockwork universe by Einstein and others was to be of great consequence for man's view of the universe and his role in the scheme of things. The replacement of absolute laws by theories of relativity would soon be transferred out of the sphere of science to the field of morality, with the result that absolute values and standards would be threatened. How the mighty Homo sapiens had fallen!

These are but a few of the truly important developments and breakthroughs which set the stage for the world scene of the twentieth century on which Kazantzakis carried out the struggle of life. What with the brilliance of these advances it is little wonder that the decline of religious faith in an increasingly secularized world was replaced by a proportionate rise in dogmatic scientific faith. Kazantzakis, throughout his life, turned a

---

33. T. Walter Wallbank et al., Civilization Past and Present, 6th ed. (Glenview, Illinois: Scott, Foresman, and Company, 1969), II, p. 373. The historical information above came largely from Part Four, "REALISM AND REALPOLITIK". This is a widely used standard text on world history with Part Four providing a simple, clear discussion of the socio-political and intellectual milieu of the period under discussion.
scathingly critical spirit to an examination of the many oversights of this new God of the West. He resisted the extent to which he and his contemporaries were influenced, either overtly or covertly, by the scientific ethos. Kazantzakis focused particularly on the devitalization, dehumanization, and destruction of necessary myth, miranda, and symbol of the Western world brought about through scienticism. This critique of scienticism is, as we shall see, a key element in Kazantzakis' theory of the transitional age.

With these family, socio-political, and cultural influences in mind let us move to the next stage in our task of analyzing the development of the basics of Kazantzakis' philosophy, these basics later providing the metaphysical foundation for his politics. This is an examination of those decisive steps—Christ, Nietzsche, Buddha, Bergson, Lenin, and Odysseus—of which he spoke. Following this we will arrive at the most crucial aspect of our initial analysis wherein we will critically investigate Kazantzakis' Cretan glance, which is a synthesis of the influences of his family, his childhood experiences, and the scientific and political developments of his age, with the religious and philosophic lessons of the mentors to whom he paid allegiance, into a rich, complex, and harmonious weltanschauung.

34 Kazantzakis, in Report, lists in two places these "steps"; p. 15, "Christ, Buddha, Lenin, Odysseus,"; p. 445, "Homer, Buddha, Nietzsche, Bergson, and Zorba. The first, for me, was the peaceful, brilliantly luminous eye, like the sun's disk, which illuminated the entire universe with its redemptive splendor; Buddha, the bottomless jet-dark eye in which the world drowned and was delivered. Bergson relieved me of various unsolved philosophical problems which tormented me in my early youth; Nietzsche enriched me with new anguishes and instructed me how to transform misfortune, bitterness, and uncertainty into pride; Zorba taught me to love life and have no fear of death."
Decisive Steps: Twentieth Century Masks

Following the completion of his studies at Naxos and the gymnasium at Heraklion, Kazantzakis left for the University of Athens where he matriculated from 1902 until 1906, taking a degree with high honors in law. In Athens he wrote articles, plays, and worked at his first of many stints as a newspaper columnist. His father agreed to send him to Paris for further academic study in 1907. While there he audited courses at the Sorbonne in the school of Law, attended Henri Bergson’s lectures at the College de France, became enthralled with Frederich Nietzsche’s philosophy, and awoke to the dynamic currents swirling through Europe. Bergson and Nietzsche were to become the dominant intellectual stimulants for Kazantzakis’ thought:

In his early youth Kazantzakis wrote two treatises, one on Nietzsche and one on Bergson, and though scholars may later trace in his thought pervading influences...of diverse and contrary strains...they will discover, I believe, that the earliest influences were the deepest.35

This is not to say that Kazantzakis was unacquainted with other philosophers. Indeed, he was familiar with most Occidental and Oriental philosophy. He translated and commented on such varied thinkers as William James and Ortega y Gasset, Bacon and Dostoevsky, Plato and Machiavelli, drawing intellectual sustenance from all. We do not examine in detail all these diverse and peripheral influences for our purpose is not at one with the

---

majority of Kazantzakis' analysts, their interests being primarily literary history;

For over a decade now, Kazantzakis' writing has attracted a number of comparativist-commentators. The author's own admission about those who had influenced him--Nietzsche, Bergson, Lenin, Christ, Buddha--has given critics the incentive to see him primarily in light of each of these thinkers, in the shadow of each predecessor, not as a writer with a shadow of his own. It is as if these critics have tasted a unique dish and, unable to identify it for what it is, they compare it to the individual ingredients it contains.36

What we seek at this point is to provide a skeletal sketch of the development of Kazantzakis' thought as a necessary prerequisite to an understanding of his politics. Therefore, our examination of his philosophic and spiritual mentors will pinpoint only the major contributors, Nietzsche and Bergson, to what we believe, with Savvas, to be essentially an original vision.

Much has been written about the reverential relationship of Kazantzakis to Nietzsche. Kazantzakis' philosophy was obviously shaped by Nietzsche's for it concerns itself with many of the fanciful, brilliant, and brutally penetrating intuitions and insights of Nietzsche. One observer, who is specifically interested in the manifestation of Kazantzakis' Nietzscheanism in Zorba the Greek, says:

A great teacher of Kazantzakis, before he met Zorba, was Nietzsche. . . . [In Paris in 1907 and 1908 he wrote] his dissertation, "Frederich Nietzsche and His Philosophy of Right." In his Report To Greco, in the chapter entitled "Paris. Nietzsche the Great Martyr," one can read how this philosopher-poet-professor assisted Kazantzakis in breaking away from the barriers of his traditional and cultural past. Such was his interest in Nietzsche that around 1915, at the time he first met George Zorba, Kazantzakis translated into modern Greek for the Athenian publisher, George Phexis, Nietzsche's Thus Spake Zarathustra.37


As noted above, Kazantzakis first became sympathetically interested in Nietzsche's philosophy during his Paris studies.\(^{38}\) It was an extremely important event for the questioning, youthful Nikos who saw in Nietzsche's rich metaphysical critique of the despiritualization of contemporary man and his celebration of the giant in man a new alternative to the decadence and bourgeois materialism so widespread in Europe at the time and to the blandness and ineffectual hypocritical forms which institutionalized Christianity was taking:

It was solid, leonine nourishment that Nietzsche fed me at this most critical, most hungry moment of my youth. I had waxed luxuriant, and now I found myself too constricted both by contemporary man in the state to which he had reduced himself, and by Christ in the state to which He had been reduced by man.\(^{39}\)

Kazantzakis was so moved by the tragedy of Nietzsche that he undertook a pilgrimage to the new Golgotha, as he termed it, to the German village of Nietzsche's birth and to those places in Switzerland and France where Nietzsche wrote and lived. This displayed the lifelong passion with which

\(^{38}\)Kazantzakis, Report, p. 318, tells of how he was first introduced to Nietzsche's philosophy in Paris by a young girl in the Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève who showed a man's photograph in a large book to him with the person's name covered and said "it's you—the very image... Don't you recognize him? Is it the first time you've seen him? It's Nietzsche! Nietzsche! I had heard of him, but still had not read any of his books." However, according to Peter Bien, "Kazantzakis' Nietzscheanism," Journal of Modern Literature, II (November 1971), p. 248, he actually was "aware of Nietzsche before he went to Paris. His first wife claims in her fictionalized biography of him that he first read Nietzsche in high school. We should remember that in these years (1899-1902) Nietzsche's thought was well known in Greece and was already exerting an influence on writers... thus it would have been natural for Kazantzakis' curiosity to have been aroused at this early age, and if not then, certainly during his years as a university student in Athens (1902-1906). To bolster these speculations, however, we have direct evidence. Nietzsche was invoked by Kazantzakis in 1906 in his very first published work, the essay "The Sickness of The Century"."

\(^{39}\)Kazantzakis, Report, pp. 331-32.
Kazantzakis became involved with people and things. Later in his life he translated many of Nietzsche's works and composed encyclopedia articles on Nietzsche as well as the dissertation. Kazantzakis not only incorporated many of Nietzsche's themes into his work but also had, throughout his life, a sense of affinity with Nietzsche's dramatic odyssey. He at one time kept a mask of Nietzsche above the door to his study and always sought mountain or seashore solitude, as Nietzsche had, for his creative periods. Writing from Zurich in 1917 Kazantzakis displays this identification: "I work alone, wandering through the mountains, and sometimes Nietzsche's face appears before me, disturbing as a painful premonition." It was through Nietzsche's famous proclamation "God is dead!" that Kazantzakis first saw clearly the abyss, the void of nothingness he had barely sensed in his adolescence, and first realized the implications therein, for Nietzsche's vivid philosophy portrays the ultimate capacity of man and the potentiality of the world for despair.

Nietzsche, who saw his era as the beginning of a new world—a world without God—sought to describe the manner in which Christianity had enslaved man, had dehumanized and devitalized man, and had ultimately contributed to its own demise. He also sought to prescribe for future man—for freed man, the ubermensch. Nietzsche gives a concise account of the manner in which Christian ethics dominated man:

---

40 Kazantzakis, Letter to Iannis Angelakis, 1917, H. Kazantzakis, Nikos Kazantzakis, p. 66. Bien, "Kazantzakis' Nietzscheanism," Journal of Modern Literature, cites from Letters To Galetea (Athens 1959), two instances, p. 247 and 250 respectively, of this identification as related by Kazantzakis to his first wife in a letter from Berlin in 1922: "The other day a German I know ran up to me as I was returning some books to the library and told me with emotion that seeing me he had suddenly thought he had seen Nietzsche."; and, recalling a visit to Nietzsche's birthplace in Naumburg, he was shaken by "the tragic face of that man who bears such affinity to my spiritual and corporeal constitution."
1. It granted an absolute value, as opposed to his smallness and accidental occurrence in the flux of becoming and passing away.
2. It served the advocates of God insofar as it conceded to the world, in spite of suffering and evil, the character of perfection—including "freedom"; evil appeared full of meaning.
3. It posited that man had a knowledge of absolute values and thus adequate knowledge precisely regarding what is most important.
4. It prevented man from despising himself as man, from taking sides against life; from despairing of knowledge: it was a means of preservation.

In sum: morality was the great antidote against practical and theoretical nihilism.  

As such, Christianity made man less than he would be, it inculcated into his being a philosophy of servitude, and it acclaimed absolute parameters to his questioning, philosophizing, actions, and expectations. However, in the modern age, with the startling developments in the physical sciences, the increasing stress on man's intellectual capabilities, and such incisive critiques of Christianity as issued by Feuerbach and others, man became less and less attuned to the dogmatic preachings of Christianity, less receptive to the idea of a governing God, and more aware of his lonely existence in the universe. As Nietzsche tells us:

The Christian ethics with its key notion . . . the interpretation of nature as a proof of God's beneficient care; the interpretation of history to the glory of divine providence, as perpetual testimony of a moral order and moral ends; the interpretation of individual experience as preordained, purposely arranged for the salvation of the soul—all these are now things of the past.  

Nietzsche concluded from this his famous proclamation "God is dead"! But where is man in a Godless world; where are his values, his guides, his aspirations and expectations? Man is alone, according to Nietzsche, and must create from his loneliness, and the accompanying despair and

---


alienation, a new, fresh, creative, and more wonderfully human attitude to life and to the world. He must "revalue all values," in free, forceful, human terms. However, Nietzsche was not so naive as to think that the revaluation, the passage from subservient dogma-hope of salvation to creative aspirations and realizations, would come easily. The world of men would first pass through an epoch of extreme despair—an era of tortured nihilism: "I see the flood-tide of nihilism rising." In that transitory epoch of despair man, lonely, hopeless, and afraid, casts about seeking something to which he can attach his hopes, find values, and fill his existence with meaning.

Kazantzakis saw his age as the "transitory epoch of despair" and threw his life into the struggle to aid suffering humanity. Bien, who translated Kazantzakis' The Last Temptation of Christ, Saint Francis, and Report, reflects on the Nietzschean orientation of these works and goes so far as to say that Kazantzakis "echoes Nietzsche's cry to our times." This echo is perhaps no more evident than in Kazantzakis' most well known work (at least in this country), Zorba the Greek. Bien explored in detail the relationship of Zorba to Nietzsche's The Birth of Tragedy and reached the conclusion that "Kazantzakis consciously or unconsciously modeled Zorba the Greek on Nietzsche's great work." Poulakidas, who likewise explored the relationship of Zorba to Nietzsche's Thus Spake

---


Zarathustra, drew a different conclusion:

Thus it is not possible to deny Mr. Bien the authoritative insights that he has into Nietzsche's terminology, for it did influence Kazantzakis' major characters. What one cannot radically accept is that it was The Birth of Tragedy that was the "model" for Zorba the Greek. In theory, there is no doubt that this former work regulated Kazantzakis' thought, but in practice and technique, the actual model for the writing of Zorba the Greek has been Nietzsche's Thus Spake Zarathustra, a work that clearly illustrates and communicates Nietzsche's theory concretely and metaphorically as well. 46

Even in their disagreement these assessments evince the wide recognition and consensus that Zorba, and by implication Kazantzakis' other works, are patterned after and centered around many of the primary beliefs which compose the vivid and compelling philosophy of Nietzsche.

These and other commentators on comparative literature are fond of compiling lists of the specifics of Kazantzakis' debts to Nietzsche. Both Bien and Poulakidas do so in extensive fashion in places other than the above cited articles. Friar, however, has best described the contributions of Nietzsche—in addition to the previously discussed elaboration of the abyss of nothingness and the accompanying transitory era—to Kazantzakis' Weltanschauung:

Nietzsche confirmed him in his predilection for the Dionysian as opposed to the Apollonian vision of life: for Dionysus, the god of wine and revelry, of ascending life, of joy in action, of ecstatic motion and inspiration, of instinct and adventure and dauntless suffering, the god of song and music and dance; as opposed to Apollo, the god of peace, of leisure and repose, of aesthetic emotion and intellectual contemplation, of logical order and philosophical calm, the god of painting and sculpture and epic poetry... however... it was not at all a rejection, but rather an assimilation of the Apollonian vision of life.

From Nietzsche, Kazantzakis also took the exaltation of tragedy as the joy of life, a certain "tragic optimism" of the strong man who delights to discover that strife is the pervading law of life... But in contrast to Nietzsche, Kazantzakis had an intense love for the

common man and a belief in socialistic orders which try to alleviate poverty and lift oppression. ... It was Kazantzakis' vain dream, perhaps as it was that of Odysseus and Moses, to make all individuals into superior beings, to lead them toward the Promised Land and to test them to the breaking point. 47

As indicated earlier, Kazantzakis followed Nietzsche, who possessed a tremendous capacity to penetrate the comforting and hypocritical facade of modern life through evocative epigrams, in defending the higher qualities of man against a materialistic, corporate political ethos. He sought basically to provoke his fellow men into realizing the true potential of their existence. Kazantzakis vied against injustice and oppression sanctioned or perpetrated by the socio-political sphere which inhibits such realization. His was an optimistic and elevating view of man's potential. But whereas Nietzsche, beginning with these goals, was led to the overman and a lengthy societal critique which contained little substantive prescriptive content, Kazantzakis—though never losing sight of the giant potential of certain superior individuals—was led to, as Friar told us, "an intense love for the common man and a belief in socialistic orders."

He was to take one of the most compassionate and compelling positions of any modern thinker. Kazantzakis, unlike Nietzsche, sought some positive means to better the lot of man. In this quest for an affirmative philosophy Nietzsche's teachings combined to give Kazantzakis' thought undeniable figurative and symbolic brilliance, jarring insights, and an unerring critical faculty which enable a breaking away from the barriers of the past. These facets were well supplemented by the teachings of the other of those "earliest, deepest influences"—Henri Bergson.

Bergson's philosophy spelled out a positive, affectionate, and affirmative world-view. Where Nietzsche had stripped meaning from man's history by teaching eternal recurrence and had revealed the abyss with its nihilistic implications, to be explored thoroughly by Kazantzakis in Buddhism, Bergson taught creative evolution which provided existential potentiality to history. He showed to Kazantzakis that which lies in the void—the Invisible Cry or the life force:

Deeply imprinted in Kazantzakis' memory were Bergson's lectures that he had attended in Paris in 1907-1908 as well as his works Creative Evolution, Time and Free Will, Matter and Memory. In January, 1913, Kazantzakis summarized for the members of the Educational Society the philosophy of Bergson who, in contrast to Nietzsche, was responsible for animating and enriching him with a positive point of view; also, in the January 22, 1913, Bulletin of the Educational Society appeared his lengthy article on Henri Bergson.

By his philosophy Bergson sought to provide an alternative to the cul-de-sacs of determinism which intellectualist philosophies, both mechanistic materialism and absolutist idealism, had found themselves. The proponents of the former of these, mechanistic materialism, seized on things as the ground of philosophizing and replaced the God-ordered universe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries with a self-regulating geometrically predictable system. Thus the dominant strain of English philosophy of the modern period leads from Locke through Hume in an ever-increasing reliance on the ontological and epistemological priority of materiality. Supported by Marx's dialectical materialism of the dominance of the industrial-economic substructure and Darwin's dramatic demonstration of the manner in which life forms are channeled by exterior influences (spread by Spencer, an early mentor of Bergson, as a philosophy of industrialism in which the inertia of things became the essence of life),

materialism became firmly entrenched as a truly deterministic view. The idealists reaction to such a metaphysics received its most profound formulation in the complex Hegelian system which saw reality corresponding to a unifying Spirit or Idea that operated in history, nature, and/or the mind thereby achieving a systemic synthesis of epistemology, ontology, and logic. The implications of Hegelianism compose a doctrine where, as one scholar notes, "all history, both what we call past and what we call future, may be considered as a single dramatic whole, not unfinished and in the making, but completely present or 'given' to the cosmic mind." In both world-views life is static, other-ordained, and the choice of men has little effect on the ultimate direction of life's history.

Another tenet of the materialists and idealists was the mind-body distinction, with the former emphasizing knowledge of things gained through the senses and the latter, particularly Berkeley, seeing reality only as an outgrowth of the mind. The materialists argued that cognizance of reality was possible only through empirical data derived from the senses through the interaction of the body with physical matter. Theirs was a participatorial approach to epistemology in that they believed that only through physical involvement could individuals acquire knowledge, and this of a limited nature. Constructs of the mind which went beyond relationality and perception were inadequate, imaginative ideas subject to and products of misinterpretations, fantasy, influences of desire and will, etc. The idealists, particularly Descartes, believed the reverse was true. Believing that the mind functions not only in a passive perceptive manner but also in a positive, affirmative manner through the formation

---

of conceptions they contended that only through a spectatorial approach could true knowledge be acquired. The idealists-rationalists believed that knowledge of the senses was confused, vagrant, and offered no potential for comprehensive contact with Being. However, conceptions of the mind could affect this contact once an individual surpassed his ego-centered confusion and arrived at true knowledge in the form of "adequate ideas." Bergson sought, in dialectical fashion, to go beyond the primacy of matter or idea and the division of mind and body, to a philosophy of transformism which emphasizes willfull transubstantiation, through ideals, of matter into spirit which is then seen as the dynamic life-pulse of procreative evolution.

Life for Bergson is not dominated solely by the physical view of the materialists nor the biological view of the Darwinians but flows from, as Kazantzakis relates, inner well-springs; "always and always the procreant urge of the world." Kazantzakis, in his treatise on Bergson, continues:

According to Bergson life is an unceasing creation, a leap upwards, a vital outburst, an élan vital... All the history of life up to man is a gigantic endeavor of the vital impulse to elevate matter, to create a being which would be free of the inflexible mechanism of inertia... Two streams, that of life and that of matter, are in motion, though in opposite directions; one toward integration and the other toward disintegration. Bergson thinks of the élan vital as a seething stream which in its ebullition distills into falling drops. It is these drops which constitute matter.50

For Kazantzakis the élan vital, the driving life force, was to be identified in messianic fashion with Buddhism, Marxism-Leninism, Christianity, and finally with Odyssean freedom. In this latter identification it becomes

50Kazantzakis, cited by Friar, "Introduction," Kazantzakis', The Odyssey, p. xvi.
the Invisible Cry of divinity in man, of the non-existent seeking realization, of the becoming of life's history:

When I say the Invisible, I do not mean any priestly version of God, or metaphysical consciousness, or absolutely perfect Being, but rather the mysterious force which uses man--and used animals, plants, and minerals before us--as its carriers and beasts of burden, and which hastens along as though it had a purpose and were following a specific road.51

This Cry is a personal god in man, nature, and history which takes many forms and masks and which is the divine in man seeking release for a greater perfection of itself. It is without the teleological finalism of Hegel for it is infinitely potential. It gives rise to the struggle for the ascent from the strictures of matter to freedom.

The form taken by the élan vital in a particular epoch is not discernable for Bergson, through matter and sense data or through intellect and pure idea but through a combination or synthesis of these which he terms intuition or consciousness. He argues that this constant stream of change which is life cannot be captured by thought for thought's very essence is dissection--static photographing of isolated moments of the life force or reality. Bergson thus equates the aesthetic faculty of the artist with intuition or consciousness as the only means of grasping life in wholes;

intuition may bring the intellect to recognize that . . . neither mechanical causality nor finality (teleology) can give a sufficient interpretation of the vital process. Then, by the sympathetic communication which it establishes between us and the rest of the living, by the expansion of our consciousness which it brings about, it introduces us into life's own domain, which is reciprocal interpenetration, endlessly continued creation.52

Bergson's intuitionist philosophy was not primarily an anti-rationalist one.

51 Kazantzakis, Report, p. 402.

52 Henri Bergson, Creative Evolution, quoted in Brumbaugh and Stallknecht, The Spirit of Western Philosophy, p. 439.
H. Stuart Hughes says; "Far from being the negation of the intelligence, Bergson explained, intuition, in the sense in which he employed the term, was its parallel and complement." Bergson consciously stressed intuition so heavily in order to correct the imbalance brought about by the stress of the preceding age solely on intelligence.

This endlessly continued creation means there is a constant evolutionary flux; therefore, everything is always changing and "the same concrete reality never recurs." Each moment is a discrete, unique epoch of existence wonderfully different from preceding moments and should be experienced to the fullest. The intellect deludes us into thinking that reality recurs for it focuses on thinking time, those photographed, isolated segments upon which we base our action. But lived time, durational time, transcends this dissection by intellectualism; "As soon as we go out of the encasings in which radical mechanism and radical finalism confine our thought, reality appears as a ceaseless upspringing of something new, which has no sooner arisen to make the present than it has already fallen back into the past." Materialistic and idealistic interpretations of reality therefore do not reach the essence of being for they seize only on segmented aspects of


54 Bergson, Creative Evolution, quoted in Brumbaugh and Stallknecht, The Spirit of Western Philosophy, p. 440.

55 Ibid, p. 440. Maurice Friedman, "The Modern Vitalist: Bergson and Kazantzakis," in his To Deny Our Nothingness: Contemporary Images of Man (New York: Delacorte Press, 1967), p. 65, discusses the importance for Bergson's thought of the concept of lived time: "To recover authentic existence we must move from the world of spatiaлизed, quantitative, successive time to the organic flow of time. Like Kierkegaard, Bergson distinguishes between the becoming, or process of the inner soul and the tendency to fix these processes into objects, categories, and words in the outer world."
reality, e.g., economics, ideas, morality, etc., as motivation. Kazantzakis would apply this to various analyses of human behavior by such socio-political and religious systems as Marxism-Leninism, Buddhism, and Christianity, and conclude that none reached the underlying unity behind phenomena but rather each seized on only one causal factor for "at the bottom of every great and critical human passion lies not economic or moral self-interest, but Passion--by which we mean a pre-human tempestuous force that is beyond logic and self-interest." This Passion which manifests itself "beyond logic and self-interest" may appear in various guises in different ages. The difficult task of man is to distinguish the true face of reality from the bogus ones. Thus Kazantzakis' concern with the others of those "decisive steps"--Buddha, Christ, Lenin--which may be either reality's face or bogus "masks."

The symbolic value of masks is relied upon consistently by Kazantzakis. We have seen that he hung Nietzsche's mask over his study door. In a very entertaining article Adele Bloch discusses the prevelance of mask imagery in Kazantzakis' work. [Masks]

occupy a conspicuous place in all his novels, his plays, his philosophical writings, and his romanticized autobiography Report To Greco. Imprisoned in Egypt, Odysseus carves the mask of his God, "The Fighter" and wears it while he engages in a frightening dance. Manolios, [The Greek Passion] the present day Greek shepherd, afflicted with a psychosomatic skin ailment, which has turned his gentle face into a leper's effigy, carves a beautiful mask of Christ. The Negro chieftain Roda Raba, dons Lenin's mask as he dances a dance of liberation on Moscow's Red Square. In The Rock Garden, the Mandarin comes to realize that the Tao bears twin, but seemingly opposite masks: one active, the other contemplative, one representing extroverted Confucius and the other introverted Buddha.


Masks can be terrifyingly revelational, as in Nietzsche, and penetrate the world's superficial beauty, harmony, and illusion to show the chaos and death which lie at the core of existence. They can be nihilistic, as with Buddha, and become (as for Kazantzakis in the early 1920's in Vienna and Berlin), a bottomless jet-dark eye in which the world drowned and was delivered, and thereby appeal to the despairing side of man's nature. Bloch implies that Buddha appealed to the introverted, withdrawn aspect of Kazantzakis' personality. Masks can be positive-transcendent, as with Christ, who in his representation by the institutionalized church turned men's eyes from the world with its injustices to a pacifistic awaiting for beatitude and other-worldly salvation. Or masks can be positive-immanent, as with Lenin (an obviously important mask for our purposes), who represented for Kazantzakis the new savior created "by the enslaved, hungry, and oppressed to enable them to bear slavery, hunger, and oppression --another new mask for mankind's hope and despair."58 These are essentially the alternative masks which Kazantzakis believes twentieth century man has donned--nihilism-escapism with Nietzsche or Buddha, otherworldly passivity with the Christ of the church, or materialistic revolution with Lenin. Yet each has its own shortcomings and in some measure fails to express the unity of God and man, of theory and action, of affirmation and destruction, of good and evil, of spirituality and materiality, of the many contradictory, dichotomous themes of man's rich and varied existence. This paucity on the part of any one mask gives rise to Kazantzakis' attempt to synthesize the masks as an expression of the unity, i.e., God, soul, spirit, dynamic principle, élan vital, etc., behind the movements in the world: his struggle

58 Kazantzakis, Report, p. 369.
to unite those "decisive steps"—"the great Sirens Christ, Buddha, Lenin, they seduced me. . . . all my life I have fought to save myself from all these sirens, without denying any one; I have been fighting to get them together and to make their three unequal voices into a harmony."\(^{59}\)

Life is a flowing, expanding, and ubiquitous stream of consciousness for Bergson and Kazantzakis which forever explores new channels in seeking to join with the rhythmic, oceanic tide of the cosmos. Of the many channels into which life may flow in a particular era there is only one that is deliverance and it is Kazantzakis' quest, particularly in *The Saviors of God: Spiritual Exercises* and *The Odyssey*, to systematically depict how an individual may attain the expanded consciousness and proper perspective to discover the true harmonious and unified evolutionary face of his age and thereby save "God," the divine in man. Key elements of Kazantzakis' salvationist perspective which will be revealed in their political importance as the discussion progresses are individualism versus community, nihilism and the human condition, atheism and spiritual values, classical versus modern views of the nature of man, and--most important--determinism versus autonomy. Kazantzakis' concern over the mechanization of society, his striving for the true value and meaning of life, and his critique of the ills of the transitional age, coalesce around these elements within the burning, vibrant forge of the artistic, spiritual, and intellectual concepts discussed above to compose one of the most compellingly humanistic and compassionate of contemporary visions. Reflecting fondly on the rich environment in which he was reared and to which he was irrevocably attached, Kazantzakis calls his vision the Cretan glance.

\(^{59}\)Ibid., p. 493.
The Cretan Glance: Transubstantiation and the General Concepts of Kazantzakis' Philosophy

The Cretan glance is an ontological attitude toward the cosmos which is a synthesis of the varied, antinomial influences of Kazantzakis' experiential odyssey and the ground from which his political philosophy flows. This attitude received its most thorough philosophical expression in The Saviors of God in 1923, its most compelling translation into activity in The Odyssey completed in 1938, and its most enlightening attempt at explication vis-a-vis the rest of Kazantzakis' philosophical system in Report in 1956. However, the most artistically perfect and hence most powerful expression of the Cretan glance is found in Zorba where the Boss, Kazantzakis' autobiographical spokesman, explains:

"We are little grubs, Zorba, minute grubs on the small leaf of a tremendous tree. This small leaf is the earth. The other leaves are the stars that you see moving at night. We make our way on this little leaf examining it anxiously and carefully. We smell it; it smells good or bad to us. We taste it and find it eatable. We beat on it and it cries out like a living thing.

"Some men--the more intrepid ones--reach the edge of the leaf. From there we stretch out, gazing into chaos. We tremble. We guess what a frightening abyss lies beneath us. In the distance we can hear the noise of the other leaves of the tremendous tree, we feel the sap rising from the roots to our leaf and our hearts and all our souls, we tremble with terror. From that moment begins . . .

"I stopped. I wanted to say 'from that moment begins poetry,' but Zorba would not have understood. I stopped."

"What begins?" asked Zorba's anxious voice. "Why did you stop?"

"begins the great danger, Zorba. Some grow dizzy and delirious, others are afraid; they try to find an answer to strengthen their hearts, and they say: 'God!' Others again, from the edge of the leaf, look over the precipice calmly and bravely and say: 'I like it.'"

---

The predicament of those who grow "dizzy and delirious" who "are afraid" derives not from the fact that there is an abyss, a precipice, beyond which there is chaos, but from their reaction to that abyss. We are afraid, we tremble, we surrender, we turn away from the abyss—which is fate/mortality—and conjure up explanations, either ideas, rationality, superstition, religion, as our ancestors have done through the ages, to deny this reality. We do this because, as Nietzsche realized we would rather have the void for our purpose than be void of purpose! We deny the void by filling the void, by adding to the precipice that which, since it represents the ultimate reach of man, becomes our moral, cultural, and social circumscribants and determinants. It is at the void that we come against the shock of life's history, that we surrender to and are over-powered by the reality of the precipice by being intimidated and frightened so by it as to turn to our minds--either in rational or irrational fashion--to construct our unreality. That unreality consequently becomes the guiding and central orientation of our lives and that which we, since we are forever fearful of the void, seek to impose and spread to others. This is evidenced in doctrinaire religious teachings that diverge in startling manner from reality in order to camouflage the void. It is evidenced in philosophic absolutism which seeks to force chaotic reality and infinitude into ordered terms. It is evident in conformist societal mores enforced to create an aura of comfort, security, and oneness to communal existence. In dogmatically acquiescing to these we do nothing, we neither negate nor affirm ourselves, our existence; we do nothing; we are nothing; we live dead lives--we are immobilized and devitalized.

As Kazantzakis develops this theme in Zorba he also develops and presents
his thoughts on the resolution of the human predicament. This resolu-
tion lies in the negation of the negation; in the affirmation of life;
in the overcoming of the oppressiveness of the void. It lies in the
recognition of fate, of mortality, of the misfortunes of life and the
ultimacy of death—the confrontation with the void but not the sub-
mission to it. It lies in struggle, suffering, rebellion, in both the
affirmation of life and the transcending of the strictures of that life—
it is at the same time a negation and creation. It is, as Bien says,
to "Say yes to necessity, fill the vacuum with joy as Zorba does, or . . .
redeem life's anguish by transubstantiating matter into spirit, Dionysiac
reality into tragic myth." The resolution requires an act, an acceptance
and avowal of life. It demands a confrontation with mortality. It demands
an act of will to life, to life's reality. It demands a facing of the truth
that there is no eternity, no resurrection, no after-life, none of the
dogmas with which socio-religious innovators have filled the void, and no
earthly salvation to be found in political ideologies—no unity gained
through enforced conformity. It requires the Cretan glance, an affirmation
that eternity is in every moment and every moment is potential eternity.

It is being Zorba and joining with him as he

struggles and rebels against a stable, comfortable world for reasons
he may not understand himself, purges himself of his weaknesses and
errors through suffering and war . . . and through this struggle and
rebellion, this purgation of matter which comes about through suffering,
he fulfills the highest debt man owes to God his Creator: he transcends
his nature makes it spirit, and like the butterfly after breaking
its cocoon, flies up and affects a union with God. 62

For Zorba, the Cretan glance, the ubermensch like capacity to "love life

---

62 Tom Doulis, "Kazantzakis and The Meaning of Suffering," Northwest
and have no fear of death," was innate and instinctual therefore he needed no enabling guides, either philosophical or theological, to direct him to the proper perspective. But what of us who do not possess this instinctual courage and insight, who cannot naturally effect a union with God, who tremble before the void or surrender to its terror by Buddhistic acquiescence? It is for us that Kazantzakis expressed himself in his prophetic The Saviors of God, to portray how in step by step fashion we can join with El Greco, Zorba, and Odysseus, and soar like a winged falcon beyond the delimitations of nothingness.

The Cretan glance, the third eye of the soul, is freedom, the ontological attitude that can grasp life and death—the élan vital/life pulse of the universe. It is "that vision which can embrace and harmonize these two enormous timeless, and indestructible forces, and with the vision ... modulate our thinking and our action." Kazantzakis saw humans as being in a certain unfavorable situation in the world. They, in his view, lived in the world dis-united from the cosmos, ignorant of the pulsating life force of the world, and uncertain even as to the possibilities of their true existence. In the manner in which they lived in the world, they were bound by and subservient either to phenomena or noumena—to stimuli artificially constructed by themselves. Man must, in Kazantzakis' view, fulfill three basic duties in the world before he can escape this unreality.

The first duty is that of epistemological emendation which involves

---


64 We have borrowed from Spinoza and chosen to designate the ascendant process of attaining Zorbaic perspective emendation of our existence, rather than improvement or amendment or purgation or cultivation or other possible descriptive terms, as this best connotes the act of following our inherent desires, i.e., the divine in man, to an unhindered, uninhibited, self-willed conscious celebration of life and infinity. Even though Kazantzakis'
two steps. Man must first explore the realm of the phenomenal with the mind's eye, to impose order, relationships, discipline, law, rationality, to the chaos of things. He must labor with the intellect and the five senses, immerse himself in the transitory world, and say: "That I may not stumble and fall, I erect landmarks over this vertigo; I sling bridges, open roads, and build over the abyss." He must then complete the corollary second step which is to recognize and glory in the limitations of the mind;

I do not know whether behind appearances there lives and moves a secret essence superior to me. Nor do I ask; I do not care. I create phenomena in swarms and paint with a full palette a gigantic and gaudy curtain before the abyss. Do not say, 'Draw the curtain that I may see the pointing.' The curtain is the painting.

The second duty is to the heart and may be termed ethical emendation. It also involves two steps. The first is to reject the rational boundaries composed by the mind's eye, explore the realm of the noumenal with the

and Spinoza's methods were quite different in many ways, interestingly enough, their point of departure and to a lesser extent their destination were the same. We have labeled Kazantzakis' triadic stages to deliverance, spelled out in The Saviors of God and followed by Odysseus, epistemological emendation, ethico-existent emendation, and metaphysical emendation, drawing support for our designations from the following interpretations. Peter Bien, Nikos Kazantzakis (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972), pp. 23-24, who labels the preparatory stage the "epistemological section," and discusses the following stages in ethico-religious and metaphysical terms respectively.

Friar, "Introduction," Kazantzakis', The Odyssey, p. xiii, who, without using our specific terms analyzes the steps in the fashion we have followed. W. B. Stanford, The Ulysses Theme: A Study in the Adaptability of a Traditional Hero (New York: Barnes and Noble, Inc., 1964), p. 236, who describes Odysseus as passing through the phases of doing, being, becoming, which corresponds roughly to our labels.


66 Ibid., p. 48.
heart's eye, and rip away the curtain in order to see the painting behind it. Man must seek truth, essence, being, reality, and the order of the cosmos, and follow his heart "to grasp what is hidden behind appearances, to ferret out that mystery which brings me to birth and then kills me, to discover if behind the visible and unceasing stream of the world an invisible and immutable presence is hiding." Again, man must recognize the ineffectiveness of the heart in discerning a purposive essence, a teleological presence, behind the universe and with this recognition comes the anguish which ensues from the attempt to give a human meaning to this superhuman struggle: "To bleed in this agony, and to live it profoundly, is the second duty." The third duty is to free oneself from both mind and heart, from the illusory yet tempting hope offered by the former of conquering phenomena and the equally illusory hope offered by the latter of harnessing the essence. Man must realize that knowledge of the mind, reason and science, is always problematical for instead of understanding the nature of things we organize, classify, hypothesize it, and then appeal once more to the data for verification. Why things are the way they are is unanswered at this level for you do not approach this, you only ask how things are done. Since the self organizes the sense-data, man's experience is a solipsistic one. Equally important for man's action and thinking is the realization that ethics derived from the second level of inquiry, that of the heart's vision, are based on knowledge, as one Kazantzakian interpreter opines, of which the heart "apprehended merely a human meaning, a human myth, and imposed this upon the unknowable." The

---

67 Ibid., p. 51.
68 Ibid., p. 50.
third duty is the metaphysical acceptance of nothingness; the transcendence of ill-fated illusions that hide the non-existent; the transsubstantiation of our materiality through the burning power of the third eye of the soul into free, self-conscious spirit.

Nothing exists. . . . There is no beginning and no end. Only this present moment exists, full of bitterness, full of sweetness, and I rejoice in it all. . . . I know now: I do not hope for anything. I do not fear anything, I have freed myself from both the mind and the heart, I have mounted much higher, I am free. This is what I want. I want nothing more. I have been seeking freedom.70

This is not the end of the journey, however, but only the beginning, for man has not at this point yet attained the Zorbaic capacity to dance defiantly in the face of infinitude. What he has done at this stage is to have prepared—the three duties in The Saviors of God are found under the heading "The Preparation"—for the expansion of consciousness which comes from the ensuing taunt, tension-drawn pilgrimage through life in the forward, ascending journey to unity with infinity. Man has now reached the point "from which you began—the ephemeral, palpitating, mysterious point of your existence—with new eyes, with new ears, with a new sense of taste, smell, touch, with new brains."71 The next step is "The March" through Ego, Race, Mankind, The Earth, from which comes "The Vision" which enables man to discover the proper relationship of man to man, God, and nature. This precedes "The Action" in which there is a joining of theory and action, that modulation of our thinking and our behavior which harmonizes the timeless, indestructible forces of growth and decay, birth and death. By this path we are thus led to the peak of "The Silence" from which


71 Ibid., p. 100.
noble heights man leaps into the abyss of eternity to link with God.

It is this ascending, bitter-sweet pilgrimage that Kazantzakis envisioned his own life as being, that he believed to be the world's odyssey of the twentieth century, and the great adventure on which he launched Odysseus to graphically illustrate both descriptive and prescriptive elements of his political philosophy for contemporary man. Friar has incisively summarized this journey which leads to the Cretan glance:

at the start of his journey, he hears an agonized cry within him shouting for help. His first step is to plunge into his own ego until he discovers that it is the endangered spirit (or "God") locked within each man that is crying out for liberation. In order to free it, each man must consider himself solely responsible for the salvation of the world, because when a man dies, that aspect of the universe which is his own particular vision and the unique play of his mind also crashes in ruins forever. In the second step, a man must plunge beyond his ego and into his racial origins: yet among his forefathers he must choose only those who can help him toward greater refinement of spirit, that he may in turn pass on his task to a son who may also surpass him. The third step for a man is to plunge beyond his own particular race into the races of all mankind and to become identified with all the universe, with animate and inanimate matter, with earth, stones, sea, plants, animals, insects, and birds, with the vital impulse of creation in all phenomena. Each man is a fathomless composite of atavistic roots plunging down to the primordial origin of things. A man is now prepared to go beyond the mind, the heart, and hope, beyond his ego, his race, and mankind, even beyond all phenomena and plunge further into a vision of the Invisible permeating all things and forever ascending.\footnote{Friar, "Introduction," to Kazantzakis', \textit{The Odyssey}, pp. xiii-xiv.}

Wisdom, courage, selflessness, and nobleness characterize he who has successfully completed the journey. Man has then fulfilled his greatest debt to God, i.e., the spiritual concept of evolutionary perfection—the Good, in transforming his mundane existence into a glorious reign, in releasing the divine within, in furthering the cause of moral betterment in the world, in upholding his responsibility to God, man, and nature, in following the
worm that becomes a butterfly, the flying fish that leaps into the air and
transcends its nature, the silkworm that turns dust into silk, and transsub-
stantiating his materiality into free unalloyed spirit, in joining with
the saviors of God and achieving beatitude:

And Thrice Blessed Be Those Who Bear On Their Shoulders And Do
Not Buckle Under This Great, Sublime, And Terrifying Secret:

THAT EVEN THIS ONE
DOES NOT EXIST!73

The weltanschauung spelled out in The Saviors of God in the 1920's,
acted out by Ulysses in The Odyssey in the 1930's, artistically depicted
in Zorba in the 1940's, explained in Report in the 1950's, and adhered
to in all other works by Kazantzakis, has obvious literary, theological,
philosophical, and existential significance. This world-view is also of
important political significance. The vantage-point of the Cretan glance,
attained through the expanded consciousness of he who has emended—episte-
mologically, ethically, and metaphysically—his existential insignificance
by following the innate divinity within himself, is man fulfilled. Thus,
each individual's fulfillment as a unique person is, to Kazantzakis, the
ultimate end of all socio-political life. All laws, institutions, and
mores, must conform to that principle. Kazantzakis' view toward the best
manner of attaining that end in politics passed through a several phased
development. A cognizance of the stages of this development and the causal
factors involved is essential to an understanding of Kazantzakis' mature
political philosophy. Prominent factors influencing Kazantzakis' changing
views are the political manifestations of his agonized tightrope dance
between social activism and literary involvement, and the extent to which

73Kazantzakis, The Saviors of God, p. 131.
Kazantzakis was, to use Camus' phrase, a historical revolutionist. The issues of action versus writing, Kazantzakis' revolutionism, and the broader ethical questions of means versus ends are discussed in Chapter II in an attempt to clarify Kazantzakis' position on these matters.
CHAPTER II

WORDS: WEAPONS IN THE BATTLE

Kazantzakis, whose focus was consistently on the abyss of nothingness, believed freedom to be the essence of man and sought to liberate civilization from the enslaving inhibitions of human mortality and historical temporality. He explored, through his life and art, the advantages and disadvantages of social involvement versus literary activity as weapons in this battle. His view of the means to be used to translate his visionary Cretan glance—the call to the higher man—into reality and thereby to attain freedom evolved through three significant stages. First—and least important from the viewpoint of political theory—there is Kazantzakis' Buddhist phase. From approximately 1918 until the mid-1920's Kazantzakis embraced headlong the Buddhist world-view which focused not on the political, cultural, and social life of man but contemplated the sanctum of infinity. This period is characterized by an escapist attitude and a disavowal of responsibility for suffering mankind on Kazantzakis' part. The dehumanizing injustices of the finite world of man were as inconsequential drops of rain on the pane of eternity for Kazantzakis during his Buddhism. His was a thoroughly apolitical experience. In the "Berlin" section of Report Kazantzakis reflects on the Buddhist belief that the world does not exist and tells how, through his once held adherence to this belief, suffering and tyranny were transformed "into a spectacle both ephemeral and vain. I told myself none of this was
true. I must not be led astray into believing, like some simple, naive person. No, hunger and satiety, joy and sorrow, life and death—all were specters!" But in Berlin the Buddhist prism was slowly penetrated by the harsh light of reality, or, to change the metaphor, the curtain of nirvana was parted and the inhuman chaos of the world thereby revealed became Kazantzakis' concern. He realized that he could neither intellectually nor emotionally maintain his aloofness from the political arena when faced with the evils of the misery he found on his arrival in Vienna in 1921 and in Berlin in 1922. With Kazantzakis' acceptance of the world came realization of the "fearful responsibility man bears for all the world's injustice and opprobium!" That being so, the question confronting Kazantzakis was what should be done to relieve that injustice? In answering this question Kazantzakis would draw from the 1920's to the late 1930's extremely varied if not opposite conclusions turning on the efficacy and desirability of acting versus writing, and physical versus spiritual arms. In what may be termed Kazantzakis' radical phase, lasting until the late 1930's, the efficacy of acting and physical arms was at the forefront of his thought. This period was characterized by intense Marxist involvement, a shrill impatience with temporal injustice, and a lack of concern with the ethics of political means. These traits of Kazantzakis' thought were superseded in his mature stage—mature both in a literary and a political sense—in the late 1930's. As Kazantzakis accepted his literary nature and realized the importance of the spiritual

1 Kazantzakis, Report, p. 374.
2 Ibid., p. 387.
unity of mankind his political theory took on new depth and more profound dimensions. In this chapter we examine the radical stage of Kazantzakis' politics in which he endeavors to emulate his Cretan forbearers and fulfill the ethic of the \textit{pallikaria} so resolutely portrayed by his father; second, the terms of his gradual recognition of the responsibility of means and the larger question of the ethics of political violence; third, his ultimate position on these issues and the importance which Kazantzakis' acceptance of his literary bent plays in that position.

Radical Vitalism

Once he had abandoned Buddhist apoliticism and accepted social responsibility for injustice Kazantzakis threw himself into the battle. On the whole he paid little attention to normal avenues of political change. When he did he was rebuffed in his attempt to utilize them. He focused firmly on the goal of completing the job began by Nietzsche, being convinced by Nietzsche "that negativism could be a weapon for the cure of contemporary decadence and need not be a symptom of that decadence."\textsuperscript{3} Acting on that belief Kazantzakis turned with a rush to vitalistic movements as the best way of destroying the old laws and accelerating the release of the free spirit of man from the forces which oppressed it. Thus was revealed one of the dominant traits both of Kazantzakis' character and of his politics. He was imaginative and telling as a social critic; however, he was also subject to exaggeration, to pushing his basically good intentions and beliefs to extreme and perhaps unwarranted conclusions. There is an excessiveness about Kazantzakis' personality that often distorted his most cherished ideals. This excessiveness was the primary motivational force that led to his

extremely radical and violent position in the period under discussion. The only recourse for Kazantzakis, who saw and opposed the evils being wrought through and by bourgeoisie political systems, was to eliminate them and the outmoded ethical, religious, economic, etc., concepts on which they were maintained. Therefore, when addressing a Congress of Radical School Reformers in Berlin in 1922, Kazantzakis,

disdaining halfway measures, demanded an attack on the root of the evil: "We should not begin with the school system," he proposed to this Congress, "but rather with the foundations of society itself—of which the school is an emanation. If we are going to help society to advance, we must one day make up our minds to sever its rotten roots and free men from their shell, which prevent them from growing." He also sought to ally himself with the Soviet Marxists for they too were bringing about the destruction of the old forms which of necessity must precede creation of new ones. He could say of World War I; "when the vile war came, it brought one great good: it intensified the process of decomposition." He filled the first half of The Odyssey, written from 1925 to 1938, with passages acclaiming the necessity of destruction: of the outmoded ethic of a placid Sparta; of the decadent society Odysseus found on Crete against which he led a successful revolution placing a companion in charge; of the tyranny of Egyptian pharoahs against which he participated in an unsuccessful revolution; even of his ideal city founded on scientific naturalism. At this point in his development Kazantzakis was unconcerned with the ethical implications of political means but cared only for the efficacy of preparing the world for the building of the New Jerusalem of freedom, justice, and virtue. As late as 1937 when,

1Kazantzakis, quoted in H. Kazantzakis, Nikos Kazantzakis, pp. 89-90.

as a correspondent covering the Spanish Civil War, he was asked of the communists, "Why did they have to go and burn the churches?" he rationalized such acts as permissible because of previous injustices; "Don't forget that if the Reds did burn the churches, the Spanish Catholic priests burned the church... In Christ's name they have sanctioned and desired a thousand crimes." And when asked by a German philosopher, Dr. Colin Rose, during the same conflict, if he was for or against war, he answered; "Neither for nor against... as I am neither for nor against an earthquake." While recognizing and taking into account that Kazantzakis was not as bloodthirsty as these remarks paint him, for he was always the dramatist and much of the above was undoubtedly posturing, there is still evidenced a disconcerting lack of concern for the use of violence. Kazantzakis' abandonment of his earlier ascetic, yet compassionate orientation for an identification with and exaltation of the claim to absolute virtue of vitalistic movements, particularly Marxism, in the 1920's and 1930's gives rise to two questions. The first is, What lay behind Kazantzakis' deification of activist movements? The other, related question is; What are the implications of such a politics of violence? In turning to the issue of Kazantzakis' involvement with activists movements we encounter one of the central, all-important themes of Kazantzakis' life and art--the personal-psychological struggle between actor and writer.

Perhaps the most intriguing aspect of Kazantzakis' thought is his attitude toward physical participation in the quest of bettering the human predicament versus theoretical, literary involvement. Although Kazantzakis

---

6Kazantzakis, quoted in H. Kazantzakis, Nikos Kazantzakis, p. 343.

7Kazantzakis, Spain, p. 163.
is perhaps most commonly thought of, particularly among his English reading public, as being an ascetic, apolitical literatist—no doubt due to the unfamiliarity with his life resulting from the lack of a good intellectual biography available in English—this aspect of his life in fact was characterized by ambivalence, self-questioning, and conflict. We will examine this question and his ultimate assessment of action versus words by addressing ourselves to his identification with Soviet Marxism in the 1920's for this is his most intensive, sustained effort at action and consequently his most extreme betrayal of his literary nature and manifests the important political implications of his internal struggle for Kazantzakis' thought.

Kazantzakis was introduced to the comprehensive and apocalyptic vision of Marxism-Leninism in Berlin by his fellow idealist and paramour, Itka Horowitz. He became so openly sympathetic to communism as to receive an invitation as the only Greek intellectual to attend the celebration of the tenth anniversary of the revolution. His sympathy occasioned several outbursts and letters by Kazantzakis in which there is evident a movement away from the more ascetic, uninvolved, and non-violent attitude of his earlier Christian-Buddhist religious orientation. They contain a more strident and more emotional protest and are centered around the position Kazantzakis arrived at as he writes Eleni from Russia in 1927:

I'm deeply affected by setting foot on the Russian earth ... by gazing at the mute enduring masses. ... Whatever I've written seems to me unworthy and provincial. My cry has been heard by only a few people ... because the means I use are weak.

What do art and a beautiful phrase and a good simile and a brilliant line of verse matter? All these things are little; and they don't touch the great waves of humanity. Only religion and action—only a Christ or a Lenin—deserve to live today. The others exist in order
to wait for him, or at most to prepare the way for him with their inarticulate, provincial cries.\(^8\)

In addition to the goals of social justice there is evinced in this passage another element of Kazantzakis' attraction to Marxism—his disillusionment at this point with art as a means of affecting social change. This theme will be explored thoroughly a bit later.

Kazantzakis' perception of why the masses silently endured and why his contemporaries sanctioned or at least implicitly condoned such inhumane conditions as existed in Vienna, Berlin, and most of Europe in the mid-1920's is found in various passages throughout his writings and help to explain his attempted movement toward radical activism. This reason lay, in Kazantzakis' view, in the sterility, apathy, and anguish, displayed by the men of his day. These undesirable traits permitted the oppressors to carry on uncontrolled by the masses and led Kazantzakis to conclude that there was a need not only for economic and political emancipation but, more importantly, for the "psychological and spiritual emancipation of man."\(^9\)

In Kazantzakis' view his contemporaries were too content to overlook or to countenance those acts of their government which did not directly hinder their daily lives, and they were openly receptive to the espousals of gradualness, of tolerance, of nonviolence, and of order proffered by their government officials for, "Needless to say, the bourgeois regime is striving to stifle this endeavor."\(^10\) In light of the injustice in the world the apathetic attitude of mankind aroused Kazantzakis to fever pitch. Kazantzakis' politics, when faced with what he viewed as the oppressiveness of both German and Greek political systems, as well as others, and the dynamic

\(^8\)Kazantzakis, Letter to E. Samios, H. Kazantzakis, Nikos Kazantzakis, p. 168.


\(^10\)Ibid., p. 569.
Soviet successes, would eventually move so far from the nonviolent apoliticism of Buddhism as to permit him to rabidly support Marxism, its means as well as its goals, in his address to the Moscow World Congress in 1927: "Capitalist war is inevitable because the capitalists who are in power have an interest in making war. There is only one thing to do: to prepare for social war. When the capitalist war comes, it must be turned into a social war."^{11}

Kazantzakis' politics represent at this point what seems to be the supreme contradiction of his earlier asceticism. The moral absolutism of orthodox Marxism with which Kazantzakis readily identified and exalted directly contradicts the repeatedly stated theme that "it is our duty to stare at the abyss" and not succumb to the false masks of "Buddhas, Gods, Motherlands, Ideas... Woe to him who cannot free himself from Buddhas, Gods, Motherlands, and Ideas."^{12} With the identification of the Marxist cause as the clan vital, the evolutionary movement of God, and his consequent justification of actual physical interference with those who disagreed with that cause Kazantzakis' politics reached a nadir of conformism and dogmatism that was at odds with his basic humanistic outlook. He was to acknowledge that certain movements, i.e., Marxism, could embody the moral

^{11}Kazantzakis, quoted in Prevelakis, Nikos Kazantzakis And His Odyssey, p. 130. Kazantzakis in Report, p. 420, in the section devoted to the Russian period, writes: "the entire world is a Pompeii shortly before the eruption! What is the use of such a world with its brazen women, faithless men, with its villainy, injustice, and disease? All these sharp merchants, anthropophagic triggermen, these priests trading God in retail, these panders and emuchs—why should they live? Why should all these children grow up to occupy the places their parents occupied in the taverns, factories, and brothels?... Let the barbarians come to clear the unobstructed road and open a new riverbed of the spirit."

^{12}Kazantzakis, Zorba, p. 191.
laws of the Invisible life-force and was to justify governmental actions, in this instance by Stalin's Komsomol, which sought, by any means, to uphold those moral laws. This was evidenced in the break-up between he and his, at that time, fellow Marxist Panait Istrati over the famous Ruskov Affair on a Russian journey early in 1929. Victor Serge, a Soviet revolutionary and old friend of Kazantzakis' and Istrati's was "unjustly treated by the Soviet bureaucracy (this was a forewarning of the inhuman treatment that the Trotskyites were to suffer)... Serge was first isolated and then exiled; his wife went mad, his child was left in the streets, his father-in-law starved to death," whereas Istrati became furious at this injustice, protested to the Secretary of the Party, left the Soviet Union, canceled favorable newspaper articles he had prepared about the Soviets, and attacked what he accurately perceived as the beginning of the purges, Kazantzakis continued his travels in Russia and, rather than protesting the barbaric treatment of the Serges, he protested the unfavorable publicity Istrati aroused about Russia. This mystical, fervid support of communism would temporarily lead Kazantzakis to a brutal ideological amoralism:

What interests me is not man, nor the earth nor the heavens, but the flame that consumes man and earth and heavens. It isn't Russia that interests me, but the flame consuming Russia. Amelioration of the fate of the masses or of the elite, happiness, justice, virtue: these things that lure so many people do not catch me.15

Perhaps the answer to the query of why Kazantzakis deified Lenin's brand

13 Prevelakis, Nikos Kazantzakis And His Odyssey, p. 137.
14 See ibid., p. 137, and H. Kazantzakis, Nikos Kazantzakis, pp. 199 & 222.
15 Kazantzakis, Tota Raba, p. 94.
of Marxism lies, if anywhere, in the realm of the psychoanalyst and not in that of the political scientist. The most logical answer is that Kazantzakis, the man of words and of strong beliefs, found in Lenin, the man of action and absolute morality, that unity of theory and action, of the intellectual and activist, for which he had expressed such concern in The Saviors of God and in other works: "He felt the need for a commitment; and Lenin had now captivated his heart. Not being a man of action, he felt the need to act."16 Other than through his writings, his honorary post as Cabinet Minister without Portfolio in 1945, his position with UNESCO as Director of the Department to translate the classics (which was only offered to him after it had been rejected by another), and his mission as Director General of the Ministry of Public Welfare in Greece in repatriating Greek refugees from the Caucasus in 1919 and 1920, Kazantzakis never attained much success in politics. He entered into an illegal and unsuccessful political action with the communists in Crete in 1924 for which he was arrested (this occasioned his "Apology" to the examining magistrate after which he secluded himself on the Cretan coast); was charged in Greece for offenses against the state and religion in 1928 for his lectures with Istrati on socialism plus his controversial The Saviors of God; planned to present himself as a communist candidate for the Greek legislature in 1929 yet failed to do so; proposed in 1940 his great, and somewhat ludicrous, plan for Greek-England unification in face of Mussolini's attack

16Poulakidas, "The Novels of Kazantzakis And Their Existential Sources" (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation), p. 112. There may be a great deal of what the psycho-analysts call "transference" in this identification for Kazantzakis' father had, by his larger-than-life call to action, intimidated Nikos: (Report, p. 475), "He it was who reduced my blood to ink." And Lenin provided a panoramic fulfillment of the quest for action on a gigantic scale. Kazantzakis probably realized this for he was familiar with Freud's work having read them during his confinement for a skin ailment in Vienna in 1921.
on Greece although he had failed to detect Mousolini's evil in an inter-
view in the late 1920's; offered to join the leftist communist partisans
in the 1940's only to be rejected while at the same time the rightest
government banned much of his work as well as investigated his communist
ties; never realized his lifelong goal to lead a communal society of
artists; nor his proposed Institute of Greek Culture in the United States,
nor his proposed International of the Spirit in the late 1940's; and,
perhaps the ultimate attestation of political ineptness, was not allowed
to return to Greece after his departure in 1946 and, moreover, his publi-
cations and influence were effectively circumscribed by the rightest Greek
government. Although, as these events demonstrate, "decidedly there was
nothing of the political man about him" it was not until his seventh decade,
the 1950's, that, as his wife Helen continues, "For the first time I heard
no regrets uttered about his incapacity to set himself at the head of a
great political movement." Paradoxically enough, Kazantzakis' greatest
political influence, both in Greece and in the world, came after his death.

With this understanding of Kazantzakis' desire for action and his
political-religious messianism it is easily seen why he would find in
Leninism an opportunity for participation. He seemed to experience a
vicarious pleasure through Soviet Marxism, particularly through Lenin's
actions, and so closely identified with the Soviet experiment that in

his third journey to Russia Kazantzakis saw the opportunity for a new
test. Was he a man of action? Would he be able to make contact with
the revolutionary society, with the god-bearing people, and to release
his powers? While he was still at work on his epic and without any
cause to hope for an escape, he had written to me from Aegina (August
25, 1927): "As soon as I finish The Odyssey, my small service, I shall
give myself entirely to the problem of how to get to grips with reality
and to act. If I live elsewhere, if I find friends outside Greece, I

17H. Kazantzakis, Nikos Kazantzakis, pp. 437 & 485 respectively.
shall triumph. That is to say, I shall do what my nature is capable of doing.\(^\text{18}\)

There is a haunting and disturbingly tragic aspect to Kazantzakis' mystical and fervid identification with men and movements of action, Lenin, Zorba, and briefly, Mussolini, and his soul-wrenching yet rather incongruous attempts at becoming a political activist, revolutionary, and leader. This is an elusive yet important theme of Kazantzakis' life and work. There is a saddening distortion of life evidenced by Kazantzakis' attempts to break with his literary nature. There is also a saddening irony in that one who passionately loved life--"I who love so violently both the 'yes' and 'no' . . . Instead of burning it (life) stingly and miserably, let's burn it at both ends."\(^\text{19}\)--would in reality live a large part of his life only in words. There have been recognized cases of men attempting through constant writing a compensation for life. One such philosophic-literary figure who exemplifies this was Henry David Thoreau.

Thoreau was, as was Kazantzakis and also Nietzsche, emasculated to some extent by his writings. The manner in which Alfred Kazin discusses this devitalizing tragedy of Thoreau's life--his devoted attempt to create and live a life of words--is so similar to our assessment of Kazantzakis as to perhaps shed some light on our discussion:

Thoreau . . . is one of the most fanatical, most arduous, most tragic examples in history of a man trying to live his life by writing it--

\(^{18}\)Prevelakis, Nikos Kazantzakis And His Odyssey, p. 127. Helen, An Afterword, Kazantzakis', Toda Raba, p. 204, gives her impression of Kazantzakis during this time in a strikingly similar manner: "In that delicate, slender, disciplined body of his, in those burning eyes, in that dialectical talent which could bring order out of chaos, these young people [Reference to Berlin associates] put their trust; it was from him so they thought, that salvation was to come. . . . Certainly he thought so himself for a brief period of time. He would abandon art . . . deny his most recent love, Buddha. He would learn a manual trade to earn his living. Then he would expand his field of action, and go to the U.S.S.R. . . ."

\(^{19}\)Kazantzakis, Letter to E. Samios, 1927, H. Kazantzakis, Nikos Kazantzakis, p. 159.
of a man seeking to shape his life by words as if words alone would not merely report his life but become his life by the fiercest control that language can exert . . . the work of art he was seeking to create was really himself; his life was the explicit object that he tried to make in words. Constant writing became for him not a withdrawal from life, a compensation for life, a higher form of life, all of which it had been for so many writers since Romanticism identified the act of composition with personal salvation. It became a symbolic form of living . . . Writing was his great instrument, a prose that always took the form of personal experience, created wholly out of remembrance and its transfiguration, writing in which the record sought not only to commemorate an experience but to replace it . . . whatever the moment was, his expression of it was forged, worked over, soldered from fragmentary responses, to make those single sentences that were Thoreau's highest achievement, and indeed, his highest aim. For in such sentences, and not just by those sentences, a man could live. Each of Thoreau's sentences is a culmination of his life, the fruit of his hallucinated, perfect, all-too-perfect attachment to his local world; each was a precious particle of existence, existence pure, the life of Thoreau at the very heart. Each was victory over the long unconscious loneliness. . . . In the end was the word, only the word.  

The depth of Kazantzakis' attachment to his writing—from 1906 until his death in 1957 he left innumerable essays, several hundred encyclopedia articles, many newspaper articles, over forty children's classics translated plus two original schoolbooks and a reader, more than twenty other translations of some of the most important works in Western literature and thought, some twenty-one cantos, at least four screenplays, eleven or better tragedies and plays, twelve full length novels, the theological-philosophical The Saviors of God, plus his obra, The Odyssey, which runs to some 33,333 lines—seems to equal even Thoreau's literary addiction. This intense attachment of Kazantzakis and Thoreau to the word culminated, in a curious sort of way, in immobilizing both in the active sphere of life and politics. The devotion to writing, in which were recorded all the experiences, observations, dreams, and aspirations of powerful minds, not only became a substitute for children and home for Thoreau but ultimately became "Kazantzakis'
means of his own salvation."\(^{21}\) Yet underneath this sublimation were strong, uncompromising, righteous characters which broke through in similar manners.

Thoreau's movement was not Marxism but abolitionism and his hero-martyr was not Lenin but John Brown. The importance for Thoreau's writings of Brown as his alter-ego in the active sphere of life is widely recognized.\(^{22}\) Thoreau, while counseling others that the place for a just man in an unjust state was in prison, had not seen fit to place himself in direct jeopardy with governmental authority other than through his speeches and his celebrated one night in jail. He seemed to experience a vicarious pleasure through Brown's actions at Harper's Ferry and so closely identified with Brown that he would write--on the occasion of Brown's imprisonment and subsequent execution; "I put a piece of paper and pencil under my pillow, and when I could not sleep I wrote in the dark."\(^{23}\) Kazin says;

---


He wrote in the dark. Writing was what he had lived for, lived by, lived in. And now, when his unseen friend was being hanged in Charleston prison, he could only speak for him. The word was light, the word was the Church, and now the word was the deed. This was Thoreau's only contribution to the struggle that was not for John Brown's body but for righteousness... There was nothing Thoreau could do except to say these things... Thoreau said that "the cost of a thing is the amount of what I call life which is required to be exchanged for it, immediately, or in the long run." By that test Thoreau paid much to become the writer he did.24

Applying that test to Kazantzakis we find that he also paid much to become the writer he did.

This payment became evident when Kazantzakis was confronted with the vital brilliance of Lenin and all the pent-up righteousness, all the moral fervor, all the unused strength of purpose of Kazantzakis' character exploded in orgiastic fury into the only real outlet that it had—the word. These words and essays which issued on the occasion of Kazantzakis' trips in the 1920's to the Soviet Union are the strongest of any of Kazantzakis' writings. They depict the explosive release of all the frustrated violence so often found in man's solitary existence. The Soviets' attack on bourgeois society symbolized for Kazantzakis the basic struggles of good versus evil, of justice versus injustice. It was an apocalyptic event which represented in a single stroke the fruition of the many surface forces and undercurrents clashing in a badly divided and diffused psyche. Prevelakis says of Kazantzakis on this point:

His repressed desire for action often appears not only in his letters and in his plots, but also in the style of his language; he had not succeeded in releasing his messianism, but he had preserved its ardor. The drama of Kazantzantzakis' life up to this time—and even a little later—was that he was setting out in pursuit of his destiny at an age when others have created their work and through it have found release.25

25Prevelakis, Nikos Kazantzakis And His Odyssey, p. 127.
Much to Kazantzakis' horror, this movement which to him represented the highest form of vitality, justice, and morality was solidly attacked by not only bourgeoisie forces but also by many socialist forces as well. This movement which symbolized to Kazantzakis the inability of the true vision of pure evolutionary morality to compromise with the forces of injustice, and which attempted to crush the evil of bourgeois society was denounced in his native Greece and throughout much of the world. All the forces and institutions which Kazantzakis most despised rallied their powers and processes to smother the spirit of Marxism. The failure of Kazantzakis' attempt to become a revolutionary activist is signaled by his reaction to this opposition in that he turned back to words--speeches (in which he was rather ineffectual), essays, such as the "Apology," newspaper articles, and an attempt to found a socialist periodical--as weapons in the battle. The word was truly action for Kazantzakis and was his only contribution to the struggle. There was nothing Kazantzakis could contribute to the battle but these words for he, like Thoreau, was constitutionally incapable of forceful action. Words were described consistently by Kazantzakis in terms of two interesting and revealing metaphors--as spermatic and as military. Words performed a vital, liberating function for Kazantzakis. By them he freed himself from various agonies and ideas through creative literary expression. At one point he says of Zorba in a passage that applies equally well to all his works:

Mobilizing all my memories, retraveling all my travels, bringing back to mind all the great souls to whom I had lighted candles in my life, dispatching wave after wave of my blood to nourish the seed within me, I waited. I fed this seed with the precious honey I had collected from a lifetime of boring into the most fragrant and venomous of flowers. For the first time I tasted the true meaning of paternal love, and what
a fountainhead of eternity a son is... On the basis of this seed, this son, my fate would be determined.

And, regarding the military metaphor, words were in a true sense Kazantzakis' many legions. In Report he says: "Under my authority I had nothing but twenty-six lead soldiers, the twenty-six letters of the alphabet." His psychic enrollment of these forces into the battle for negativistic, action-oriented, end-dominated political movements, disregarding the ethics of means brings up the crucial question for Kazantzakis' thought of the implications of political violence.

The Responsibility of Means

The consequences for politics of such a disregard of the ethical and moral questions of political means are many and far-reaching. The most important implication comes from the act of defining what is politically permissible by one's own subjective conception of the correct goal of mankind. Here Kazantzakis advanced his doctrine of the imperative need to deliver man from his slavery in the transitional age to an extreme that the end justifies the means. This conclusion and the manner of Kazantzakis' arrival at it are evident in Japan-China, written one year after Spain: "As in science where a 'hypothesis,' even if it is wrong, causes the discovery of true natural laws, so a 'wrong' religion or political doctrine may give birth to a great civilization."

26 Kazantzakis, Report, p. 463.

27 Ibid., p. 482. Prevelakis, Nikos Kazantzakis And His Odyssey, footnote 133, pp. 181-82, suggests in an interesting passage that Buddha, Christ, and Lenin all personify for Kazantzakis "the universal power of the human word. . . . From statistics issued by UNESCO we learn, moreover, that from 1948 to 1955 Lenin has been translated 968 times; the Bible is second."

Kazantzakis did correctly perceive the need to bring about change, to free the oppressed, and to make the world more just. He failed at this point to see that the political "hypothesis" on which society proceeds is at least of equal importance as the goal it aims for in determining the outcome. The solution to injustice does not lie in the hypothesis of violence as attempted and advocated by the negativists of the world. Neither does the answer lie in standards of absolute eternal laws or in any right of those who on the basis of their individual judgements claim justification to interfere with, and kill if necessary, those less fortunate than themselves who do not perceive "true justice." The abolishment of archaic institutions and the making of society more just did not justify the wanton slaughter of the Spanish Civil War just as the establishment of a Republican government did not justify the use of terror in France in the eighteenth century, and just as some ephemeral future state did not justify the use of terror and liquidation camps by Stalin in the twentieth century.

One of the most eloquent and consistent opponents of this ethic of limitlessness in politics, of absolutist justice, whether preached by governments or individuals, and of the use of political violence, terror, and destruction for the realization of a new, more just order, has been Albert Camus. Camus, like Kazantzakis, addressed himself to the question of social justice on the philosophical level, but he arrived at a radically different conclusion. The elemental, most devastating, and most relevant attack that Camus levied at the ethic of murder for the sake of

justice was his belief that "pure and unadulterated virtue is homocidal." On the basis of this belief, proven true for Camus by the increasing excessiveness of violence and murder in the name of morality unleashed in the West by the French revolution and ever-growing since, Camus built a philosophy of freedom and revolt—with an intriguing view of the inherent limits and values of the two vis-a-vis a resolution of the human predicament. Perhaps the most moving and humanely expressive utterance of Camus on the human predicament and the role which justice and violence play in that predicament came in the form of one of his "Letters to A German Friend." In this letter he begins by describing, as Nietzsche had, the meaninglessness of the world and, in this initial cognizance, relates how he and his friend both thought for a long time that "this world had no ultimate meaning and that consequently we were cheated. I still think so in a way. But I came to different conclusions from the ones you used to talk about, which, for so many years now, you have been trying to introduce into history." It is in this difference of conclusions from the sympathetic recognition of absurdity wherein lies the ultimate and crucial choice for man and humanity's course. Camus continues:

You never believed in the meaning of this world, and you therefore deduced the idea that everything was equivalent and that good and evil could be defined according to human wishes. You supposed that in the absence of any human or divine code the only values were those of the animal world—in other words, violence and cunning. Hence, you concluded that man was negligible and thus his soul could be killed.

Camus has pinpointed the problem of individual license as a consequence


32 Ibid., p. 288.
of the absurd, whereby man, in his loneliness and hopelessness, succumbs
to the frenzied nihilistic urges generated therein and, in his rage, strikes
out to destroy everything. Whereas Camus' friend followed this route
through yielding to despair and surrendering his autonomy in Hitlerian
Germany, Camus chose the side of justice:

I continue to believe that his world has no ultimate meaning. But I
know that something in it has a meaning and that is man, because he
is the only creature to insist on having one. This world has at
least the truth of man, and our task is to provide its justifications
against fate itself. And it has no justification but man; hence he
must be saved if we want to save the idea we have of life. With your
scornful smile you will ask me: What do you mean by saving man? And
with all my being I shout to you that I mean not mutilating him and
yet giving a chance to the justice that man alone can conceive.13

This contrast of views between Camus and his German friend is crucial for
Camus' philosophy in that to Camus the fact that "from the same principle
we derived quite different codes" summarized the betrayal of his friend
of the solidarity, dignity, and courage of man in the face of the reali-
ation of the absurdist, meaningless character of human existence. This
firm elevation of the dictum "we are" of human solidarity, of the value
of courage, moderation and limits in rebellion is applied by Camus to the
issue of violent means as he states his ethics of rebellion--"The end
justifies the means? Possible. But what justifies the end? To this question
which historical thought leaves hanging, revolt replies: the means."34

Camus' writings reflect the most agonized and soul-searching confron-
tation of a contemporary humanist with the issue of violence. He sets forth
his doctrine of limits vis-a-vis political violence. Fred Wilhoite, who
has written extensively on Camus' political thought, believes that "Despite

33 Ibid., p. 289.
34 Camus, The Rebel, p. 292.
(Camus') profound attachment to and respect for human life, Camus was not a pacifist. He recognized that to adhere to absolute pacifism was to implicitly sanction the powers, oppressors, and tyrants that may exist at any given time. Camus works out the contrast between that view of violence represented by Kazantzakis and his view in Les Justes, a play based upon the Russian revolutionary terrorists of 1905. Stepan, the rabid totalitarian revolutionary proclaims his absolute freedom and limitlessness of action to those who were morally unable to murder innocent children:

There are no limits. The truth is that you don't really believe in the revolution. If you believed in it totally and completely, if you were certain that through our sacrifices and our victories we will create a Russia liberated from despotism, a land of freedom which in the end will cover the whole earth, if you did not doubt that man, liberated from his masters and his prejudices, would then turn toward heaven the visage of a true god, why would the death of two children matter in the least.36

Their deaths would matter precisely because ends do not justify any means. They would matter because, as Camus tells us through the young revolutionary poet Kaliayev, though he believes in the revolution

life continues to look wonderful to me. I love beauty and happiness. The revolution—certainly! But the revolution for life, to give life a chance. . . . We kill in order to build a world free of killing. We accept our guilt so that the earth may at last be covered with the innocent.37

There can be no headlong suspension of judgement as to the morality of an act of violence. The demands of the tension which the true rebel lives by


36Camus, quoted in ibid., p. 111.

37Ibid., p. 110.
and the standard that any such act must not add to the sum total of misery in the world must be observed and fulfilled.

The question which remains for us to answer as we obviously sympathize with Camus' view of violence rather than Kazantzakis' is: If one limits, as Camus does, the use of violence as a means to free the oppressed and better the human condition—which after all was the worthy goal of Kazantzakis—what is one to do in the face of an organized resistance? Wilhoite has addressed himself—at least in an implicit way—to this crucial issue:

He (Camus) did not believe that men are justified in shattering intentionally the complicity that exists among them by virtue of their sharing a common fate. The simple existence of physical life was in his view unquestionably good; in fact it is the ultimate of human knowledge and experience. . . .

and,

At the heart of Camus' constructive political thought is not a program or a doctrine, but certain values, and above all a spirit of "measure"—a determination to remain faithful to the limits of human nature. The rebel realized that a quest for total justice inevitably debases men and altogether negates justice. But as a combatant against unhappiness and oppression the rebel cannot resign himself simply to ignoring and living with the injustices of society. The true rebel undertakes the difficult task of finding a middle way between amoral revolutionism and passively immoral quietism. He remains acutely aware that as a finite being located within the historical process he cannot transcend its fluxes and relativities so as to comprehend its total meaning, and thereby be justified in attempting to force his fellows into the mold of a universal pattern. Man's enterprises are at best calculated risks, for even the best of intentions are sometimes betrayed into the commission of gross injustice.38

One does not negate the evil in the world by more evil but by goodness, courage, and compassion. One does not render the world better by impulsive and headlong murderous escapades. One does not lessen the injustice in the world by further injustice and one does not lighten the burden of misery which is an essential part of the human condition by terror. Neither the

paths of Camus' German friend who "supposed that in the absence of any human or divine code the only values were those of the animal world," or Kazantzakis who, in his moral fervor, exalted in the dissolution of the hateful institutions of his age—

We are living in a critical, violent moment of history; an entire world is crashing down, another has not yet been born. Our epoch is not a moment of equilibrium in which refinement, reconciliation, peace, and love might be fruitful virtues... We can no longer fit into old virtues and hopes, into old theories and actions. The wind of devastation is blowing; this is the breath of our God today... it shouts: "Prepare yourselves! War! It's War!" This is our epoch, good or bad, beautiful or ugly, rich or poor—we did not choose it. This is our epoch, the air we breathe, the mud given us, the bread, the fire, the spirit! ... It is our lot to have fallen on fighting times. Let us tighten our belts, let us arm our hearts, our minds, and our bodies. Let us take our place in the battle! War is the lawful sovereign of our age.39

nor the path of apathy, withdrawal, and "passively immoral quietism," as Wilhoite aptly phrased it, are the proper paths to--at one and the same time--affirming the value of life together, freeing the oppressed, and avoiding adding to the sum total of injustice in the world. What man must do Camus tells us in the concluding passage of The Rebel with almost unbearable power and beauty:

At this moment, when each of us must fit an arrow to his bow and enter the lists anew, to reconquer within history and in spite of it, that which he owns already, the thin yield of his fields, the brief love of this earth, at this moment when at last a man is born, it is time to forswake our age and its adolescent furies. The bow bends; the wood complains. At the moment of supreme tension, there will leap into flight an unswerving arrow, a shaft that is inflexible and free.40

Fortunately for those who admire Kazantzakis and agree with Camus, Kazantzakis' mature thought on the means to be used in bettering the lot of man proved quite different from the position described so far and, in fact, resembles markedly Camus' position sketched above.

40Camus, The Rebel, p. 306.
While it is nearly impossible to identify a certain point in time when an individual's position on any one issue undergoes a transformation, in the extant case 1936 to 1938 seem to be the crucial years which marks Kazantzakis' surpassing of his earlier amoral, violent, end-oriented approach to political questions for a deeply spiritual, means-oriented approach. This recognition of these years as a watershed of political maturation is touched on by Hadgopoulos who—without fully developing the issue of means and ends in Kazantzakis' thought—describes his changed view. She turns to the Prometheus Trilogy, written in 1937-1938, for substantiation;

Prometheus, for Kazantzakis, is an example of one who wanted to save the world, but failed to do so, and now is nailed to memory's rock and shouts in pain. Kazantzakis' Prometheus had wanted to destroy a suffering world in order to create a calm world where suffering men could find repose; he had used violent means for a peaceful goal and had failed—as do all such methods which attempt to establish an absolute through totalitarian means. It is this figure of Prometheus as symbolic of totalitarianism, bearing whatever good, which Kazantzakis comes to reject in the adventures of his Odysseus. Kazantzakis' Prometheus is a resplendent, shining rebel, a luminous figure. . . . Prometheus says to Odysseus that there always remains the last bloody ax, a God of violence, even beyond death. Kazantzakis shows with his Prometheus the idea of terrestrial power (enforced by the mention of the dragon, his symbol of earthly power) as a never-ending fire of violence, the legacy of Prometheus. 41

While the infinitely malleable Prometheus figure symbolized the failure of violent means, Odysseus—The Odyssey was completed, as previously noted, in 1938—expresses through his adventures, as Hadgopoulos implies, both earlier and later stages of Kazantzakis' thought, with Book XVI—in which the ideal city is destroyed and Odysseus once more resumes his journey—being the fulcrum. The violent excesses which characterized the

preceding books no longer appear. Odysseus is imbued with a new
spirit of measure once his city is destroyed and no longer seeks to
forcibly remake the world into a utopian mold. Hadgopoulos continues;
"Kazantzakis implies that only the fire of the spirit can lead to true
change and that the fire and ax together lead to destruction but not
to fruition." This emphasis by Kazantzakis on the forceful power of
the fire of the spirit rather than the power of violence becomes a
central theme in Kazantzakis' works of the 1940's and 1950's. Thus in
the late 1930's Kazantzakis arrived at the last of his three staged view
--following Buddhist apoliticism and revolutionary activism--on aiding
mankind in the quest for freedom in which unity and brotherhood as well
as individual responsibility become increasingly important concepts in
his thought.

Writing to Prevelakis during that era Kazantzakis looked back on these
developmental stages. Following nationalist and Buddhist enthralment;

From approximately 1923 to 1933 . . . I was part of the left wing
(never a communist . . . I never caught that intellectual pox). The
pale shadow I felt beside me was P. Istrati. Now I am passing through
the third stage—will it be the last? I call it freedom. No shadow.
Only my own . . . I have ceased to identify my soul's fortunes—my
salvation—with the fortunes of this or that idea. I know that ideas
are inferior to a creative soul. Kazantzakis drew sustenance from the discarded intellectual, religious,
and political husks which he left strewn in his ascendant wake. Bien
makes clear the self-creation of Kazantzakis' journey:

Kazantzakis' walk through political experience enabled him to meet
himself: to actualize his own personal potentialities for mature,
meaningful idealism; to understand his previous immaturity; and, through

\[42\] Ibid., p. 64.

\[43\] Kazantzakis, quoted in Bien, The Politics of Twentieth Century
Novelists, ed. Panichas, p. 142.
this understanding—which after all is a spiritual accomplishment—to fulfill his need to transcend the flesh and be free. By taking the long way round, he came home; by walking through others, he walked through himself.\textsuperscript{44}

Let us look closer at precisely what Kazantzakis' ultimate position is—in view of his spiritual arrival at "mature, meaningful idealism"—on the issue of political means, its manifestations in his later works, and the reasons supporting his changed view.

Mature Idealism

The question of means is explored in The Last Temptation of Christ. Judas, the firebrand revolutionary, casts his lot with Jesus because he believes Jesus has the following and fortitude to lead a successful revolt against the Romans. Jesus slowly leads Judas to understand that violent revolution is not the way but that the spiritual revolution brought about by his sacrifice as God's son will bring about the desired end of justice:

"If the soul within us does not change, Judas, the world outside us will never change. The enemy is within, the Romans are within, salvation starts from within."\textsuperscript{45} Therefore, Jesus enlists Judas' aid in making certain

\textsuperscript{44}Ibid., p. 143. Kazantzakis, Report, p. 470, came to understand the creative course of his journey; "Had nothing gone to waste, then? Considered separately, each of my intellectual ramblings and sidewise tacks seemed wasted time, the product of an unjelled, disordered mind. But now I saw that considered all together they constituted a straight and unerring line which knew full well that only by sidewise tacks could it advance over this uneven earth. And my infidelities toward the great ideas—I had abandoned them after being successively fascinated and disillusioned—taken all together these infidelities constituted an unshakable faith in the essence. It seemed that luck (how shall we call it? not luck, but destiny) had eyes and compassion; it had taken me by the hand and guided me. Only now did I understand where it had guided me and what it expected me to do. It expected me to hear the Cry of the future, to exert every effort to divine what that Cry wanted, why it was calling, and where it invited us to go."

the crucifixion will occur. Other instances in the 1940's support our theme of change. In the early 1940's Kazantzakis revised The Saviors of God and deleted reference to it as a "metacommunist creed." This signaled that his activist, ideological fervor of the mid-1920's, when the work was written, was ended. In the late 1940's upon hearing of Gandhi's murder, Kazantzakis cried out;

the world has contracted. Four bullets have deeply wounded the worldwide conscience. . . . In such a materialistic, greedy, amoral world as the present one, it was only natural that the hero of nonviolence be killed by violence. . . . The doctrine of peace and love in such a miserable era arouses and organizes hatred, so it seems. The dark forces have been unleashed—the blind Titans—and every noble endeavor increases their fury tenfold.46

Still another manifestation of Kazantzakis' increasing allegiance to the moving power of the spirit was his mounting appreciation of St. Francis, of whom he wrote The Poor Man of God, and Albert Schweitzer, whom he knew and loved. Linking the two as noble spiritual hero-models of medieval and modern times respectively Kazantzakis praised both as possessing "the philosopher's stone which transmutes the basest metals into gold, and gold into spirit."47 Paeans to the spirit also resound throughout both Report and "The Immortal Free Spirit of Man." Evident in all these is Kazantzakis' increasing concern over the responsibility of means. This concern reached its culmination in The Fraticides, the last and most political of all Kazantzakis' works, in which is found the most extensive and rewarding examination of spiritual versus violent means and of proper ends.

The Fraticides, a dramatization of the Greek Civil War following World War II, centers around two groups in opposition. They are the communist guerrillas, the red tops, in the hills, and the nationalist

47 Kazantzakis, quoted in ibid., p. 535.
troops, the black tops, of the village of Castello. The Captain of the nationalists, and Loukas, assistant to Captain Drakos who leads the rebels, represent—as Stepan represented in Camus' *Les Justes*—the path of violence, hate, and terror. The former, as he slays communist guerrillas, asserts, "The end justifies the means, and our end is the salvation of Greece." The latter, as with equal dedication he kills nationalist troops, argues, "The true communist does not falter when he sees injustice; he accepts it if that injustice helps our cause, everything is for the cause—everything for victory." Captain Drakos, i.e., the young Kazantzakis, wavers between Loukas' view and a more humane, compassionate belief. Although leading a fierce band he experiences doubts concerning their destructive tactics and wonders "was it possible that this was not the right road." In answering Loukas, who is trying to oust him partly for his doubts, Captain Drakos issues a ringing manifesto to humanity reminiscent of Kaliayev's rebuttal of Stepan:

"That's going to be our downfall!" So the end justifies the means, does it? We should go ahead with injustice to reach justice, eh? We should go on with slavery to reach freedom? I hate to say this, but that attitude is going to destroy the cause. It hasn't been very long since I began to realize that if the means we use to reach our goal are dishonest, our cause becomes dishonest. Because the cause is not a piece of fruit, that hangs ripe and ready at the end of the road for us to pick; no, no, never! The cause is a fruit that ripens with each deed, that takes the dignity or the vulgarity of each of our deeds. The path we take will give the shape and flavor and taste to the fruit, and fill it with either honey or poison.

---


49 Ibid., p. 235.

50 Ibid., p. 198.

51 Ibid., pp. 235-36.
Drakos, unlike Kaliyev, follows the path of violence for so long that he becomes "poisoned" and when, at the climax of the story he alone can stop the bloodshed, the fratricidal demon he has nourished within himself screams for blood and the slaughter continues. Kazantzakis divides characterizations in *The Fratricides* as he did so successfully in *Zorba*. He presents through the figure of Father Yanaros the divine element in man in opposition to the evil portrayed by the previously mentioned characters. Father Yanaros, i.e., the mature Kazantzakis, is the priest of Castello and natural father of Captain Drakos. His task is to discover God's road to ending the fratricidal horror—whether it be resistance or capitulation on the part of the villagers. Father Yanaros pits the forces of love, brotherhood, and the divine spirit of man against the forces of evil as he turns the village over to the rebels to stop the slaughter. He sees Drakos betray that trust by breaking their agreement and slaughtering several village elders in the name of freedom and justice. Father Yanaros rails against this—"Tyranny, force and the whip? So that is how we get freedom? No, No, I won't accept that." He pays for this opposition with his life. We must not be misled, however, by Father Yanaros into believing that ineffectual quietism was Kazantzakis' path. This is not so as proven by still another work of the same era, *The Greek Passion*.

In *The Greek Passion* Kazantzakis pits Greek refugees, i.e., proletariat, against the well-to-do Greeks of the village of Lykovrisi, i.e., bourgeoisie, and relates how the latter drive away their dispossessed brethren. Toward the end of the work the refugees, facing starvation, assault Lykovrisi.

52 Ibid., p. 248.
only to be repulsed and have to resume their quest for a new community.

Violence proves unable to rectify the situation. But, like Camus, Kazantzakis does not totally reject violence. The central figure of the work, Priest Fotis, summarizes in a revealing passage Kazantzakis' view:

There was a time when I too, use to say: "Why struggle for this life here below? What does the world matter to me? I am an exile from Heaven and I yearn to go home to my country?" But later I understood. No one can go to heaven unless he has first been victorious upon earth, and no one can be victorious upon earth if he does not struggle against it with fire, with patience without resting. Man has only earth for a springboard if he would fly up to heaven. All the priests Grigorises, the Ladases, the Aghas, the big proprietors, are the forces of evil which it has been allotted us to combat. If we throw down our arms, we're lost, here below on earth and up there in the sky.53

The Greek refugees, under the leadership of Priest Fotis, exhaust all possible avenues of rectification before turning to the avenue of violence. With Prometheus, Odysseus, Jesus, St. Francis, and Father Yanaros, Priest Fotis testifies to Kazantzakis' abandonment of his youthful end-dominated politics. Theirs are resounding voices lifted in unison to the responsibility of means and the moving force of the spirit of man. The question remaining is why did Kazantzakis' change his position so radically?

There are several reasons for Kazantzakis' turnabout on the issue under discussion. One is his increasing return, in the 1940's, to an exploration of Christian teachings. Another is his insistent concern over the inner man. Also of importance was the widespread devastation, experienced first-hand by Kazantzakis on Aegina, of World War II. A more important reason lies in Kazantzakis' twofold realization--perhaps as an outgrowth of the above concerns--of the imperative need for unity and the sobering acceptance that by acquiescing in that unity in the face of the chaotic nature of the

world one necessarily accepts some limits, some measure, on his egocentric existence. This is evident in Kazantzakis' comments on his friendship with Angelos Sikelanos. Kazantzakis describes Sikelanos as content in the naive conceit of his superiority as a literatist. Sikelanos does not seek the ascent, the summit, for he believes he has attained it, and is not concerned with the metaphysical void facing man and history: "I said to him one day, 'The great difference between us, Angelos, is this: you believe you have found salvation, and believing this, you are saved; I believe that salvation does not exist, and believing this, I am saved.'"54 Believing himself immortal, Sikelanos transformed all questions into egocentric terms, "mine, mine, and me, me was my friend's terrible prison, a dungeon without windows or doors;" therefore, Kazantzakis tries to free his friend by telling him of the highest peak a man can reach, "conquer the self, the ego. When we reach that peak, and only then, Angelos, we shall be saved."55 This is so because the "Spirit is not called Me, it is called All of us."56 In this difference of approach by Sikelanos and Kazantzakis lies a crucial distinction between Kazantzakis' view of means from the 1920's to the 1940's leading to a more compassionate politics on Kazantzakis' part. Focusing more and more on the unity of mankind, Kazantzakis came to realize that the violence he had sanctioned irrevocably shattered that unity. Kazantzakis had earlier realized that one must save oneself before he can save others and with the realization of the imperative need for unity among men came the corollary understanding that "the

54 Kazantzakis, Report, p. 192.
55 Ibid., p. 196.
56 Ibid., p. 192.
sole way to save oneself is to save others.” Even more important as an explanation of Kazantzakis' political maturation than either his return to Christian themes, his concern with the inner man, or his emphasis on unity, is his artistic maturation.

With Kazantzakis' reflection on his failure as an actor came greater self-understanding of his true literary nature. The decade between _Toda Raba_ in 1931, which is a novelized account of Kazantzakis' Marxism, and _Zorba_ in the early 1940's is one of artistic growth in that Kazantzakis increasingly, though perhaps unwillingly, becomes more and more the artist and less and less the activist. Bien discusses this transition which is, in the main, accomplished by the time of _Zorba_. Kazantzakis accepts his role as artist and much subdued now is the hysterical fervor of the early works in which his personal obsessions tended to vitiate the execution and which seemed determined to reform the world then and there.

[Zorba] is a crucial fulcrum in Kazantzakis' career since it so openly records his passage from embroilment to serenity: the distanced noninvolvement of the artist, the events and people the book records are Kazantzakis' agonized tightrope-dance between activism and Buddhistic withdrawal.

The immobilizing character of rationality, of adherence to ideas, of compensation for life by intellectual and literary constructs—Thoreau's payment—is a theme brilliantly worked on time and time again by Kazantzakis throughout _Zorba_. The Boss, i.e., Kazantzakis, represents one who has withdrawn into the world of intellectualism, has denied his passions, has become enmeshed by the cumulative socio-religious culture that has been constructed to give to the void purpose, to fill the void. He recognizes this enmeshment as he tries, to recall a previously cited passage, to free himself of "all these phantoms . . . Buddhas, Gods, Motherlands, Ideas. . . .

Woe to him who cannot free himself from Buddhas, Gods, Motherlands, and

---

57Ibid., p. 486.
Ideas." He is led to face his surrendered state by Zorba who, uncontaminated by learning and esoteric intellectualism, has instinctively overcome the void and followed the trembling of his passions:

Zorba's personality, prodigal, instinctual, highly curious and dynamic, haunted Kazantzakis' very antithetical personality. In hearing and seeing Zorba's carefree philosophy, characterized by Kierkegaard as the philosophy of the 'existing individual,' Kazantzakis could only laugh at himself and at every intellectual.59

The manner in which Kazantzakis expresses and, to some extent, cognitively copes with the problem of the emasculating character of too-intense a devotion to a literary life on his part and that of his master, Nietzsche, is dealt with in such an intriguing manner by Poulakidas that it deserves reproduction:

Zarathustra lives in isolation, does not relate himself to others, and yet wants to mingle with people. One would dare to say that if Zarathustra would ever act he would be healed of his philosophy, which does not grow out of his own experiences and adventures but out of his thoughts. Zarathustra is primarily a thinker and not a doer. One can even say that if Nietzsche had only acted, had he been but a "hippie" of his time, had he engaged in the social activism of his day, his end would not have been as pathetic, as unrealistic as it was. Thus, his overman remains a reality only on paper. However much Kazantzakis admires this philosopher (He went on a pilgrimage to Nietzsche's holy land), Kazantzakis realizes what Nietzsche has failed to do, and as an artistic surgeon, he operates on Zarathustra, separating his two selves and making both integral, functional, and human in Zorba the Greek. Having had in mind a definite model of Zarathustra's overman and an embodiment of Zarathustra's theory, he mobilizes George Zorba in the character of Alexis to play this role, and having realized that Zarathustra's other self was like himself, Kazantzakis casts himself in the role of the Boss. . . . the Boss, like Kazantzakis, remains an incurable bookworm and pen-pusher; and Zarathustra, like Nietzsche, loses himself in his sub-conscious world of apocalyptic dreams and terrifying visions. Only Zorba is alive and conscious of the reality of life and death, and has never been contaminated by 'learning.' The other four can say that they have slammed the door behind them, but one knows that such a door to intellectual activities has not been tightly shut. The Boss informs Zorba that "The old goat within me has still got a lot of paper to chew over." He hopes that one day he

too will get tired of books. Zarathustra also acknowledges the same truth and hope. . . . Zarathustra, like Nietzsche, despises learning and writing, and yet, Zarathustra, like Nietzsche, continues to intellectualize. They cannot give themselves fully to life and action.

With Kazantzakis' recognition of his literary nature came not only greater sophistication in his work but more power as the "messianic ardor" of which Prevelakis spoke was harnessed to a moving, dramatic, and unquenchable thirst for expression:

Kazantzakis stands like a colossus, or like a mountain. Everything about him was big. The main difference between Kazantzakis and the most of the younger writers is a matter of will. This word is so important that I should print it in letters two feet high. Most of the writers of the 20th century are so defeated; they look around sadly, and make a gesture of despair. They seem to shrivel like leaves when Kazantzakis roars: 'Ahoy, cast wretched sorrow, prick up your ears!' This monster, this uncouth giant, is a living symbol of man's greatness, of his capacity to rise above self-pity. He is even more important because he is so obviously human. Of Goethe and Tolstoy,

---

60Ibid., pp. 234-35. Other commentators have discovered this surgeon like portrayal of the intellectual-literatist and the passionate luxuriate in Kazantzakis' make-up as the central theme of Zorba. C. N. Stavrou, "The Limits of the Possible: Nikos Kazantzakis' Arduous Odyssey," Southwest Review, LVII (Winter 1972), p. 63, states that in "Zorba the Greek, the author-narrator constantly berates himself for his inability to espouse a life of the senses." Joseph Blenkinsopp, "My Entire Soul Is A Cry," Commonweal, XCI (February 26, 1971), p. 515, wonders while reading Zorba whether the Boss will complete his manuscript, learn to dance, learn to love, and sever the strings to be drawn into Zorba's world? "The dramatic climax ought to come (it does in the movie) with the Nietzschean moment of the collapse of the cableline and ensuing dance on the shore. Only at this point the author is defeated by his own autobiographical honesty. He was too much convinced that writing was a second-order activity, a faute de mieux; he tells us elsewhere that when he came to know Zorba at the age of thirty-four it was already too late; he had degenerated into an incurable pen-pusher. And so the Boss, though turned on by Zorba, was not driven out of his wretched mind." Colin Wilson, The Strength To Dream (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1960), p. 208, believes that Kazantzakis was all his life ashamed "of being a 'pen-pusher,' and hankered after the life of action. . . . This same self-division is apparent in . . . Zorba the Greek. . . . Most of the book is taken up with the adventures of Zorba, a kind of lesser Ulysses, healthy, happy, roguish, loving women, wine and food, completely lacking in self-division, while Kazantzakis struggles with an epic about the Buddha and renunciation. . . . Kazantzakis . . . is the unhappy intellectual, who never makes the effort to heal his own self-division and become reconciled to the 'original sin' that makes him at once greater and less happy than Zorba."
one can think: 'Ah yes, they were lucky—they were born strong.' And of Shaw, most people say: 'He was strong because he was heartless. But Kazantzakis was not born a giant; he made himself into a giant. Again and again he loses confidence, comes to despair, then gradually straightens his shoulders and stretches his arms until his fears roll off his back.61

It is the colossus-like stature of Kazantzakis, his giant yet compassionate will, his being a "living symbol of man's greatness" in an age of anguish, alienation, despair and small souls, that makes Kazantzakis' ideas on freedom, unity, and the human condition an important political philosophy.

The various tenets of this political philosophy, Kazantzakis' mature idealism, is what we examine in succeeding chapters. This political thought is expressed within an intellectual framework of Kazantzakis' theory of the transitional age, the culpability of the scientific ethos for the transitional predicament, and a classic view of the relation of art to politics in bettering the human situation. These issues are the central

61Colin Wilson, "The Greatness of Nikos Kazantzakis," Minnesota Review, VIII (1968), pp. 179-80. This enormous will to expression is why what Thomas L. King, "Kazantzakis' Prometheus Trilogy: The Ideas And Their Dramatic Rendering" (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Indiana University, 1970), pp. 157-60, says of Kazantzakis is perceptive. He sought to use all the devices available both to the writer and to the theatre to express his thought. He has not limited himself to the conventional dramatic style of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, nor has he limited himself to the devices of the poet and the novelist. Instead he has embodied his ideas in drama by producing a complex mixture of as many of those devices available to the creative artist as he could include. He uses poetry, prose, narrative, description, choral utterance, film, the sounds of nature (particularly of birds and the sea) dialogue, lengthy single-character exposition and soliloquy, masks, interaction of characters, and all the lights and sounds of the theatre to produce a drama that cares little for the niceties of logical construction or the separation of artistic media. He does not limit himself to what is, in the strictest sense, purely dramatic. He piles effect on top of effect, sometimes simultaneously, to produce a rush of effects all designed to create both an arresting spectacle and a vehicle for his ideas. The drama of Kazantzakis is a drama in which the novelist and poet strain at the bonds of the dramatic and the dramatist utilizes all the devices of the theatre to make the vision of the novel and poem come alive."

concern of Chapter III. Kazantzakis charts a course from the ills, meaninglessness, and terrors of contemporary life. This course can only begin within the problems of the transitional age.
CHAPTER III

POETRY, PROPHECY, AND POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

At the end of World War Two Kazantzakis was invited by the British Council of Letters, an official agency that sends and receives artistic and intellectual representatives in furthering British culture, to visit England and survey the intellectual resources of the country. While there he wrote England, met the leading minds of the country, and made three addresses over the B.B.C. One of these addresses was subsequently published in the English periodical Life And Letters under the title "The Immortal Free Spirit of Man" and contained the questionnaire Kazantzakis intended for British writers and men of science. It is from the cumulative picture of Kazantzakis' outlook presented in these questions that we have taken the title of this chapter and we know of no better way of prefacing the ensuing discussion than with Kazantzakis' questionnaire.

Therefore, I address this appeal to all intellectuals of good faith throughout the whole world. And I ask the following questions, confident that the answers will facilitate a broad international cooperation of the spirit:

1. Do you believe we are living at the end of an historical epoch or at the beginning of a new one? And in either case, what do you think are the characteristic traits?
2. Can literature, art or theoretical thought influence the present movement of history? Or do they merely mirror existing conditions?
3. If you believe that thought and art do influence reality, in what direction do you think they should lead the development of the spirit in your own country?
4. What do you think is the positive contribution that British thought and art can offer the world?
5. What is the level of contact between the British intellectuals and the large mass of the people? And what could be done to broaden
this basis of contact?
6. What is the foremost duty of the intellectual and the artist today? How can they contribute to the peaceful cooperation of all peoples?
7. Would it be practical to establish an "International of the Spirit?" And if it is practical, are you willing to collaborate in it?¹

As with so many of Kazantzakis' attempts at political organization, his proposal for an International of the Spirit met with little response. However, in many ways, as will become increasingly obvious, our entire exploration of Kazantzakis' political thought revolves around the manner in which he himself answered these basic questions.

Transitional Age: A Philosophy of History

As we have seen, Kazantzakis placed much importance on birth in an "interesting epoch." For many reasons he believed the era of his lifetime to be such an epoch—a crucial age of historical transition. His political philosophy, his literary activity, and his personal odyssey were all deeply influenced by this basic belief. Kazantzakis brought his sense of historical transition to bear on the problems of his age and deciphered "the painful, inexorable meaning of our time: that we are faced with the end of a civilization and the symptoms that always manifest themselves in times of decadence."² This view is consistently stated with little variation throughout his works in, among others, The Saviors of God in 1925, Toda Raba in 1931, The Odyssey in 1938, "The Immortal Free Spirit of Man" in 1946, and Report in 1956. In exploring this philosophy of history we want to focus on intellectual sources and the perceived causes and symptoms of the end of civilization.

²Kazantzakis, Toda Raba, p. 116.
Many thinkers contributed to Kazantzakis' concept of the transitional age. Nietzsche reinforced Kazantzakis' instinctual epochal inclinations with his depiction of the death of God and the intermediate age of nihilism. Bergson contributed the idea of dynamic evolution which implicitly connoted crucial developmental stages in world consciousness. Buddha taught that life existed between twin abyss's of nothingness and by inference man's history also existed as luminous intervals between non-existence. In addition, two thinkers whom Kazantzakis first came into contact with in Berlin in 1922 to 1924 presented crucial elaborations of the idea of epochal historical moments. They were Marx and Spengler. Those Marxists revolutionary's, Itka, Rahel, Elsa, Leah, and Dina, whom Kazantzakis became involved with in Berlin impressed upon him the vigor and dynamism of Marxism. Such vitality proffered a stark alternative to the Buddhist escapism he was at that time inclined toward. It was through Marx that Kazantzakis was introduced to Hegel and Feuerbach, for as one commentator on Marxian thought has said, Marxism might perhaps be epitomized as "Hegelianism mediated by Feuerbach's critique of Hegel." Marx pursued his early studies during a time of near complete Hegelian domination of German thought and if one of Marx's era was not of Hegelian persuasion, he was at the very least forced to focus and formulate his ideas around

---

3Kazantzakis, Report, p. 369, recounts Itka's rabid scorn of Buddha when he told her; "I know another Messiah who delivers man from hunger and also from satiety, from injustice and also from justice. And what is most important, from all Messiahs."

"And his name is . . ."

"Buddha!"

She smiled disdainfully, then said in an angry voice, "I've heard of him. He's a ghost. My messiah is made of flesh and blood."

the arguments of the Hegelians of the day. Hegel's elevation of man's consciousness, his emphasis on the progressivistic movement of the world spirit, and his ideas of the transformation of the world were vivid and controversial.

David McLellan's objective study of Marx's early writings in their historical context has traced the persistence of Hegelian themes through both the early and late Marx. McLellan identifies several factors which blocked this recognition of Marx's Hegelianism until the 1920's. One was the lack of availability of Marx's early writings. Another was the positivists and neo-Kantian liberals attack on Hegel's mystical philosophy in the late nineteenth century. A third, political reason, was the leading communists' reluctance to view Marx as a student of Hegel and therefore a participant in the bourgeois philosophical tradition. Thus the practically-minded revisionists, such as Bernstein, had no time for Hegel, even had they been able to understand him. Kautsky and the orthodox Marxists arrived at the same result for very different reasons, those of doctrinal purity; they wished to be able to preach a scientific socialism free of any ethical or metaphysical elements. Lenin had certainly studied Hegel in his Swiss exile, but there was not much evidence of influence either in his theory or in his practice.

Paradoxically, in view of the many prominent Marxists' ignorance of Hegel, Marx's enduring value comes from his borrowing from Hegel. Although Marx's theory of the revolutionary role for the proletariat engendered by economic forces has been rendered obsolete; "Nevertheless, the second of Marx's major analyses, and the one most evident in his early writings, that of alienation, has acquired an importance far greater than he imagined." According to Erich Fromm, "the thinker who coined the concept of alienation

---


6Ibid., p. 213.
was Hegel. However, as Fromm and others hasten to point out, alienation as discussed by Hegel, Feuerbach, and Marx takes on varied meaning. Hegel as a pre-eminent philosopher of idealism locates alienation in man's consciousness of his involvement with the world. That is

the identification of labor itself with alienation... results from Hegel's idealistic presupposition that man is essentially a conscious being and that the object of consciousness is merely self-consciousness objectified. From this presupposition it follows that any relation to an extrinsic object, any involvement with an external world, is an alienation of man. Thus the whole humanization process, according to Hegel, becomes an evolution from consciousness of the object to self-consciousness, and the genesis of man is reduced to a reappropriation of objectivity.

From this view of Hegel one sees that the locus of Hegelian alienation lies in his emphasis on spiritual consciousness. Also evident is the extreme extent to which Hegel was radically idealistic and the extent to which he rejected the material world. Hegel's idealism and the consequential rejection of the natural, material world were challenged by one of his philosophical successors—Ludwig Feuerbach.

Feuerbach proposed a philosophy of humanism that was necessarily anthropocentric and repudiated the historical emphasis on an other-worldly Supreme Being. He reversed the idealism-materialism, other-world real-world dichotomies established by Hegel and emphasized the material, external, natural world in which man lived as the only proper, truly meaningful locus of man's actions. In a similar vein Feuerbach turned his attention away from speculations on an Absolute Spirit, God, or Omniscient Reason, which dictates and determines through history the course of mankind. Marx followed Feuerbach's lead in placing man in the world, in turning Hegel on his

---


head. Yet the comprehensiveness inherent in the Hegelian system and the eschatological bent were both adopted by Marx in the formulation of his philosophical system. Using Hegel's dialectic and Feuerbach's materialism he constructed a revolutionary philosophy of history in which man seizes his humaneness:

The world of phenomena having been shown to be a world of human alienation, the revolutionary imperative took shape as a call to end human alienation by changing the world. It now said that a world in which man is everywhere estranged from himself and exists only as 'non-man' ought to be transformed into a new world of humanism in which alienation would be overcome and man could realize his nature as man.9

From this vantage point Marx made his critique of the historical predicament which Raymond Aron has called "an analysis and an interpretation of capitalistic society in terms of its current functioning, its present structure, and its necessary evolution."10 Marx based his critique, revolutionary philosophy, and dialectical materialism on the role that labor plays in men's lives, "the productive life is the life of the species. It is life engendering life."11 Using these component elements of his system both as analytical devices for the past and predictive tools for the future Marx issued his grand historical theory which held that class relations and the religious, legal, philosophical, political, social, ideological concepts of the superstructure are based on the productive forces of the substructure in society. Thus man's history moves in accordance with developments in the productive forces always toward a higher integration,

9Tucker, Philosophy And Myth In Karl Marx, p. 100.


i.e., synthesis, of freedom with occasional lapses or zig-zags of history and with apocalyptic epochs of qualitative changes occurring periodically until the final realization of the City of God on earth—the communist society.

Communism is the positive transcendence of private property, of human self estrangement, and therefore is the real appropriation of the human essence by and for man; communism therefore is the complete return of man to himself as a social (i.e., human) being—a return become conscious, and accomplished within the entire wealth of previous development. This communism, as fully-developed naturalism, equals humanism, and as fully-developed humanism equals naturalism; it is the genuine resolution of the conflict between man and nature and between man and man—the true resolution of the strife between existence and necessity, between the individual and the species. Communism is the riddle of history solved, and it knows itself to be this solution.12

Marx's ambitious solution of "the riddle of history" aroused great emotional empathy in the compassionate Kazantzakis in the midst of the squalor and chaos of post-World War I Berlin. He wrote his first wife, Galetete, of the widespread misery;

with what emotion I see the people here suffering from hunger and despair. What misery, my God, and how long will it last? Today, for example, I went to buy a paper, and a little girl about 14 entered carrying on her back a sack full of packages. I approached to help her unload it, but I couldn't carry the load. The little girl smiled, but her body was already deformed, her shoulders were crooked, her legs were like reeds.

Yesterday, a woman was sitting on the edge of the sidewalk, one leg over the other, and underneath one could see a horrifying grey petticoat, and her whole body, up to the navel, stark naked. She was sad and cynical and pained from hunger. What a luxury, really, to concern yourself with shame and nakedness while you are dying of hunger! Such shame or modesty is reserved for the rich. Oh, how well I understand this 'sister' of our new religion [ref. communism]. It would be better for the earth to vanish. To have the firmament purged from the infamy of contemporary life.13

This dramatic combination of intense, dehumanizing poverty and Marx's

12 Ibid., p. 102.

apocalyptic vision deeply influenced Kazantzakis' view of history. An equally apocalyptic vision to solve the "riddle of history" by Oswald Spengler was the other primary source of Kazantzakis' philosophy of history.

Spengler's doctrine of the mortality of civilizations was the great intellectual development of post-World War I Europe. Prevelakis documents the manner in which Kazantzakis was repeatedly confronted with the idea:

Kazantzakis felt it for the first time in Germany, during the tragic years of inflation and hunger, and he accepted it intellectually with the aid of Spengler. The Decline of the West (in the German edition of 1923) was one of the books he brought back on his return home. When French thought, in its turn, took up the subject, Kazantzakis—who always kept abreast of new ideas in French literature—was able to perceive it even more clearly, in, for instance, such illuminating works as Paul Valery's Prologue to the Persian Letter (1926), Glances at the World Today (1931), and other essais quasi politiques. In Greece, also, Kazantzakis saw now and then that the gloomy prognostic of the end of Western civilization was having an effect on the sensibility and thought of his contemporaries—in a good many of Cavafis' poems, in certain writings of Petros Vlastos and, later on, in the tragedies of Sikelianos and other younger writers.14

Spengler surveyed the destruction and chaos rampant in Europe and particularly his native Germany in the war years and, drawing upon a mass of pseudo-scientific data, argued that the crashing wave of European culture was receding. In his view cultures are as organisms and are born and cultivated in a particular era to pass through stages of aging until death at which time another organismic culture is born. A culture grows up in the soil of a place which can be defined with precision and to which it remains as faithful as a plant. A culture perishes when the soul has realized all its possibilities, molding peoples, languages, religious systems, arts, states, sciences; it returns then to its primordial psychic state.15

14Prevelakis, Nikos Kazantzakis And His Odyssey, p. 61.

15Oswald Spengler, The Decline of the West (German edition), I, pp. 144-45, quoted in ibid., p. 60.
As one analyst observed, it was Spengler's belief that the era of "individualism, humanitarianism, intellectual freedom, skepticism" was ending to be replaced by an era of "restrictions on individual freedom . . . a revival of faith . . . and an increase in the use of force." This cyclical theory, once held in ancient Greece, was not unique to Spengler, but was espoused by many of the leading thinkers of the age. The Enlightenment teaching of the linear progressive betterment of man's lot in history was widely discredited in many schools of thought by the intensity of destruction of World War I. This, plus nostalgia for a simpler age, increasing awareness of the values of alien cultures accruing from comparative anthropology, and the reaction to scientific rationalism, made for a conducive climate for Spengler's theory. His work received much attention and was the first of "a series of novel and unclassifiable writings that have seemed to mark the end of a cultural epoch." Kazantzakis was one of those who acclaimed Spengler and many years later echoed the German historian; "Whatever spirit this world once possessed was expended in creating a brilliant civilization—ideas, religious, arts and crafts, sciences, deeds. Now this world has vented its strength." The sources of Kazantzakis' theory of the transitional age were then: (1) his innate mystical leanings; (2) those decisive intellectual, personal, and religious steps he found so important; (3) apocalyptic eschatological

---


17 Ibid., p. 378.

18 Kazantzakis, *Report*, p. 420. Gasset, *The Revolt of The Masses*, p. 196, sees this world crisis as the "demoralization" of Europe deriving from the fact that "life to-day is the fruit of an interregnum of an empty space between two organizations of historical rule—that which was, that which is to be." This provisional nature of Gasset's world has many implications
Marxism; (4) and, apocalyptic cyclical Spenglerism. Kazantzakis resolved in practical fashion the contradiction between these last two most important sources—that conflict being Marx's linear view and Spengler's cyclical view—by seeing the communists as only temporary, although important, victors in history. With these sources in mind let us turn to the causes and symptoms which Kazantzakis perceived as manifesting the death of civilization.

The causes of the historical predicament as perceived by Kazantzakis are multifold with the disparity between mankind's mind and soul being one of the primary causes. Decrying the paucity of the moral resources of mankind evidenced by Hitlerian genocide—with six million Jews dead in gas chambers, by American bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki—with untold dead, and by similar brutalizing and dehumanizing degradations to which man had stooped in his savage battle for domination, Kazantzakis stated in an essay in 1946 his belief that the chief danger in the world is that

the mind of contemporary man has developed far more rapidly and intensively than his soul. Mind has conquered the cosmic forces and placed them at the disposal of man, who has not yet attained that moral maturity to use them for the service of the world's peace and prosperity. There is a lack of balance and harmony between man's intellectual and moral development.19

In "The Immortal Free Spirit of Man" Kazantzakis is concerned with the reconstruction and overcoming of these forces which threaten civilization. He describes a gap, an abyss, which must be transcended by civilization

for man. Since such provisionism leads to an unguided, rudderless, public life, men are uncertain what to think, what to do, how to act. There is no "programme," to use one of Gasset's favorite words, which lends credence to actions, gives expectations to the future, and gives connectedness to the past. In such a situation "men do not know what institutions to serve in truth; women do not know what type of men they in truth prefer."

19Kazantzakis, Life And Letters, L (September 1946), p. 124.
or its life will be extinguished. Believing that behind every economic, religious, and political movement there lies a great moral passion Kazantzakis argues that civilization must of necessity be based on both intellectual and moral maturity or it will succumb to the inner barbarians. The reverse occurred in the Middle Ages, according to Kazantzakis, when the Eastern societies whose moral development had outdistanced their intellectual development succumbed to barbarian invasions. A related cause of the world crises was, for Kazantzakis, the oppression of spirit and spiritual values by matter and materialistic values. Hadgopoulos discusses Kazantzakis' symbolic treatment of this theme in terms of his contrasting imagery of Helen, who epitomizes spirit, and Eros, who epitomizes matter. Helen's role in Kazantzakis' world view is that of insatiability, both in creation and in destruction; she is the bewitching force that leads mankind's spirit to struggle. Her counterpart, her opposite is Eros, that impetus which becomes enchanted as soon as it casts its glance on matter and then longs to impress its features upon it.²⁰

Beautiful Helen, the guiding concept or ideal of spiritual ascendence, is mired, in Kazantzakis' eyes, in the chaos of the materialistic West; "Materialistic explanations, which are solid enough as far as they go, are used to integrate all human experience, although they are utterly limited in scope."²¹ Such an ethos fails to address itself to the higher needs of civilization and fails to fulfill the nobler aspirations of the human soul for a "Civilization can rest only on spiritual foundations."²² Orthodox communism's materialistic orientation plays a major role in Kazantzakis'  

²¹Kazantzakis, Toda Raba, p. 116.  
²²Kazantzakis, Life And Letters, 1 (September 1946), p. 124.
eventual disillusionment with the Soviet experience.

A further cause of the world's malaise derives from Kazantzakis' concept of God as the Invisible ever-perfecting Good moving always toward divinity. Phrasing this in Marxian terms Kazantzakis argues that the mystical life force, the Invisible, no longer resides, as it once did, with the bourgeois but rests with a vital new group, "the working class: workers, farmers, people productive in the spirit." He tells his fellows:

We are confronting a spectacle, the likes of which can be observed at the end of every civilization. A single class—in the very beginning, it was the priests and the magicians, then the kings, then the feudal lords, then the bourgeois—assumes power, after shattering the preceding class. Then, after a time, when it too has passed all the phases of the high point and the decline, another class comes (fated to follow the same curve) and takes its place. Such is the undulating pattern of history.23

But, in the face of conclusive historical evidence, the bourgeoisie resist attempting to preserve their position of power. Their world is crumbling because on an empirical basis its predatory individualism, inequities of wealth, organized violence and injustice, etc., no longer suffice for the social entity, and because on a normative basis there is no unifying Idea or Passion to lead men for the Idea has passed at this historical juncture to the working class. Counseling civilization that when the old laws or molds of life no longer ennoble men's soul man must create new ones, new forms, Kazantzakis adds to his teachings of love of liberty and scorn of mortality a Nietzschean cry; smash "even the most sacrosanct of the old molds when they are unable to contain you any longer."24 Kazantzakis here takes a Marxist line yet he is ultimately saved from dogmatic fanaticism by his very consistency in adhering to his system for to him the undulating

---


rhythm of history, the movement of the Invisible, never ceases, i.e.,
the world dialectic does not stop with communism.\textsuperscript{25}

Although the disparity of mind and soul, widespread materialism,
and class confrontation are significant causes of the crisis of civi-
lization there is, in Kazantzakis' view, a more pervasive and important
cause. This is the nihilism arising from the fact that the "ancient
myths are dead!"\textsuperscript{26} Mankind's agony in confronting the scientific
evidence of the paucity of the Judeo-Christian world-view gives rise
to nihilism:

in general our age still clings to a leftover ethical system based on
the Christian conception of an ordered, benign, providential universe.
. . . This condition in which men apprehend the antinomy between ideals
and reality is a sickness, indeed the sickness of our age, the mal
de siècle. It was perceived by Nietzsche even before it had advanced
to its present critical state, and is the background to both the
negative and the positive aspects of his thought. The name of
this sickness is nihilism.\textsuperscript{27}

This sickness of despair arising from the clash between the increasing
impetus of scientism and the accelerating loss of faith gives rise, in
Kazantzakis' thought, to important historical-political consequences.
Although he never systematically developed this penetrating insight regarding
the nature of the Western world Kazantzakis hit upon one of the central
themes underlying contemporary civilization and thought. This is . .
because hope in the modern world has been formulated and channeled primarily

\textsuperscript{25}\textsuperscript{25} Kazantzakis, in Toda Raba, pp. 39-40, has Mikhailovich say, 'I also
know what you Communists do not know and do not dare to know; that as soon
as the attackers get the power—the table—they too will start to get
fat and paralyzed. And other hungry, suffering masses will rise on earth
again. So will waves of human beings rise and fall in an unceasing rhythm
until the end of time. That's what I know, oh, you little practical souls.'

\textsuperscript{26}\textsuperscript{26} Kazantzakis, quoted in H. Kazantzakis, Nikos Kazantzakis, p. 342.

\textsuperscript{27}\textsuperscript{27} Kazantzakis, "Friedrich Nietzsche's Philosophy of Law and the State,
in the terms, symbols, and miranda of Western Judeo-Christian God-
culture. The elemental fashion in which the Christian myth has influenced
men's capacity for hope or despair has been through its teachings of
grace, salvation, and a perfect order. These posited end/goals of individual
human earthly existence are to be realized in the Heavenly City of God and
with the Second Coming whereby the reign of goodness, justice, and love
will be established on earth, only--according to Christian teaching--after
a progressive betterment morally, socially, and in all other ways, of
humanity in history. It is with this introduction into the consciousness
of humanity's life history of the notion of an eschatological linear
movement with an apocalyptic end/goal to be faithfully believed in and
adhered to that Christianity kindled the embers of hope in men's breasts.
But, as has become increasingly evident in the contemporary world of the
unbelievers, there is inherent in the combining of Christianity's ethical/
moral teachings with a linear view of history dangerous implications for
politics. These arise from the potential consequences of: (1) if one,
e.g., Marx, were to kill the ancient myth and yet retain the Judeo-Christian
eschatological and hopeful historic sense then would the new God-man be led
to attempt to bring about, with all the absolute freedom and powers at his
disposal in a Godless world, his own version of absolute justice, order,
and morality?; (2) if one, e.g., Nietzsche, were to deny the Judeo-Christian
myth with its hypothesis of the progressive betterment of the human situation
would be, in his despair and nihilism engendered by the meaninglessness of
his predicament, vent his frustration, frenzy, and rage in destruction,
terror, and nihilistic murder. From these observations one discovers that
in the despair/hopelessness experienced by mankind when it awoke to the
death of the "ancient myth" lies both immense creative and immense destructive
potential. Man can surrender to the oppressiveness of the historical predicament and, in paranoia and futility, turn to nihilistic destruction. Man can surrender to the oppressiveness of the historical predicament and, in weakness and need, turn to various religions of history for succor and authority. Or mankind can persevere in the face of meaninglessness, can wrench hope from hopelessness, can create meaning in the world. Man can either betray or bear, in Dietrich Bonhoeffer's phrase, the "cost of discipleship." That is, he can bear the cross of death with dignity, faith, and an acceptance of the unity which this cross confers on man with men. Or, he can succumb to those who, like Hitler, betray that course. This cross of death, Kazantzakis' abyss, can be not the end but the beginning. The Anti-Christ recognizing this "fights the cross with political and social ideology." The disciples reject this, look firmly at the void, accept as Christ did the burden of the Cross, and gloriously fulfill their self by resolutely entering the fray for mankind. They cultivate the creative energy of freedom and emphasize with Kazantzakis that

> it is our duty to stare at the abyss ... with dignity and faith. To be sure the present moment and the one immediately ahead are horrifying and will become increasingly so. ... But the moment further on in the distance will be utterly brilliant. I'm certain that the human species has not yet revealed all its rich potentialities. The belly of the earth is still full of eggs.

Further, "The anguish which at present grips every man worthy of the name is lined with a great hope, more precisely, with a great assurance: Evil always ends up by succumbing to the slow but sure omnipotence of the Good."30

---


30Kazantzakis, Acceptance Address to the International Peace Committee in Vienna, 1956, quoted in ibid., pp. 544-45.
Kazantzakis' perception that the "present moment and the one immediately ahead are horrifying and will become increasingly so" is borne out by recent events. We have failed in the present age in upholding the dignity and spiritual duty of man. We have witnessed the idiocies of nations in a "cold war," have lived with the constant knowledge and consequent fear that man may at any time succumb to his fratricidal urgings and blow the world to nothingness, have endured the unbelievable horrors and inhumanities carried out by the world's most powerful nation against a primitive people of another culture, and consequently find Kazantzakis' wrenching and exhaustively hopeful cry for strength, courage, and perseverance an increasingly difficult burden to bear. For those who have suffered the violence of bigotry, the totalitarianism of technology and bureaucracy, the curious and deadly logic of the politics of fear, ideology, and emotionalism perpetrated on a worldwide scale in the name of progress, commerce, and civilization, Kazantzakis' theory of a transitional age of history characterized by despair seems all too accurate. They wonder with Kazantzakis not only how long such a civilization will endure but even whether in fact it should endure. Many faiths, hopes, value-systems of the past century having failed where does mankind look for solace and inspiration? If in the West the answer to Kazantzakis' critique is distressing; and if alienation, isolation, futility, and frustration permeate and circumscribe the day-to-day existence of Western man, where does the source of resolution of this bleak historical predicament lie? The major vehicle to which twentieth century man has, in Kazantzakis' view, attached his hopes for deliverance has been science.
Science As Deliverance

Through a thorough critique of science as an avenue of deliverance from the historical predicament Kazantzakis arrived at a position at odds with the mainstream of Western thought. He finds that the uses to which science have been put and the reasons behind such utilization may spell doom rather than deliverance. The central purpose of Kazantzakis' examination was to set forth an explication of the results which have accrued from the technological-scientific ethos. Once these results have been defined they are then explored for causality, meaning, and import. According to Kazantzakis the dominant societal developments derived from scientific-technological adulation have been: (1) excesses in fulfilling the basic "outer" needs, i.e., material goods, leading to a situation where these needs are all-determinant with a consequent deadening of the creative desires of man and a lack of aspirational challenges; (2) failure of the scientific ethos, which destroyed much of the historically viable authority of the Christian myth, to supply a new normative myth-ideal because of its concern with empirical fact rather than values and morals and, in this anormative vacuum, the rise to the fore of the temporal leaders, e.g., politicians, technicians, economists, etc., while the spiritual, artistic, and intellectual leaders go unheeded; (3) the obvious fact, as the cumulative import of these characteristics portray, that the good life of the polis cannot be constructed solely on the basis of scientific-rationalism; (4) technicism has given rise to a new barbarism.

Kazantzakis' was a forceful voice raised in defense of man against the often inhumane forms which scientific "progress" was taking throughout the
world. His attack on this front was twofold. He levelled his criticisms at the artificial needs which were created by an increasingly scientific-technological-industrial culture and which led man from the realization of his higher, spiritual potentialities through diverting his attention from the real values of life; and he condemned the dehumanizing manner in which scientific and technological innovations were utilized to produce these material "needs." At first glance one is tempted to reject Kazantzakis' criticisms for on the superficial level they seem merely atavistic, and therefore, to a large extent useless. His interest in and love of nature plus his periodic asceticism coupled with his obvious primitivism have led to this misinterpretation of Kazantzakis. However, upon closer scrutiny, one discerns that Kazantzakis was not condemning scientific-industrial progress per se, for he acknowledged that "to turn backward is utopian," but rather was attacking what he saw as a perversion of civilization and an ever-increasing submersion of the individual to technological forces. As is evident from the briefest survey of Kazantzakis' writings, he condemned many of the modes of production of technological society, but not from the position that they were inherently threatening to man. What Kazantzakis railed against as he toured the English cities in the mid-1940's was that the "machines had triumphed. . . . In his enthusiasm over his possession of his new iron slaves, the man of the nineteenth century, kindled by irrational hopes and naive optimism, had rushed headlong to conquer matter." This was the wrong, the perversion that had deluded man


32 Ibid., p. 93.
into scientific-technological enslavement. Kazantzakis did not repudiate the possible advantages, though so dearly bought, which the scientific mind of mankind offers. Indeed, he believed that civilization begins only when those outer, materialistic needs of man are provided and there is occasion for leisure, art, music, sport—all the elements of culture. Kazantzakis turns to the archetype of the scientific man, Prometheus, to explain this belief. Prometheus, after teaching man how to order phenomena and conquer the material world, is asked to teach men music and answers:

Holy moment that I have desired for years! Now my complete work is crowned . . . . Till now, bent over with effort, I taught you the tools of peace or war—how to save the pale body from the wild beasts: the frost and the sickness. We couldn't spare the space of a breath to play on the grass. Yoked all day to wild necessity, we hadn't time, careless, to raise our hearts and eyes on high. We must live! We must live! God surrounded us to devour us! But now, you blessed brave heart of laboring mankind, we have passed beyond necessity and breathed the free air of beauty . . . . We have left from the animal, a new light-bathed path stretches before us to carry us from the animal to humanity.

Merely attaining the plateau of opportunity for culture is not enough however. The crucial issue is the goal to which the leisure time is spent. Along with the cultural liberation of freedom from want promised by rational scientism, we have found that, in Kazantzakis' view, rather than merely meeting materialistic needs we have created an immoral materialistic culture which leads man to the submission of the spirit to the flesh. This is what Kazantzakis means by his curious elaboration on a quotation from Henry Miller concerning poverty in Greece; "Poverty, when it is not excessive and does not reach the point of hunger and misery, is really well suited to any people or any individual averse to weighting the spirit down

---

with the flesh."\(^3\) The satiation of man in advanced technological society has given rise to a situation in which man no longer struggles to release the divine element of his being—that spiritual nobility which to Kazantzakis is the Cry of God and man's evolution within each man. He has succumbed under the paternalism of the scientific-technological society to the stagnation of the status quo. Kazantzakis describes this deadening of the inner struggle from England; "our own spirits are far more insatiable, far closer to the abyss than the English. Here one finds a great weariness and much control—control that is not the outcome of some great force controlling itself but of weakness that is easily controllable."\(^3\)

A strikingly similar although more empirical analysis of this point which may illuminate the discussion is found in the thought of an even more fervid critic of the scientific-technological society, Herbert Marcuse. Viewing the development of modern technological society Marcuse argues that it has given birth to one-dimensional man—as seen in the laborer who has been emasculated by the "good life" and has abdicated his revolutionary role. He has fallen victim to the policy of "containment," as Marcuse puts it, because the techniques of oppression developed by advanced technological society—which is founded on highly administered economies that must of necessity operate at high levels of production and hence of affluence—are so subtle as to harness and channel the creative energies of the laborer "into the handling of goods and services which satisfy the individual, while rendering him incapable of achieving an existence of his own, unable


\(^3\)Kazantzakis, Letter to Tea Aemoyanni, 1946, ibid, p. 449.
to grasp the possibilities which are repelled by his satisfaction."36 For Marcuse, as for many others, the Western dream has become a technological nightmare. Human dignity is affronted, real needs go unfulfilled, and the determinant quality of life is organized necessity. Under such conditions a repressive framework functions as efficiently as the technology from which it arose. The repression is twofold: externally, the vested interests and the manner of production, however subtly, repress the ordinary man; internally, individuals—due to the satisfaction of their so-called needs—willingly submit to their one-dimensional existence. They think, live and act only in terms of the diffused life in which they are placed; "The inner dimensions of the mind in which opposition to the status quo can take root is whittled down."37 It is precisely to this concern with the "inner dimension of the mind" that Kazantzakis addressed himself at the end of World War II. Calling for a revitalization and regeneration of man Kazantzakis counseled, "make no mistake about it . . . the only true, solid, reconstruction is man's inner rehabilitation."38

The failure of science in effecting the inner rehabilitation of man derives primarily from its inability to provide a normative goal for man. Kazantzakis implies that science functions primarily in a negative manner in that it disproved many assumptions of the Judeo-Christian value system but in a positive sense science is less useful for all scientific attempts

---


37 Ibid., p. 10.

38 Kazantzakis, Life And Letters, L (September 1946), p. 124.
at formulating a viable replacement have failed because science can never answer the why of things. Darwinism, which was proffered as an answer to the enduring questions, in fact blocked all chance of hope by demonstrating not the cause or end of evolution but only the manner or mechanism. Kazantzakis realized that many new value-systems had been attempted in order to fill the void left by science's killing of God—Comte's elaborate scheme, the adulation of reason, the socialists utopias, Marxism, etc. As these endeavors failed, revealing the ethical bankruptcy of science, thinkers like Bergson forced the scientific advocates to admit that they cannot answer the eternal questions.\(^\text{39}\) At this point Kazantzakis aims a blazing critique at the West's adoption and constant advocacy of the method of scientific-rationalism as a means to the resolution of socio-political problems. Scientific-rationalism, beginning in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and reaching its peaks in the philosophy of Descartes and Spinoza in the seventeenth century and its utilization as a directing principle in the French "Age of Reason" in the eighteenth century, has had many profound effects on Western life. Western democracy's embodiment of that scientific outlook—evident in all aspects of life—with its inherent progressivist hopefulness, led to formulation of a pragmatic socio-political world-view that in itself, and even more so in its reverberations in other areas of twentieth century life, neglected the potentiality for despair that existed within its optimistic premises. Leading exponents such as John Dewey in the United States would contend, and other scientific socio-political philosophers would certainly agree, that the problem under discussion is precisely how conflicting claims are to be settled in the interests of the widest possible contribution to the interests of all—or at least of the great majority. The method of

democracy—in so far as it is that of organized intelligence—is to bring these conflicts out into the open where their special claims can be seen and appraised, where they can be discussed and judged in light of more inclusive interests than are represented by either of them separately. 40

What he and his colleagues failed to do, in their progressivistic faith, was to recognize and take concrete steps against the grave implications for political life of significant ideals, creative aspirations, needs, and myth, being excluded from the mediation process. In a dialogue with Unamuno, the great Spanish literatist, Kazantzakis contends

today the dialectical mind [which to Kazantzakis meant the scientific, analytical approach as opposed to the artistic] has gone too far and is no longer helpful for life. We no longer believe in myth and for that reason our life is barren. I think the time has come for the dialectical mind to fall into a deep sleep—to sleep so that the deep creative powers of man can awake.41

By stripping away the masks of traditionalism in politics, custom in culture, and Christianity's authority in religion, science revealed the chaotic reality that lay behind man's artificial and superficial attempts at creating order. Priest Fotis in The Greek Passion says the "world is a mystery. . . . The motions of God's will seem complicated to man's narrow brain."42 Kazantzakis believed that it will take something in addition to the scientific brain to discern the true face of God's will, which is reality, in the world and thereby to recreate a viable order.

In this anormative vacuum with no guiding myth, beliefs, or ideals, the temporal leaders, politicians, technicians, economists, etc., who deal in matter and fact rather than spirit and value are, in Kazantzakis' view,


41 Kazantzakis, Spain, p. 176.

42 Kazantzakis, The Greek Passion, p. 266.
all-powerful. They have at their disposal the tremendous powers of modern science yet they do not have—recall his earlier critique of the disparity of mind and soul—the compassionate moral sensibility with which to use these powers for the benefit of mankind. The beast in man dominates as exemplified by such developments as,

Yesterday the Americans proudly announced the discovery of a poison so horrendous that with 9 grams of it they can in one fell swoop kill all of the inhabitants of the United States and Canada (i.e., Russia). The gorilla, you see, without taking the time to become a human being, has discovered fire and is going to burn the world.43

A central element in the rise to power of the temporal technicians is the intellectuals' abandonment of a critical perspective and their turning away from a theoretical outlook—"theoretical thought has gone bankrupt and has turned into a tool applied for destructive purposes, or an aimless, foolish toy in the hands of a magician."44 Kazantzakis has unerringly proceeded to what is increasingly recognized as perhaps the most crucial issue facing modern civilization. Of others who have explored this rise to the core of technical, means-dominated thought none has done so more perceptively than Paul Tillich.45 In analyzing this issue Tillich finds a vital

---


45 The discussion of Tillich's thought comes directly from a seminar lecture, Philosophy 203, Metaphysics, Fall, 1970, by Dr. James F. Anderson of the L.S.U. Department of Philosophy. See his Paul Tillich: Basics In His Thought (Albany, New York: Magi Books, Inc., 1972). Karl Mannheim, Ideology And Utopia: An Introduction To The Sociology of Knowledge, trans. Louis Wirth and Edward Shils (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1936), sees this as functional rationality whereby rationality is transsubstantiated into irrationality. Mannheim recognizes the destructive effect which functional rationality has upon human capacity for rational, reflective judgement. He brings up the possibility of the technique or organizational process becoming both the means and end as it replaces the value or true goal for which it is supposed to be utilized. This critique is paralleled
distinction between metaphysical and ontological reasoning to be the source of the problem. Metaphysics concerns only method and stresses form or intelligible structure in Tillich's view. It is an analysis or critique of intelligible structure rather than an experiencing of being. He sees modern scholastic metaphysics as less perceptive than ontology and more argumentative, for it is technical reason and not ontological reason. Technical reasoning is not perception of being but ratiocinative process concerned only with discovering means for ends (by contrast ontological reason deals with the ends themselves, being-goodness-unity, and goes directly to these primary ends and principles themselves). Technical reason by Marcuse's in *One Dimensional Man*. The major specific development which Marcuse feels to be the greatest contributor to both the rise and the maintenance of modern-society technological totalitarianism is the abandonment of theory in favor of positivistic philosophy. Positivism, rationalism, and behaviorism are viewed by Marcuse as corruptions of philosophy and he attacks the embodiment of these methodologically oriented developments as perverting modern thought, modern philosophy, and modern sociology. The addiction to scientism, i.e., to fact, has led to a loss of: (1) an historical perspective; (2) a comprehensive world view; (3) any concept of transcendance. He argues that the emphasis on fact, on what is, with no regard to what ought to be, has a stasis bias which reinforces the repressiveness of the status quo and further flattens both the philosophical and personal horizon to its one-dimensional perspective. Marcuse states, correctly it seems, that this scientism of view is not a party matter but is found throughout the spectrum of political philosophy—liberal and conservative. Social philosophers have, under the weight of scientific-positivism, come to view their role, according to Marcuse (p. 211) as a "descriptive analysis of facts that blocks the apprehension of facts and becomes an element of the ideology which sustains the facts. . . . Nothing remains of ideology but the recognition of that which is. . . . The world tends to become the stuff of total administration, which absorbs even the administrators." This has resulted, to Marcuse, in the intellectuals losing their ability to synthesize in the traditional Western manner, to criticize which is their proper role as the forerunners of social change, and to postulate and inculcate value into both their endeavors and into those of the society as a whole. Marcuse is particularly sincere and intense when he criticizes the many socio-political adherents of behavioralism for their addiction to quantification, their narrow specialization, and their involvement with the overworked distinction between fact and value. The new intellectuals, in Marcuse's analysis, have abdicated their role of criticism and have become part of the establishment—supporters of, participants in and subject to the repression of technological civilization.
is reasoning about objects rather than understanding and perceiving them.

Ontology is the foundation of metaphysics because it concerns content whereas metaphysics concerns method. It is experienced being and prevailed from Parmenides to Hegel. Ontological understanding is the faculty for apprehending actual existence--to know is to be. There is an inseparable connection of mind and being in Tillich's view for the very structure of the mind enables it to transform being. Ontological understanding is useful both practically and aesthetically. It is an intellectual force uniting mind and emotion as the highest form of rationality. God is being itself and, in Tillich's assessment, is contacted only by ontological reason, therefore without it we are cut off from life. Intellect is thus the power for knowing being and what is. Ideally ontological and technical reason go hand in hand and as long as they are so combined reasoning is used to fulfill the needs of reason. If they are separated the results are disastrous. Tillich believes that since the mid-nineteenth century technical reason has been severed from ontological reason through the development of positivism. The result is the devising of ends by non-rationalistic forces serving power-domination rather than insight-enlightenment. Examples of this are the military industrial establishment where technology undeniably rules, the loss of control over norms and ends and the chaotic condition of our priorities, the dehumanization of life accruing from positivists refusal to heed and understand anything which is not available through human reason, the modern attempt to control nature rather than know it, in sum, the American way of life--exploitation, control, management--the very apotheosis of technical reason whereby we know not merely to know but to exploit! In such a civilization controlled by technological irrationality, as Kazantzakis said two decades ago, "to discern
and criticize today's unhaltered passions with an independent mind and spirit is considered a mortal sin. . . . The free-thinking man cannot even attempt synthesis."46

The import of the above deficiencies of the scientific ethos is that the good life of the polis cannot be built solely on scientific knowledge. This is powerfully depicted by Kazantzakis in Books XV and XVI of The Odyssey—Kazantzakis' imaginative reflection on his disillusionment with the scientific socialism of Marxism-Leninism—in which Ulysses constructs his ideal city only to see it destroyed. Ulysses based his city on the scientific necessity of nature where Marxism-Leninism was based on the scientific necessity of history and where the former perished the latter was perverted. Ulysses' utopia is built, with elements from Plato and More, on a firm foundation of barbaric coherence with blind natural necessity symbolized by a wild pear tree:

"Fellows, at noon today, on my God's rocks, I saw a tough and twisted pear tree blossoming in the sun; its leaves and flowers shook, then sang with human voice: 'How long shall I deign to guide you, fool? No matter how you boast, disdainful man, or strive to shake your yoke, you'll still plod, shackled, round and round man's threshing floor. Accept your fate with no false shame, and you'll surpass her! What else did you expect from the rank herd of man? Their hearts are airskins, their brains mud, their loins manure, but yet I love them and I like the stench of earth; I know well how the spirit blooms, how God is shaped, what filth my black roots browse on in the darkest gloom. See how I milk the rock, suck up manure, and turn all into flowers with patience, with despair, with love, and now I stand firm in your path, a blossomed pear; behold me, take me for your model, start your work!'"47

However, the underlying theme of Social Darwinism which led Ulysses to the drawing of organic analogies and belief in brutal evolutionary survival


47 Kazantzakis, The Odyssey, Book XV, lines 375-90, p. 460.
proved insufficient for the governance of the city. Therefore, Ulysses, after first heeding the teachings of the model of nature——

Whatever blind Worm-Mother Earth does with no brains we should accept as just, with our whole mind, wide-eyed, rejects it when the city is destroyed by natural calamity. Ulysses rages against destructive necessity with its belittling implications for man's stature and potentiality;

"Never shall I forgive and bend down to that vain, that senseless dark which blots the holy light of man!"

Then he thrashed out with rage against his ruthless god:

"You fool how in your greatest need can you abandon most glorious man who lives and fights to give you shape?
You fill our hearts with cries and vehement desires, then sink your ears in silence and refuse to listen;
but man's soul will fight on, you coward, without your help!"

His heart leapt high, spurned Death, and in the black air cut a thousand roads to fly through on a thousand wings, then, screeching like a hawk, strove to unwind what fate had woven.¹⁹

Ulysses came to realize that the polis must be built on something more than scientific emulation of organic nature. Kazantzakis implies that in a similar manner Marxism-Leninism suffered its perversion due to blind adherence to its scientific historical-materialistic aspirations. Just as Ulysses' dogmatic following of empirical nature left no room for individual initiative so does Marxism, a professed humanistic theory, overlook the individual as a viable participant in achieving his own redemption. While not wholly deterministic, Marx's system is so geared that human initiative as a decisive factor is not given much credence. Redemption is seen as coming in scientific fashion when the economic forces bring it about and when that happens humans will become human and not before. In practice this denial of human capability opened the door to the most oppressive applications

¹⁸Ibid., lines 600-01, p. 465.
¹⁹Ibid., lines 1450-60, pp. 484-85.
of Marxist ideology. In his denial of individual participation, Marx left a gaping hole through which Lenin and Stalin were to proceed in also denying the ability of the individual to have any productive possibilities as to bringing about the socialist society. The party under Stalin justified its existence and hegemony by the argument from scientific socialism that the forces of production and the consequent factors of class structure were not at a sufficiently advanced level to enable the true socialist society—the classless society. In this way the party maintained its position of power. This is a perversion of Marx's thought but a logical one. Marx's denial of human accomplishments and his view of humans as tools of history opened the door to similar denials of human rights and a similar use of humans as tools by Stalin. Marxist doctrine teaches that what is inevitably fixed may yet be unveiled and people will be assigned their functions. Those later Marxists of totalitarian leanings emerged, through their claims as possessors of the only scientifically valid doctrine, as the unveiling of the new order. They and they alone were portrayed as guiding society on the right path to socialism and, at times, they tolerated no deviations. In fulfilling their role they assumed the responsibility and power for assigning all individuals to their functions in the transitory stage. This resulted in oppression, injustice, and ordering of men's lives in the name of some future distant utopia. Kazantzakis, though intensely involved with Leninism during the 1920's and momentarily sympathetic to Mussolini, correctly characterized both men's reign in terms similar to our analysis, "The same suppression of individual liberty, the same faith in a better future."

50 Kazantzakis, Conversation with E. Samios, H. Kazantzakis, Nikos Kazantzakis, p. 150.
Finally, surveying the results of the adoption of scientific-rationalism in the union of capitalism and experimental science and the union of socialism and analytic science, Kazantzakis would say in a lengthy summation:

For a few more generations, the mind is going to be obliged by the pressure of history to forget its independent theoretical function. It will have to be enlisted in the service of the most immediate and imperative need; that of making propaganda for one of the two great competing slogans and that of preparing techniques—by inventing lethal weapons and poison gases—for annihilating brothers and fellow human beings fighting on the opposite side.

Science, on which poor miserable man has based so much hope for deliverance from poverty, passion, and the brute beast, and for an answer to the agonizing questions of his spirit, has become the most formidable and immoral weapon of a new form of barbarism, the most horrifying form, the scientific.

At the present time we are experiencing and witnessing the moral bankruptcy of science before our very eyes, in the mounds of corpses piling up. It is not just that science and morality are failing to walk hand in hand, but (and this is what is most terrifying) we have also seen the possibility of the following abomination: the more science progresses, the more morality retrogresses, until the moral degradation of man reaches a state of primitive bestiality. Vaunted progress has also proved one of the most menacing myths of the modern world.

This rise of a new barbarism, in both East and West, was likewise traced by Ortega, one of Kazantzakis' spiritual colleagues, to experimental science and technicism. The impetus which technicism provided to the rise on a mass scale of the new barbarians was, for Ortega, of two sorts: quantitatively, i.e., the proliferation of man, and more importantly, qualitatively, "the actual scientific man is the prototype of the mass man... science itself—the root of our civilization—automatically converts him into mass-man, makes him a primitive, a modern barbarian." This inherent nature of modern science results, for Ortega and Kazantzakis, in producing men with no sense of intellectual and social relatedness and tolerance, with

52Gasset, The Revolt of The Masses, pp. 120-21.
no historic-social appreciation and with dogmatic inflexible minds. Concerned always with the evolutionary movement of world reality—which socio-political forms should follow—Kazantzakis concludes vis-a-vis science, "in order to comprehend the élan vital, the human intellect is necessary, the examination of created things, the history of our earth as our scientific researches show them; but that is not enough." Scientific progress as an avenue leading mankind from the horrors of the transitional age is, to Kazantzakis, a circular one which ultimately turns back into the chaotic quagmire. Further, because of the increased potential for destruction engendered by scientific discoveries and the lack of a corollary development of compassionate sensitivity to that capability the roadway of science may lead to the dead end of nothingness. If mankind is to avoid this destination he must find another route of salvation. Within the exciting and imaginative capacity of art lies, for Kazantzakis, the best hope for world deliverance and betterment.

Art as Deliverance

It is not surprising that Kazantzakis, a student of Bergson, a disciple of Nietzsche, and a gifted literary artist, believed that through art one could effect a contact with reality. He expressed his artistic allegiance in various ways. Art is "a mysterious science, a veritable theurgy. Words attract and imprison the invisible spirit, force it to become incarnated and to exhibit itself to man." "Like Buddha, the artist lives completely


\[54\] Kazantzakis, Toda Raba, pp. 90-91.
liberated and completely liberating matter."\textsuperscript{55} One must learn that art is not submission and rules, but a demon which smashes the molds.\textsuperscript{56}

An artist is, "A sort of angel. Well, not exactly. There's a little something lacking. Look here: there are animals--asses, mules--and there are human beings. And then, above them, there are the artists and higher still the angels."\textsuperscript{57} And an artist, like his "grandfather" El Greco, "divines the future and immortalizes the past."\textsuperscript{58} It is this latter capability of the artist to, at one and the same time, assimilate, overcome, and transcend God-father-ancestors-ideas in the forge of creativity and sow the seeds of the son-future-new values that has import for political thought. Kazantzakis believed a new consciousness can be hammered out by the artist beyond the bounds of dry logic and historical-contemporary inhibitions. In the continuously creative artistic process of contrasting the old and new the limits of the possible are forever shattered and enlarged. Kazantzakis' favorite symbol for the artist is Akritas--the sentinel. As a sentinel the artist sees new developments, new potentialities, new realities before those in the interior. Two special talents possessed by the artist make possible this unique role. One is his imaginative capability. Wilson discusses this dimension of the artist as exemplified in Book XVII of \textit{The Odyssey} which is acted out in Ulysses' imagination:

\footnotesize
\begin{itemize}
  \item Kazantzakis, \textit{The Greek Passion}, p. 63.
  \item Kazantzakis, \textit{Report}, p. 503.
  \item Kazantzakis, \textit{Freedom or Death}, p. 118.
  \item Kazantzakis, \textit{Spain}, p. 207.
\end{itemize}

Ulysses has stumbled on the profoundes of all evolutionary truths. The mind is actually a new dimension of life, distinct from the physical world and our responses to it. But we are hardly capable of grasping this; we are still 95% animal, machines that respond to external stimuli. We are like two dimensional creatures who have not yet learned to look upwards and grasp that there is a third dimension of existence. Man possesses an immense freedom which is grasped in certain moments of ecstasy by mystics and poets. It is a realm that he could enter and make securely his own, if only he became conscious of its existence. His main problem is that he does not know who he is; he continues to think of himself as a creature, an earth-bound animal.59

In addition to this imagination-intuition Kazantzakis ascribes to the artist a special sensitivity that lends greater existential awareness to the vibrations of cosmogenic evolution. Although every living man experiences to a degree the fate of his times, the creator does so "most of all. There are certain sensitive lips and fingertips which feel a tingling at a tempest's approach as though they were being pricked by thousands of needles. The creator's lips and fingertips are of this kind."60 Therefore art, with these special capabilities, is the best way to philosophize. Art allows one to rise

59Wilson, Minnesota Review, VIII (1968), pp. 177-78. Wilson goes further to scold Kazantzakis for not systematically developing this insight; this "should lead to the recognition that if the mind possesses this freedom, then the immediate problem is to find methods for increasing the recognition. Not mystical flashes; they are too brief and unreliable; nor drug-inspired ecstacies of oneness with the universe. A scientific method, an extension of what we at present call science and philosophy.

I feel that it is at this point that Kazantzakis' mind refuses to take the final leap; it falls back. His admirers--although I count myself among them--may dispute this. I can only state my own opinion for what it is worth."

Wilson demands far too much here. The greatest art is never so radically divorced from physical stimuli as to be solely of the mind. Kazantzakis gloried both in the mind's creative capability and the body's physical earth-bound existence. Thus he knew that for the artist's mind to make Wilson's "final leap" would be a betrayal of the vital polarity of mind and body.

60Kazantzakis, Report, p. 449.
above the boundaries of science, reason, empiricism, logic, etc., and experience Being/reality and thereby provides the best possible answers to the enduring questions of the spirit of man. Art looks beyond phenomena and transubstantiates matter into spirit:

Once again art is beginning to be dissatisfied with external phenomena, is beginning to seek, to find the essence; is abstracting as much substance as possible from physical bodies, is searching for a line, a color, a motion capable of expressing the inexpressible, this being the only thing worthy of expression. Rather than what the corporeal eye sees, art renders what the restless eye of the soul can surmise within this visible world.61

The inexpressible essence which art captures is composed of two components. They are the soul of man, which takes on different attributes and forms in different ages, and the evolutionary God/spirit of time, space, history, and nature. In capturing these art makes possible creation of the new myths, legends, symbols, etc., necessary for twentieth century man to give meaning, order, coherence, form, direction, and purpose to life and socio-political existence. Believing the artist possesses these truly powerful creative tools the next question to which Kazantzakis addresses himself is what is the duty of the artist vis-a-vis suffering mankind.

Kazantzakis relates how he once asked Unamuno this question of what the artist concerned with the suppression of the free spirit of modern man in the transitional age must do. Unamuno responded;

"Nothing!" he roared. "Nothing!" The face of the truth is terrifying. What is our duty? To hide the truth from the people! The Old Testament says: 'He who looks God in the face will die.' Even Moses could not look God straight in the face. He looked at him from behind and saw only the edge of His robe. Such is the nature of truth! We must deceive the people; deceive them, so that the poor creatures can have the strength and cheerfulness to go on living. If they knew the truth, they couldn't go on living. They wouldn't want to any more.62

61 Kazantzakis, Spain, p. 100.

62 Ibid., p. 175.
Aware of the shock of scientific revelations of the disparities of traditional religious "truths" Kazantzakis agreed that the dialectical-analytical confrontation of the masses with naked Godless reality had created much of the havoc and barreness of modern life. However, he reached a different conclusion than Unamuno. Kazantzakis came to have a comprehensive belief that far from doing nothing, the artist has a demanding duty and responsibility to once more creatively fill the void brought about by the dialectical-scientific mind and thereby aid man. In fulfilling this responsibility it is not the artist's duty to look only to the past or future;

The purpose of art is to discover the invisible spirit of the Father and to express it through the visible body of the Son. If man can grasp and express nothing but the Son, he creates a merely superficial work of art; if he expresses nothing but abstract ideas, nothing but the Father, he produces not art but metaphysics.63

This meaningful synthetic reconciliation of past and future in the overcoming and surpassing of the former by the latter is the true purpose of the artist. Kazantzakis repudiates those who would say the duty of the artist is merely to create beauty. In fact, Kazantzakis dwells at some length on the chief danger of art--that beauty can camouflage and cover-up the perversity, suffering, and injustice in the world. This concern is revealed in a conversation in Berlin with Itka, who scorns Kazantzakis' naive adulation of beauty; "You write poems. You speak in your turn--have the effrontery to speak--about poverty, oppression, and villainy. By transforming our pain into beauty you get it out of your system. Damn beauty, when it makes a man forget human suffering."64 Responding to

63Kazantzakis, Toda Raba, p. 90.
64Kazantzakis, Report, p. 388.
this criticism Kazantzakis foregoes a strict adherence to the demands of beauty in the quest for helping achieve a new, higher existence for man. This gave to Kazantzakis' literary output a jarring lack of balance which occasioned many critiques of his literary competence. He explains;

I began to write. But no matter what I wrote—poems, plays, novels—the work always acquired without conscious effort on my part, a dramatic élan and form—full of mutually clashing forces, struggle, indignation, revolt, the pursuit of a lost equilibrium; full of portents and sparks from the approaching tempest. No matter how much I struggled to give a balanced form to what I wrote, it quickly assumed a vehement dramatic rhythm. In spite of my wishes, the peaceful voice I desired to emit became a cry.65

In a similar vein he scoffed at the debates over the artistic merits of The Odyssey;

Historians of literature come only after the artist has passed; they hold measuring rods, they take measurements and construct useful laws for their science, but these are useless for the creator because he has the right and the strength—this is what creation means—to break them by creating new ones. When a vital soul feels, without previous aesthetic theories, the necessity to create, then whatever shape his creations take cannot help but be alive.66

Just as the artist's duty is to rebel against the demands of beauty and artistic critics in the pursuit of honesty, so it is his duty to never acquiesce to the socio-political injustices of the status quo;

The writer, who is by nature more sensitive, cannot repress his indignation or shirk his responsibility. He is duty bound not to sleep, he must keep his people on the alert. Furthermore, I think this role of the writer as agitator is indispensable in all countries ruled by injustice.67

Kazantzakis' life, and particularly his arrival at this view toward art portrays, after a fashion Søren Kierkegaard's magnificent view of the journey to the self.

65Ibid., p. 449.

66Kazantzakis, quoted in Friar, "Introduction" to Kazantzakis', The Odyssey, p. xii.

Kierkegaard believed most men lived on one of three levels--the aesthetic, ethical, or religious. Yet it was possible for some to pass through all three stages incorporating the lessons of each in reaching self-actualization.\textsuperscript{68} For Kierkegaard that which distinguishes the aesthetic, i.e., poetic, approach to life is a concern with power, an adoration of being and immediacy, a focus on outwardness, a contemplative detachment from life, a superficial descriptive time-frozen attitude, and a lack of concern with universals and norms. These characteristics result in a conquering nature constantly outside itself with only an external and no internal history: "But since external history is the one kind of history which can without detriment be concentrated it is natural that art and poetry choose this especially for representation, and hence, choose likewise the unopened individual and everything that has to do with him."\textsuperscript{69} The aesthetic-artistic approach is only a partial attitude to life for it does not induce understanding of internal history, of selfhood, openness and the deeper, tragic meanings of life. The aesthete uses the categories of fortune, fate, despair, etc., in his art only to abstract an unrealizable ideality within the immediate, finite world but "to comprehend misfortune, to come to an understanding with it, to turn everything upside down and to make suffering the point of departure for a view of life, is

\textsuperscript{68}William Barret, \textit{Irrational Man: A Study In Existential Philosophy} (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1958), pp. 146-47, describes this process: "Thus the three 'stages on life's way,' as Kierkegaard called them, are not to be taken as different floors of a building; if I rise from the aesthetic to the ethical it does not mean that I have left the lower floor entirely behind me. Rather, both attitudes are stages on the way from the periphery to the center of the self, and the periphery is still preserved when we have learned to dwell a little closer to our center."

something he cannot do; he ought not even to make a move in that direction for then he is merely a bungler.** In Kazantzakis' terms the aesthete creates beauty through art to cover-up injustice. A more profound level of understanding is to be attained through the ethical attitude to life. This is evidenced in the philosopher who knows the good. The ethical man is of a possessive nature which rests within itself. He is an open individual concerned with inwardness, universal rules, and lived time. He goes beyond description to involved understanding of the tragic-comic existence of man. Where the aesthete describes humans as they are, i.e., both good and evil, the ethical individual takes man from this medium and places him in existence: ethics will at once demand that he be pleased to become, and then he becomes—either good or bad. . . . Ethics consequently rejects every explanation of becoming which deceptively explains the coming within being, whereby the absolute decision that is rooted in becoming is essentially revealed, and all talk about it rendered essentially nothing but a false alarm.\(^{71}\)

Ethics has no truck with chance or excuses and therefore places heavy responsibility on finite man. Ethics "invites you to believe in reality and to have the courage to fight against all the afflictions of reality, and especially those ghostly sufferings which man answers on their own responsibility; it warns you against those cunning, calculations of reason which are even less trust worthy than the oracles of antiquity."\(^{72}\) An ethical attitude engenders a compassionate battle to relieve human suffering and may be said, in terms of the discussion of Kazantzakis' life and art, to be represented by his conversion to the humane goals of social justice espoused by Marxism. The ethical is, however, deficient in at least two

\(^{70}\) Ibid., pp. 70-71.

\(^{71}\) Ibid., p. 74.

\(^{72}\) Ibid., p. 95.
respects. One, it is not universally open to all. And, even those who attain the knowledge of the good are not necessarily led to will it. The religious attitude as embodied in Kierkegaard's knights of faith lies beyond the aesthetic and the ethical and is the surpassing of the former and the fulfilling of the latter. The religious individual is not essentially a genius or a poet. He is the true individual who loves everyone and lives by virtue of the absurd;

In infinite resignation he drains the dark waters of melancholy to the last drop; he knows the blessedness of infinity; . . . he remains in the finite without betraying any signs of his weary and tortured training, and yet rejoices in it with so much assurance that for him there appears to be nothing more certain.73

It is no wonder that Kierkegaard never found such an apostle of the disciplined ethical. Such a person would be as a miraculous dancer who is not confined by the positions he takes but through them expresses the attitude of he who, when faced with dilemmas to which no ethical norms or blueprints apply (for no ethics can cover all life's possibilities), confronts them with the trembling religious center of life and chooses. This person is the exception to all rules but he breaks none arrogantly. His exceptionality is distinguished and made noble, as Barret says, by his not denying the "validity of the ethical: the individual who is called upon to break with the ethical must first have subordinated himself to the ethical universal; and the break, when his is called upon to make it, is made in fear and trembling and not in the callous arrogance of power."74

The break is made on the principle that the individual is ultimately superior to any collective universal yet the ethical rule must be incorporated

73Ibid., p. 113.

74Barret, Irrational Man, pp. 148-49.
before it can be rightfully transcended. Beyond aesthetic art or Marxist ethics Kazantzakis' latter years were the most intensely religious—in the highly personal sense in which Kierkegaard uses the term—of any period of his life. He sought to expand the frontiers of his age for a new existence. Kierkegaard says of the artist who is truly religious,

If the religious is in truth the religious, if it has submitted itself to the ethical and preserves it within itself, it cannot forget that religious pathos does not consist in singing and hymning and composing verses, but in existing; so that the poetic productivity, if it does not cease entirely, or if it flows as richly as before, comes to be regarded by the individual himself as something accidental, which goes to prove that he understands himself religiously.75

Within the framework of this assessment the latter two decades of Kazantzakis' life and art truly display his passionately religious responsibility for saving mankind.

In upholding this responsibility Kazantzakis utilized two primary means. First, he sought to sensitize his being to the extent of ultimate receptivity to all the currents of his age. He delved into nature, man, ideology, God, religion, etc. He traveled continuously over the earth seeking experience, knowledge, and insight. He traveled within his mind seeking truth, reality, creation, and more. He surveyed wars at first hand and lived in monasteries. He did all these things believing that if he could capture them in words he would "be able to help shorten the agony of other kindred spirits who have set out along the same path. . . . I am not making Art. I am only letting my own heart cry out."76 Kazantzakis sought to experience all of life and deny none of it and through the alchemy of his sensitive, creative chemistry to convert that experience into knowledge

75Kierkegaard, The Living Thoughts of Kierkegaard, presented by Auden, p. 102.
76Kazantzakis, Spain, pp. 11-12.
truth, and mobilization of the spiritual forces within man. The other avenue which he chose in his path to fulfilling his perceived duty was that of immersion in the lives of his historical, religious, mythological, spiritual, and literary hero-predecessors. Throughout his work, Kazantzakis dwells on those great "tormented souls that had suffered and loved exceedingly in their lives, and had impudently contended against God and destiny. I fought to drag them up from Hades in order to glorify their pain and struggle--mankind's pain and struggle--in front of living men."77 This is evident in, among other works, The Odyssey, when Ulysses meets Christ, the Poet, the Primitive Man, Don Quixote, and others, in his travels. In addition to these figures, Kazantzakis attached importance to Prometheus, Nicephoros Phocas, an ancient liberator of Crete, Hamlet and Faust, and more. This attempted immersion in the lives of his heroes is a very important aspect of Kazantzakis' art and thought. This is displayed in a revealing passage in Spain where Kazantzakis compares Cervantes, Quevedo, the great seventeenth century Spanish poet, philosopher, and political writer whose satire of Philip IV brought him four years of imprisonment, broken health, and an early death, and Dante, and casts illumination on the specific manner in which the artist can create a "new riverbed of the spirit" into which socio-political reality can flow. Cervantes had been able to define clearly the spirit of his race and so save it from compromise and destruction. Magic the power of speech that is capable of creating the thing, or of enclosing the created thing within clearly defined limits, so that it cannot overflow or shrink and lose its original form. Perhaps Quevedo, Cervante's contemporary, is a more powerful writer--richer, cleverer, more forceful with his broad humor and pathos and his violent love of life. But in none of his works could he immortalize the twofold essence of the Spanish spirit. Not capable of saving, he was not saved. But Cervantes, with his Don Quixote and his Sancho, saved the spirit of his race from being

destroyed by time, and he too was saved along with her. Dante, centuries after his death, effected the unification of Italy by having coerced her in his strict terza rima to be a united Italy. Just so, Cervantes expressed in speech the hidden or still unfathomed characteristics of his race. He made them crystal-clear and fixed, and the Spaniards, seeing this most perfect expression of themselves, were coerced into conforming to their own racial character. Such is the difficult, dangerous, utterly mysterious responsibility of the great creator.78

Through their lives and art Dante and Cervantes expressed those central themes and counter-themes, ambiguities and constants, characteristics, and mysteries which composed the essence of their age. By doing so they surpassed their time and cleared a pathway to the future. The intensity of Kazantzakis' belief in this ennobling capability of art is demonstrated by his eulogizing El Greco—a native Cretan, a gifted artist, an enormously imaginative and vital individual who also, in Kazantzakis' view, lived during a transitional age—as one who, like Dante and Cervantes, wrought a creative conformation of reality "within clearly defined limits." He describes an El Greco painting as laying bare "the whole fate of man, the entire soul of the world, flooded with the tragic-comic powers of good and evil. . . . From every perfect work of art rises a cry of pain, joy, hope, strife. And, above all, the unchanging cry of liberation."79

The perfect work of art portrays the unity of man with nature, God, animal, man, and life and death. In doing so it liberates man by revealing the flow of the creatively conscious movement of man's history. Paradoxically enough, it also determines and channels, to an extent, that history.

Art has, therefore, important implications for politics. This is so because political reality is a central element of the historic flow. Kazantzakis reflected on this and concluded that the "genuine role of the poli-

78Kazantzakis, Spain, p. 44.
79Ibid., p. 102.
tician is not to stop history but to work in harmony with it. Underlying his thought at this point is the belief that the political and the artistic must work hand in hand with the former following the lead of the latter. He speaks wistfully of the royal Arab courts of old where "the poets were in the ascendency. They were not parasites and buffoons, as they were among the Byzantines and the Franks." In England a young writer tells him that in this chaotic age 

eventually our poets emerged from their splendid isolation and began to mingle with the main currents. They gave up struggling for the most rare form of expression and began to seek the most responsible and most representative form, the one most universally human.

And in "The Immortal Free Spirit of Man" where he speaks of the crucial socio-political questions facing a war weary world, he again evinces his belief in the illuminating potential of the poet-artist in the socio-political arena;

Let all those of us who believe in spiritual values unite. Let us, clear-minded, look at the dangerous times we are going through and let us see what is today the spiritual duty of man. Beauty is no longer enough; nor is theoretical truth, nor passive goodness. Man's spiritual duty to-day is greater and more complex than in the past ... he must formulate a new universal rallying-cry, able to establish unity—that is, harmony between man's mind and heart. He must find the simple words that will once more reveal to man this most simple truth—that all men are brothers.

As in all past creative ages, the poet is again identified with the prophet. Let us have faith in the spirit of man; in the most difficult moments, when the fate of mankind hangs in the balance, the spirit takes over responsibility.

Just as great artists of the past had affected a union of poet and prophet

80 Ibid., p. 251.
81 Ibid., p. 109.
83 Kazantzakis, Life And Letters, L (September 1946), pp. 124-25.
and thereby opened riverbeds into which reality flowed, so Kazantzakis sought to do. He evinced his immense faith in himself in a letter to Prevelakis:

It's as though we are the first specimens of some future race, and the physical and psychological conditions around us are still hostile. Neither the air nor the aspirations nor "human beings" thought are our "climate." This is not "romanticism" or "revolte" or weakness or merely strength. I felt that it is something deeper, more mystical, more organic.

Bringing this view to bear on the anguish of a civilization struggling for deliverance from the many oppressive political, religious, and philosophical masks which dominated it, Kazantzakis reversed Plato and contended, "I chanced to be born in an age when this struggle was so intense and the need of help so imperative that I could quickly see the identity between my individual struggle and the great struggle of the contemporary world." Wherever Plato thought it possible to discover individual justice, harmony, and virtue in the individual by reading it "writ large" in the state, Kazantzakis believed it possible to discover the locus of the world's anguish and the path to overcoming same by reading it indelibly written in the suffering and rebellious torment of the life of the sensitive, creative individual. Kazantzakis saw his personal passage from birth to death in terms of this thesis. His entire life is a portrayal of the path to freedom, to a higher human existence beyond hope and rationality, and despair and nihilism, through overcoming the many obstacles within the contradictions of word-action, mind-flesh, good-evil, mortality-immortality, etc., and becoming a higher man of unity with diversity and honesty. His is an unceasing battle with the abyss, unceasing quest for immortality in

84 Kazantzakis, Letter to Prevelakis, 1932, H. Kazantzakis, Nikos Kazantzakis, p. 256.

85 Kazantzakis, Report, p. 452.
an age when man has succumbed to the masks and is enslaved, like Kazantzakis' childhood Crete, to outer and inner Turks. His cry—in a time of bombs, wars, rationality transformed into irrationality, violence, church hypocrisy, scientific excesses, despiritualization and blandness, ideological ferment, etc.—is one of the maintenance of tension when confronted with the void, not escape from freedom but courage, compassion, fortitude, transubstantiation, transcendence. Kazantzakis' cries out against these perversions and for the Invisible, for future man, co-creation, deliverance, harmony, unity, union with God and nature, reconciliation of flesh, soul, mind, and world spirit; it is an individualistic rebellion and re-orientation with important communitarian overtones—a quest for existence beyond nihilism. By organizing, assimilating, and ordering the stimuli of one's experience Kazantzakis believed men could "not only come to know ourselves. Far, far more important, we are able to transcend our own insanely proud egos; plunging them and tempering them in the tormented itinerant army of Man." Kazantzakis' was an elevating view of the worth of each individual's capabilities for aiding in the world struggle. He consistently held to his oft-stated faith that every man has a cry, his cry, to sling into the air before he dies . . . this cry may scatter ineffectually in the air, that there may be no ear either below on earth or above in heaven to hear it. No matter. You are not a sheep, you are a man, and that means a thing which is unsettled and shouts. Well then—shout.

In another work he said "the bloodstained endeavor of the Spirit in whatsoever field of the earth, is a universal human endeavor that bursts out and goes on indestructibly inside every human being who continues the

86 Kazantzakis, Spain, p. 11.
87 Kazantzakis, Report, p. 478.
struggle." While we obviously believe Kazantzakis' struggle has much to offer for political philosophy there are those who disagree.

Bien argues that Kazantzakis was only circumstantially and never essentially concerned with politics, which Bien defines as the technics of "how men behave in groups in societies: how (to go back to the root of the word itself) they build and maintain their cities, developing all the delicate compromises that enable masses of people to reside harmoniously together and prosper." He contends this was so because Kazantzakis was concerned primarily with his own salvation and not the welfare of society. He holds that political involvement was for Kazantzakis only a path to individualist salvation; "We may speak, therefore, of 'Kazantzakis and politics,' but not of Kazantzakis as a political writer." We believe that Bien, to use a trite phrase, makes a "distinction without a difference" in his analysis of Kazantzakis' politics. Certainly Kazantzakis was not immediately concerned with the intricacies of political institutions but this alone does not disqualify him, as Bien implies, as a valuable source of political thought. Kazantzakis' was an artistic vision brought to political theory. It was not that of the technical analyst. He expressed his view thusly, unlike science "art, on the contrary, has its first source in an intuition, establishing a contact with the great reality. A vision. And then quite simply and effortlessly all the details fall into place and find expression." Many of the great figures of political thought, from

---

88 Kazantzakis, Spain, p. 37.
90 Ibid., p. 137.
91 Kazantzakis, Conversation With Marinetti, H. Kazantzakis, Nikos Kazantzakis, p. 110.
the pre-Socratics to Cicero and Augustine to Hobbes to Nietzsche, to name only a few, have evinced a similar disregard for political mechanics. Like them Kazantzakis was not only circumstantially but also essentially concerned about the mores, values, goals, priorities—the what of a political system—that determine, to a marked degree how "men behave in groups and build their cities." Even though Kazantzakis' focus was not on the mundane stuff of everyday politics but rather was on the ideals, values, etc., of political society he was still very much a political writer. Reviewing his interrelated artistic-political role as sentinel, seer, value-giver creator, agitator, and rebel, Kazantzakis realized the grave socio-political responsibility this denoted:

If we open a riverbed by writing or acting, reality may flow into that riverbed, into a course it would not have taken had we not intervened. We do not bear the full responsibility naturally, but we do bear a great part.

Writing may have been a game in other ages, in times of equilibrium. Today it is a grave duty. Its purpose is not to entertain the mind with fairy tales and make it forget, but to proclaim a state of mobilization to all the luminous forces still surviving in our age of transition, and to urge men to do their utmost to surpass the beast.92

Bien mistranslates Kazantzakis' avowed goal of self-transcendence as being a negation of concern with others. Actually, as the above passage demonstrates, Kazantzakis was very much concerned with all mankind's salvation. Kazantzakis believed individualist and societal salvation to be intrinsically entwined for—to recall an earlier citation—those, like Quevedo, who cannot save themselves cannot save others. The former is a necessary prererequisite to the latter. Therefore, when Kazantzakis sought salvation through his art it was not merely an egocentric, self-concerned exercise but an attempt to help all mankind achieve salvation from injustice, cruelty,

92 Kazantzakis, Report, p. 450.
and suffering. Bien recognizes this aim in an apt passage near the end of his essay which vitiates somewhat his earlier denigration of Kazantzakis' political writing. Kazantzakis'

heroes are models of spiritual achievement, encouraging reality to reach them in some undefined (and constantly receding) future. They die and sometimes in dying help to inspire others to live better and make better societies, but probably even more important than this, they voice—and leave behind them—a cry. This, though intangible and spiritual, is their right act, the one that will do most to bring an end to the injustices and chaos of the transitional age.93

Those who, like Bien, see Kazantzakis as basically unpolygonal could make a stronger case by arguing not that he was only circumstantially concerned with politics but by pointing out the contradictions in the label "political writer." That is, it may be possible to say that to be truly political and a writer, in the ideal sense of the word meaning an accomplished literatist, is not possible. The argument could be waged on three levels, the first two of which find Kazantzakis particularly vulnerable: (1) that a concern with politics inevitably lessens the scope, worth, and durability of a work of art; (2) that rather than art decisively influencing politics just the reverse seems true in this century; (3) that art can do little for the common man, i.e., who reads Kazantzakis or looks at an El Greco—the peasant? In an intriguing essay on art and culture T. S. Eliot addressed these points. Eliot believed a supra-national network of artists to be essential to the transmission of ideas and the advancement of culture. Political differences in the late 1930's destroyed, in Eliot's view, the vital supra-national harmony within the artistic community that was the basis for his review, The Criterion, a vehicle for the interchange of ideas. He contends that European literature between the two World Wars was weakened

in part "by the obsession with politics. . . A universal concern with politics does not unite, it divides."\(^{94}\) Through such division art is placed in propagandistic confrontation with art with a resulting dilution of quality. Political themes thus led, in Eliot's assessment, to a lowering of the standards of European literary output of that period because of the intellectual anxieties and pressures placed on "political" artists within contesting nation-states.

Addressing himself to the second point, the interrelationality of art and politics, Eliot implies that art may be more strongly influenced by politics than vice-versa as Kazantzakis infers. This is so for several reasons. In today's large societies, Eliot says, "the professional politician has too much to do to have leisure for serious reading, even on politics. He has far too little time for exchange of ideas and information with men of distinction in other walks of life."\(^{95}\) A related and perhaps more important factor in the lack of influence of art on politics lies in the tendency for the mass public to distort and assimilate lesser ideas far below the best and wisest the leading artists offer. The practical politician, even if he is aware of this trend, must deal with and accommodate the widely held concepts propagated through mass art "as if they were the constructions of informed sagacity, the intuitions of genius, or the accumulated wisdom of ages."\(^{96}\) Other factors vitiating against the influence of art over politics today are the difficulty of travel and the expense of art. These have led to a lessening of so-called "private" art in favor of "public" or governmentally subsidized art. This is especially visible

\(^{94}\) T. S. Eliot, Notes Toward A Definition of Culture (London: Faber And Faber, Limited, 1948), p. 117.

\(^{95}\) Ibid., p. 86.

\(^{96}\) Ibid., p. 87.
in the vital interrelations among artists of differing nations. What with the immense work being done in comparative sociology, anthropology, and political theory, all nations have become extremely culture-conscious. They have established official agencies to assist in the arts and sciences. Many, like the British Council, send and receive representatives—as exemplified by Kazantzakis' visit to Britain following World War Two. With the cold war restrictions on travel, the increasing culture consciousness, the increased expense of art and research, and the deletion of private patronage, governmental discretion over art has expanded enormously. Eliot offers as preventives against this political control recognition of the need for artists to travel as private citizens to meet one another without official approval plus, "Some safeguard may be provided, against increasing politicalisation of the arts and science, by encouraging local initiative and responsibility; and, as far as possible, separating the central source of funds from control over their use."97 A further reason for the influence of politics on art is the resource weakness, particularly in crisis times, of the artistic community in terms of the political community. This was displayed in 1940 when the artistic community shut its borders and turned within itself. There was "a gradual closing of the mental frontiers of Europe. A kind of cultural autarchy followed inevitably upon political and economic autarchy."98 Eliot obviously wages powerful and logical assaults on the Kazantzakian perspective vis-a-vis these points. However, on the last level of the argument which in many ways is the most important, i.e., the question of what art can do for the common man, Kazantzakis is much less

---

97 Ibid., p. 94.
98 Ibid., p. 116.
Vulnerable.

Eliot believed that art directly benefitted and was understood by an elite. He asserted that without contact among this elite—scientific, artistic, philosophical, political, and religious groups—a society may disintegrate.\textsuperscript{99} This group's unity spanned national boundaries through its grounding in the three great sources of Western civilization—Israel, Rome, and Greece.\textsuperscript{100} Yet Eliot argued also, in somewhat contradictory fashion, that for the permeation of ideas a non-educated language, i.e., of the common people, is vital. Speaking of Welsh in the particular instance Eliot says;

But it must be remembered, that for the transmission of a culture—a peculiar way of thinking, feeling, and behaving—and for its maintenance, there is no safeguard more reliable than a language. And to survive for this purpose it must continue to be a literary language—not necessarily a scientific language but certainly a poetic one; otherwise the spread of education will extinguish it.\textsuperscript{101}

This espousal of an artistic-poetic people's language as a necessary vehicle for transmitting culture—a directing force of destiny—was supported in stirring fashion by Kazantzakis. His Cretan birth among the common people, his mistrust of pseudo-intellectuals and self-serving politicians, and his maltreatment at the hands of various academics and literary critics, all led him to identify himself with the people and their language. Kazantzakis tells how impressed he was on meeting 150 Greeks during a Russian trip in 1929 and discussing world issues with them, "If I were Christ surely my apostles would be people like these. Love, warmth, trust. The intellectuals are barren, dishonest, doomed. I had felt tired

\textsuperscript{99}Ibid., p. 84.
\textsuperscript{100}Ibid., p. 113.
\textsuperscript{101}Ibid., p. 57.
and sad. And with these simple people I regained my confidence in man. 102

And, comparing the people of his native race with their leaders, he found,

The Greek people in the mountains and in the islands are superb. They have great virtues and human depth. But their leaders are a disgrace to them. And among the intellectuals you will find a few young people full of aspiration, intellectual curiosity, and disinterested love. The older ones are all lost. 103

Thus Kazantzakis' personal answer to the fifth question he posed to British intellectuals—what can be done to broaden the basis of the contact between intellectuals, artists, and the people?—was within the terms of Eliot’s analysis of the need for a people's literary language:

In the critical evolutionary stage through which our demotic language is passing it is natural, essential—and extremely useful—for a creator to treasure avidly and to save as much linguistic wealth as he can, as in similar periods of Dante, Rabelais, and Luther. Our tongue, because of the laziness and linguistic ignorance of the 'intellectuals,' and because of the linguistic corruption of the people subjected to faulty schooling and newspaper jargon, is in danger of being deformed and impoverished. The creator is more anguished by this danger than anyone else, and because for him every word is a part of the spirit he knows that the greatest responsibility falls to him, he opens the doors of his works wide in order that the nouns and adjectives may find a refuge there. This is how it has always been; the creator, in these endangering periods, even though he knows that his vocabulary may become overlaid, wants to receive under his roof (he cannot, he must not resist) all the homeless linguistic refugees who are in danger of dying. Only in this way can the constantly increasing linguistic wealth be saved, that is to say, spiritually. 104


104 Quoted in Friar, "Introduction," to Kazantzakis’ The Odyssey, p. xxix. Adonis Decavelles, "The Torrent and the Sun," Poetry, XCV (December 1959), p. 178, assesses The Odyssey in terms of this theme: "He has gone for his major source to the demotic language which in its numerous dialects preserves roots and elements from all periods, from Homer to the present day. To this he added what he has borrowed from written records of folk literature, and from all this he has produced a homogeneous and powerfully expressive medium, peculiarly his own, and the perfect tool for his cosmic, burning message. The language he has used is itself another Odyssey in its explorations and achievements. His words are like wild plants pulled from the
Kazantzakis chose the Greek demotic language, that of the peasant, fisherman, and worker, rather than the purist Greek of the intellectuals, for his modern sequel to Homer and for other works. For this reason Kazantzakis' popular reputation abroad as well as in Greece has always been greater than his critical one. This is demonstrated in America by the lack of significant criticism, even though many have seen the Broadway musical and Cacoyannis' film version of Zorba, plus Dassin's rendering of The Greek Passion in the film "He Who Must Die," while millions have read the English paperbound editions of his novels. In Greece this disparity is evidenced by the fact that the three hundred copies of the original edition of The Odyssey, issued in 1938, did not receive wide acclaim and in fact did not even sell out for some time after their appearance. Kazantzakis explains this phenomenon, "The intellectuals of Athens cannot understand this; I give it to the boatmen and fishermen, and they have no trouble."

The contest between supporters of purist Greek and supporters of the demotic is not waged merely on an academic or literary level as Friar, "Introduction," to Kazantzakis', The Odyssey, p. xcviii, explains: 'Since the birth of the modern Greek nation, a passionate battle has raged between scholars and academicians on the one hand, who have tried to impose the purist tongue from above, and most authors--poets, novelists, dramatists--who, equally proud of their long tradition, have found themselves unable to express their emotions in an artificial and bloodless tongue whose textual roots go so deep as to evolve into no living blossom. Fifty years ago Athenians rioted in the streets when a troupe tried to stage the Cresteia in modern translation, and several students were killed in an attempt to keep The New Testament from being translated into the demotic tongue.'

Kazantzakis' adoption of the demotic as the literary vehicle for carrying his thoughts to the people had the effect of reinforcing his identity and sense of unity with the common man. In the same manner in which he rejected the pseudo-intellectual, academic-literary language that ignored the people's needs he rejected also political solutions that did not involve the people of Greece and that were not wrought through and by the people. In The Fraticides Kazantzakis relates through Father Yanaros his belief that of the three possible roads out of the Greek Civil war on which the book is based, God's intervention, the leaders—kings, politicians, bishops, revolutionaries, and intellectuals—good will, and the people's path, only the latter offers any hope; "What third road? There is no third road! It hasn't opened yet. We have to open it with our labor, pushing onward to make it a road. And who are the 'we'? The people! This road begins with the people, goes ahead with the people, and ends with the people." Kazantzakis' tenacity in living by the dictates of the people's needs and his addressing his art to those needs in terms the common man could comprehend represents the populist alternative to Eliot's elitism and the only feasible manner of reversing the modern trend and preparing for the influence of art over politics. Drawing from his Greek origins, the Judeo-Christian tradition, his many travels and experiences, and his wide learning, Kazantzakis showed the road of salvation to rich and poor, intellectual and peasant, master and servant. One traverses this road by saving God.

Thus far we have seen Kazantzakis' diagnosis of the ills of contemporary Western civilization. He believed the widespread suffering, injustice, and despiritualization derived from: (1) man's escapist surrender to the masks of ideology and the hypocrisy of institutionalized religion, both of which stifle the spirit rather than release it; (2) the dominance of the technocratic-materialistic ethos with its many dehumanizing aspects; (3) the paucity of synthesizing vision among men of the spirit--artists, intellectuals, prophets, and religious leaders; (4) the eagerness with which man abdicates his burden of freedom; (5) the explosive increase of violence in the world. Believing this and viewing his personal salvation as an artist and humanist to be at one with the world's Kazantzakis could say, through Father Yanaros, "Now, all is chaos, and I, the worm, must bring order."\(^1\) It is this attempt to bring order--Kazantzakis' theoretical prognosis if you will--to which we turn our attention in the remainder of the discussion. Kazantzakis proffers his prognosis as an exit from the transitional age, and really from any transitional age, through the concept of saving God. Any philosophy of politics such as Kazantzakis' must necessarily answer the charge, not only of the perceptiveness and accurateness of its analysis, but also the accuracy, meaningfulness, and usefulness of its proposed solution. The central theme of this examination is that

\(^1\)Kazantzakis, *The Fratricides*, p. 177.
while Kazantzakis' prognosis for Western civilization is rather mystical and ultimately demanding of men, it is rich in insights, wholly operational, and answers uniquely the central problem of modern man, i.e., how to constructively resolve the contradiction between the boundless freedom that is his and the deterministic forces at play in mass, technological society. For this resolution Kazantzakis attempts in effect to render the individualist Zorbaic-Odyssean vantage point of the Cretan glance into a vibrant communitarian perspective, realizing that "a new decalogue is absolutely necessary." In this chapter we will provide an explication of the tenets of his new decalogue for saving God and man, an interpretation of his search for valid humanistic political criteria applicable to that process, and—through following the logic of this basic metaphysics to its political conclusions—a description of Kazantzakis' new messianic ideal-order for modern man for, "His politics grew out of his metaphysics, his metaphysics out of his politics." 

Saving God: A Political Metaphysics

Spinoza once wrote, "All things, I say, are in God." From this basic cornerstone of his algebraically precise philosophy he derived proof of God's omnipotence as free cause unhampered by intelligent, purposive, or moral restrictions. Given the infinite potency of God/substance all

---


real possibilities will be actualized. Spinoza emphasized God's activity as cause, infinitely, unconquerably, and exhaustively actualizing potentiality. In this system man played no active, participatory role. Man's duty was the passive one of emending his intellect by striving for self-actualization through the intellectual love of God. From this intellectual love would come "adequate ideas" of God. These ideas, attained at the third, highest level of Spinoza's hierarchy of knowledge, would enable the mind to perceive things in aspects of their eternity, drive the emotions to subservience and control, and know that "our salvation, or blessedness, or freedom consists in a constant and eternal love toward God, or in the love of God toward men."5 Spinoza's was the most profound, comprehensive, and rigorous formulation of the logic of the Platonic-Christian ontology to its deterministic conclusions. The implications for man of this view are many and far-reaching, the most important of which comes from the elevation of the force of God as necessity and the corollary deemphasis on the capability of man for creative, constructive, and affirmative freedom. If one accepts the Spinosistic-Christian view that "all things follow from the eternal decree of God,"6 and that all men, as finite expressions of the essence of God insofar as he is extended substance, have a broad base of "common notions" on which they not only should rely but on which they must eventually at some point in time agree, then man exists in a truly determined world.

Reflecting on this mechanism from a vantage point three centuries later, it seems that if there were such a broad base of common knowledge available

5Ibid., p. 275.
6Ibid., p. 125.
to men, if the world were so ordered as Spinoza believed, if there were accessible adequate ideas from which and through which we could perceive the essence of the world, and if man was determined by all these things, then man would have made much more progress toward achieving a larger degree of stability and unity in his world than is the actual situation. If Spinoza was right then how does one explain, as Kazantzakis observes, that most

human beings are submerged in the inferno of hatred, barreness, absurdity. They are like people who cannot read, who can make out only a few letters, but still try to read from the Divine Song. They mix up these letters and link words or phrases analogous to their own humble desires—food, women, wealth, logic. It is like reading some superb work in a drowsy state. Here and there they distinguish a word and then fall back to sleep.7

Spinoza explicitly explains away the source of much controversy, but he at the same time implicitly does grave damage to the possibility of diversity among men. The existence of diversity and the capability of spontaneity of men are the two most powerful forces in the creativity and vitality of men. Spinoza, with his powerful emphasis on adequate ideas and reason had taken from man much that is of value to him and much that allows him the flexibility and adaptability to cope with a world that is just not as well-ordered, as rational, as easily understandable, as easily explainable as the Platonic-Christian ontology would have us believe. Taken in its entirety Spinoza's system has obvious weaknesses although there are several points of his thought which lend themselves readily to contemporary analyses, such as Kazantzakis', of the human predicament.

7Kazantzakis, England, p. 84.
While it is equally valid to view Spinoza's philosophy on an ontological, logical, or epistemological level, he offers perhaps the most sustenance today, particularly in view of the deficiencies in his ontology and epistemology, when discussed on the ethical/moral level vis-a-vis the problem of freedom. Spinoza's frequently cited principle "freedom is the recognition of necessity" is particularly meaningful for man who lives on this side of Marx, Freud, and the industrial revolution. This is so because we have come to realize under the leadership of these men and the force of these events that we are indeed determined to a dramatic extent--culturally, genetically, socially, by our unconscious drives, etc. In view of this, Spinoza's counsel that we must gain adequate knowledge of external determinate causality seems a sound piece of advice if we are to understand these determinants and our own fate. However, Spinoza's fatal error--and by inference that of the Platonic-Christian ontology--lay in the stricture that man is only a perceiver who, once he recognizes external God-necessity from which according to that cosmology all things flow, must submit to that determination. Kazantzakis borrows from "the thrice holy ascetic, Spinoza" in reacting to the negative role assigned to man through this error and arrives at a more viable, dynamic, man-centered ontology with decisive political import. Taking Spinoza's basic insight into the recognition of necessity Kazantzakis constructs a system in which man creates his own fate and that of God through saving God.

The basic cornerstone of Kazantzakis' philosophy was a reversal of Spinoza; God "huddles in a knot in every cell of flesh." And, "This world is not His vestment, as I once believed; it is God himself. Form

---

8 Kazantzakis, Spain, p. 120.
9 Kazantzakis, The Saviors of God, p. 91.
and essence are identical. . . . Zorba knew this, but could not say it. He danced it. I thought to myself, if only I can transform this dance into words." Kazantzakis derived from this reversal of the Spinozistic-Christia1 cosmology proof of the lack of God's omnipotence and emphasized the world of things and men as free cause unhampered by a priori other-worldly intelligent or purposive restrictions. This is to say that all real possibilities, both good and evil, can and may be actualized for nature has no morals. What man must do is to actualize the good. He does this by saving God. As pointed out in the discussion of the Cretan glance, God is the Divine, spirit, the good, the élan vital, and many more things. Durant discusses these varied meanings of God for Kazantzakis; sometimes Kazantzakis describes a mystical vision: 'I felt a command . . . to become one with the fearful enticing Lover who lies in wait in the darkness and whom we call God. . . . I felt that love, death, and God were one and the same. (The process of life, love, reproduction, death, new life, love . . . is itself God, as a continuous creative force and flow.) As the years went by, I became ever more deeply aware of this terrifying Trinity.' Sometimes he united God and Satan in a 'new synthesis' expressing the moral ambivalence of a world fluctuating between good and evil. Or he identified God with the Heracleitian flux, almost with revolution: 'God is not the power that has found eternal equilibrium, but the power that is forever breaking every equilibrium, forever searching for a higher one.' Or again, like Thomas Mann, he offered God as the progressive 'spiritualization of matter' by the heroes of man's mental and moral growth; these nobles of the soul gave developing form and substance to man's ideal; they were the 'creators of God.' So the word 'God,' which had expressed the highest ideal of men through groping centuries of myth and hope, must not be allowed to die because one of its forms has faded from the minds of educated men. At the age of sixty-seven Kazantzakis was still 'longing for God.'

The question which presents itself in view of the importance of the concept of God in Kazantzakis' system is whether or not Kazantzakis can accurately be described as an atheist. Opinion is divided on this question with a majority--three of whom are Bloch, Prevelakis, and Helen Kazantzakis--portraying

10 Kazantzakis, Report, p. 468.

11 Durant, Interpretations of Life, p. 290.
Kazantzakis as a pure atheist, while some—Poulakidas and Stavrou among others—believe that Kazantzakis may have returned to Christian membership late in life. It is perhaps more correct to say that once Kazantzakis had passed through phases of Nietzscheanism, Buddhism, Marxism, and

12Those who believe in Kazantzakis' atheism state their views thusly:

Bloch, Journal of Modern Literature, II (November 1971), p. 90; "Kazantzakis' world is devoid of an external God. Illusion reigns supreme, death is the only certainty, and even death may be a dream. Yet the Greek poet's nature is permeated with extreme religiosity and a thirst for sainthood ... [The Divine Being] who is neither the Biblical nor the Christian God, bears the innumerable masks of nature and is a pure projection of the human mind who conceives It. To Kazantzakis God is merely a human creation."

Prevelakis, Nikos Kazantzakis And His Odyssey, p. 135; "But behind appearances does there exist a metaphysical unity, a real Being? The conclusion of The Saviors of God had given the answer. Is there at least an ethical world? Moralists sell the temporal as eternal. Nothing exists except an inconceivable and continually renewed energy. Man out of conceit identifies himself with it, rides with tragic joy the cataract bearing him towards the abyss."

H. Kazantzakis, Nikos Kazantzakis, p. 433, relates how their marriage ceremony was moving "even for atheists like ourselves."

While those who deny the atheism of Kazantzakis' later years say:

C. N. Stavrou, "Some Notes on Nikos Kazantzakis," Colorado Quarterly, XII (Winter 1964), p. 321; "Kazantzakis, like Joyce, made some bold Icarian passes at the sun, but the wax on his wings never melted to the point of danger. Kazantzakis' Odysseus conceives of himself as a species of Nietzschean Superman and may be called an atheist. But the Kazantzakis of The Last Temptation of Christ accomplished a prodigal's return home in exemplary fashion—doubly secure, be it added in the knowledge that he was saved and that his safety could not be attributed to a cloistered virtue. The godlessness of a James Joyce was completely antibetical to Kazantzakis' perception and response to life although he himself was not completely aware of it until relatively late in life. However, The Poor Man of God, a work about St. Francis reveals the ancient mariner Kazantzakis, returning to the belief of the young boy raised by the Franciscan monks and to the devoutness of the young man seeking enlightenment in the monasteries of Macedonia. Neither his exile from country nor his apostasy from Church was as final or as irrevocable as Joyce's."

Poulakidas, "The Novels of Kazantzakis And Their Existential Sources" (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation), pp. 147-48, contends that while on the one hand Odysseus, Zorba, and Captain Michales reject religious comfort and do not really belong to the Christian community "On the other hand, Kazantzakis does not refuse to acknowledge the power and values of Christ's message. The Last Temptation of Christ, The Greek Passion, Saint Francis, and The Fraticides are Kazantzakis' testimony in behalf of a positive theology: 'only this final One still lives and reigns as God.' To ignore this
Hellenism, he was, because of his background, his concern with the soul, and his evaluation of the moving power of the Christian myth, brought back to Christian themes. Although Christian beliefs do not constitute the totality of his philosophy he adopted certain Christian postulates, late in life, for a non-Christian perspective. It is possible that Kazantzakis was—as someone, Proudhon perhaps, once said of Nietzsche and Feuerbach—an anti-theist. That is, like they, he opposed not so much the idea of God but the interpretations and usages to which the idea was put by God's earthly followers. He, like they, was avowedly anti-clerical and relentlessly battled the institutionalized church. While it is not possible to definitively resolve this question Helen's recounting of Kazantzakis' death would seem to indicate that he persisted in his anti-theism, if not outright atheism, through his later years even when faced with the abyss:

That Saturday (October 26, 1957) two pastors came into our room. The regular one, the Protestant pastor, and then the Catholic priest. Nikos turned his face to the wall. Full of hope, I had not thought of the end. 'Nikosamou,' I scolded. 'What you've just done isn't polite. It's Saint Dimitri's Day; the poor men wanted to please us.' He didn't say a word. He only turned his face toward me and asked for a drink.13

Such nullification of the reassuring institutionalization of the Christian cosmology carries with it many profound consequences. The most important of these lies in its nihilistic potential.

side of Kazantzakis is very misleading, because one is then tempted to align him with the French existentialists, Sartre and Camus. One can say that The Fratricides published posthumously was written so that Kazantzakis could assure for himself a mansion in heaven and that it is his repentance and confession, his repudiation and nullification of his great 'Silence' and Sequel written at the prime of his life. This, of course, is stretching the point. One must consider all of Kazantzakis' work and not only part of it in understanding Odysseus and the other characters."

Kazantzakis' nihilism has been and is at present a hotly contested issue. There are commentators on both sides of the issue and they usually—as Kazantzakis was at no time concerned with conciseness or consistency—support their cases quite well from his writing. Kazantzakis' ascetic inclination, his Buddhism, and his idealism, all lead to a tendency to negate the reality of the world, however, he ultimately rejected the nihilist solution. His firm adherence to the potential goodness in the world and the duty of man to realize that goodness through affirming life is expressed through his emphatic loyalty to his task of saving God.

14 Blenkinsopp, Commonweal, XCIII (February 26, 1971), p. 518, has recognized that "in Kazantzakis' thinking there are unresolved antinomies, ambiguities, unreconciled polarities of expression." This has led to many philosophical contradictions and differing interpretations of his major views—including nihilism.

One school, to which the following belong, contends Kazantzakis was a nihilist:

Prevelakis, Nikos Kazantzakis And His Odyssey, p. 134, finds Kazantzakis in the mid-1920's "turning toward total nihilism."


Durant, Interpretations of Life, p. 289, believes The Odyssey to be possibly the outstanding poem of our century "despite the nihilism of its philosophy."

Another school holds that Kazantzakis was not a nihilist:

Hadgopoulos, "Odysseus' Choice: A Comparison And Contrast of Works by Albert Camus and Nikos Kazantzakis" (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation), p. 150; "both Camus and Kazantzakis attempted to chart a way out of nihilism, the contemporary anguish and misery which has led to a sense of human indifference and spiritual apathy."

Stanford, The Ulysses Theme, p. 233, discusses how Odysseus and the beautiful courtesan, Margaro, realize the insubstantiality of the world. The young prince, who has learned this from them, "decides to cast away all his earthly possessions. He has chosen the via negativa. But Margaro and Odysseus choose the way of acceptance; they will endeavour to fill the vacuum of life with joy. In this episode the Odysseus of Kazantzakis rejects the ultimate nihilism of Pascoli's Ulysses, just as he has earlier rejected the hollow heroics of d'Annunzio's Navigator Hero."
Kazantzakis states this allegiance to his concept of saving God in various passages in virtually all his works. In *The Last Temptation of Christ* Judas cries out, "Man must fight to bring about the Messiah."\(^{15}\) Odysseus says:

> I know that God is earless, eyeless, and heartless too, a brainless Dragon Worm that crawls on earth and hopes in anguish and in secret that we’ll give him soul, for then he, too, may sprout ears, eyes, to match his growth, but God is clay in ten fingers, and I mold him! He spoke, and his ten fingers shaped the empty air.\(^{16}\)

He hears God’s cry, "Help me, my son. I’m caught in your dark loins! I groan!"\(^{17}\) In *Report* Kazantzakis says, "Blowing through heaven and earth, and in our hearts and the heart of every living thing, is a gigantic breath—a great Cry—which we call God."\(^{18}\) In such a view God’s existence is tenuous at best. His light is perishable. It is to man’s support that God must look for preservation. In transitional times God’s survival is particularly perilous; "Returning from Mount Athos, I felt for the first

---

\(^{15}\) Kazantzakis, *The Last Temptation of Christ*, p. 17.

\(^{16}\) Kazantzakis, *The Odyssey*, Book VIII, lines 830-36, p. 250.

\(^{17}\) Ibid., Book XIV, line 1052, p. 442.

time that Christ wanders about hungry and homeless, that He is in danger, and that it is His turn to be saved—by man.”19 One commentator, in analyzing this concept, links Dostoyevsky and Kazantzakis as "friends of God" and traces such friendship to its founding on two basic ideas;

first, the notion that there was a gradual change from objective to subjective grounds in the analysis of creation; that is, that man, from accepting an objective world in which God (who had created him) existed, ultimately thought of himself as the creator of the idea of God (who therefore joined the subjective world within the mind of man). Second, there is the subsequent assumption by man of a sense of responsibility, or concern, over the position and merits of a transcendent Being within a solely subjective world which was created by man and must therefore be sustained by him.20

Thus, armed with this knowledge and responsibility, Kazantzakis, who realized with Zorba and Odysseus that the great, sublime One does not truly exist, turned not away from the world through nihilism as some would have it but to the battle for creating and sustaining God;

The major and almost the only theme of all my work is the struggle of man with 'God'; the unyielding, inextinguishable struggle of the naked worm called 'Man' against the terrifying power and darkness of the forces within him and around him. The stubbornness of the struggle, the tenacity of the little spark in its fight to penetrate the age-old, boundless night and conquer it.21

19 Ibid., p. 236.


Men go to God when he is sore bested;
find him poor and scorned, without shelter or bread,
whelmed under weight of the wicked, the weak,
the dead;
Christians stand by God in his hour of grieving.

We will explore in a later section the manner in which Bonhoeffer's concept, written above a few months prior to his execution, parallels Kazantzakis' in fulfilling the logic of Hoffman's analysis.

In this struggle Kazantzakis put man at the center of the universe:

He gave man both individual and universal significance, enabling an individualistic voluntarism to serve transindividualistic ends. By realizing their own potentialities, by overcoming sluggishness and exerting our vitality whether sexually, martially, or mentally, we save god and push evolution forward.22

For Kazantzakis the forward push of evolution by man for transindividualistic ends can only come through one system—submission to a new harmonious and unifying visionary ideal:

this system summons and commands all our forces; viz., we must follow a rhythm that is higher than ourselves. Only in this way can man's existence become noble and integrated. Only thus can his energy transcend the stifling limits of the individual. Only he who believes and obeys such a rhythm can live perfectly his own tiny individual life.

As soon as a believer climbs onto the pyre or sets about doing a brave deed or even just sits calmly on his own doorstep, the life inside him erupts, all flooded with light. In the flicker of an eyelash, he feels such joy as all the logical non-believers cannot feel in a whole century. The faithful, most ascetic method has always been the surest and most fruitful for man's living intensely—not the life to be hereafter—but the present life here and now on earth. Only through faith can the masses be elevated. What do we mean by their being "elevated?" We mean the subjection of their desires and needs to a hyperindividual, or rather, to the deepest human rhythm.

Our duty, if we find this rhythm, is to ally ourselves with it. And how? By following its own method; viz., by transmuting as much material substance as possible into Spirit. In the human realm, this struggle is complex and uncertain. For what we call "material substance" and what we call "Spirit" are interchangeable. Whatever was once a movement or an impulse upward in the foregoing generation—whatever was once spirit—becomes, in the subsequent generation, motionless, stifled, heavy, and in time reacts just like substance. A Breath (call it Religion, Race, Ideal, Fatherland) that had once risen like fire, that had once created, dies down after a few centuries; it is slowly reduced to embers, and finally becomes a hindrance to any new upsurging Breath. Finally, after it in turn has exhausted its power in all possible forms of work, it too peters out, dies down and at the very center of the struggle becomes an obstacle.23

There is a linkage of Kazantzakis' metaphysics with his theories of history and politics in this duty of each man as a savior of God to identify and ally himself with the God-rhythm of his generation. For the spiritual

22Bien, Nikos Kazantzakis, p. 18.

23Kazantzakis, Spain, pp. 62-63.
rhythm will lead from the transitional age and, if not wholly political, it will of necessity take political forms for efficacy and comprehensiveness. Two important questions immediately arise concerning Kazantzakis' politics of salvation. First, how does one identify this noble rhythm; or, is there a universal theme underlying all the various political faces the Spirit takes? Second, will saving God help man to overcome Spinozistic necessity and contemporary technological, economic, historical, and sociological realms of determinism? If so, how, and if not, then of what liberating value is the concept? The latter of these questions will occupy our attention in the next and last chapter. As for the former, in addressing it at this time we are led again to Kazantzakis' Marxism. Just as Kazantzakis' psychic struggle between writer and actor propelled him to Marxism, so did his concept of saving God.

Marxism, in Kazantzakis' terms, seemed to embody the God-rhythm. Wilson observes of Toda Raba and The Saviors of God:

Like Sartre, he seems to have accepted that Marxism is the most typical and basic philosophy of our century. And where Sartre has attempted, in The Critique of Dialectical Reason, to broaden and deepen Marxism, Kazantzakis has attempted to create a new religion based upon the anti-Christian ideas of Nietzsche and Marx. He declares, in effect, that man must cease to regard himself as a servile creature of God, and recognize that he is God's co-worker. In fact, more than this; without man's creative effort, God dies; through the god-like act of creation, man becomes the Saviour of God. The idea is tremendous and powerful—and, of course, in total opposition to the self-pitying pessimism that has become so fashionable in the 20th century, from Andreyev to Beckett.24

He was attracted to Marxism by its activist messianism and by its egalitarian economic, political, and philosophic appeal. Postulated as that alternative philosophy of salvation for which Kazantzakis was seeking he was dismayed to discover that, in practice, Marxism took on many of the

---

aspects of bourgeoisie Christianity—the inquisitional religion which he opposed;

Like many men of sensitivity and compassion of that day, he thought of communism as a religion, yet a religion which was in danger of being submerged and distorted by materialistic emphasis. He rejected the materialistic bias of communism, but similarly rejected the dogmatic and anthropomorphic God of the Christians as equally materialistic. 25

In the name of the City of God the later Marxists used injustice to bring about social justice, murder of heretics to attain brotherhood, and intolerance and oppression to achieve equality, thus bringing about a tragedy between the idea and the realization. Marxism became more than the necessary ordering ideal of men's lives in laying claim to being the absolute, hegemonic vehicle for man's salvation on earth—as religions claims to be the absolute, hegemonic vehicle for man's salvation after death. Centralist, compulsory means were adopted to assimilate society and the individual into a collective machine in order to re-structure and re-create all in the name of a future eschaton. This claim to absolutes allowed no deviation, no spontaneity, no freedom. The later Marxists committed the fatal error of attempting to stop history. Following an intense involvement with Marxism, Kazantzakis subsequently became disi-

25 Friar, "Preface," to Kazantzakis', The Saviors of God, p. 20. Ignazio Silone was one of those contemporaries of Kazantzakis of sensitivity and compassion attracted to Marxism. Pietro Spina, the central character of Silone's masterpiece, Bread And Wine, trans. Harvey Fergusson II, with Afterword by Marc Slonim (rev. ed.; New York: A Signet Classic, The New American Library, 1955), pp. 95-96, joins a socialist youth group in 1921 thereby leaving a church which "was identified with the corrupt, wicked and cruel society which it should have been fighting." Many years later he looks back in dismay. Had not the socialist "community also become a synagogue? . . . Hasn't truth become for me the party's truth? and justice, party justice? Has not the organization ended up by extinguishing in me all moral values, which are held in contempt as petit bourgeois prejudices, and has not the organization itself become the supreme value? Have I then not filed the opportunism of a decadent church to fall into the Machiavellianism of a sect?"
lusioned with Soviet Marxism due to its materialism, bureaucratization, moralizing, and--because of these--its loss of dynamism. He never, however, abandoned socialist goals.

Kazantzakis had rejected as outmoded the Christian ontology and the bourgeoisie ethic built on that world-view in formulating his alternative concept of saving God only to see the first socio-political application of his view fail with the institutionalization of Marxism. He had emphasized commitment and choice yet proffered no guides for such choice. In this respect at least, he was vulnerable to Camus' criticism, as related by Wilhoite of Sartre's brand of existentialism:

Sartrean existentialists present no criteria for evaluating personal choices, much less for justifying their own political and ideological alliance with proponents of a deterministic view such as Marxism. They seek to actualize their boundless freedom by aligning themselves with a movement which claims the authorization of history for its total freedom.26

Do success, vitalism, and vigor, representing the "authorization of history," provide the viable criteria for one's commitment? Is this how one tells

26Wilhoite, Beyond Nihilism, pp. 91-92. In Sartre's, The Age of Reason (New York: Bantam Books, n.d.), pp. 130-32, Brunet, the communist operative in Paris in the 1930's, tells Mathieu, i.e., Sartre; "Yes, you need to commit yourself. Don't you feel so yourself. . . . You have gone your own way. . . . You are the son of a bourgeois, you couldn't come to us straight away, you had to free yourself first. And now it's done, you are free. But what's the use of that same freedom, if not to join us? You have spent thirty-five years cleaning yourself up, and the result is nil. You are an odd sort of creature, you know. . . . You live in a void, you have cut your bourgeois connections, you have no tie with the proletariat, you're adrift, you're an abstraction, a man who is not there. It can't be an amusing sort of life. . . . You renounced everything in order to be free. . . . Take one step further, renounce your own freedom; and everything shall be rendered unto you." Failing in this instance to make the commitment, Mathieu becomes an absurd, pathetic figure in contrast to Brunet, of whom Mathieu observes; "Now you are very real. . . . You are a man. . . . you have chosen to be a man! A man with powerful, rather knotted muscles, who deals in brief, stern truths, a man erect and self-enclosed, sure of himself, a man of this earth, impervious to the angelical allurements of
a liberating ideal from an oppressive one? Kazantzakis addresses this issue in The Fraticides. Leonidas, a sensitive young nationalist soldier, writes to his love:

why am I fighting? For whom am I fighting? They say we fight to save Greece, we, the Royal Army, the blackhoods as they call us; and that our enemies in the hills--the redhoods--fight to divide and sell Greece. Oh, if I could only be sure! If I only knew. . . . Is it possible that we are the traitors, the ones who are selling Greece, and can the so-called traitors in the hills be the armed mountaineers and the rebels of 1821? How can I tell justice from injustice, and decide with whom to go, and to which side I should give my life? There is no greater torment, to a fighter, than this doubt.27

Leonidas, i.e., Kazantzakis, realized that sincerity in one's commitment as expressed through individual bravery and fortitude represents a possible evaluative standard. Yet when his group captures five young rebels, rather than join the nationalists they choose execution; "So courage and faith is not the infallible test; but, then how can I separate the truth from the lies? How many heroes and martyrs have sacrificed themselves for some damned ideal; God has his pure heroes and martyrs; Satan has his pure heroes and martyrs; how can I tell them apart?"28 With his disillusionment with Marxism Kazantzakis, perhaps unlike Sartre, came to appreciate fully--as testified to by Leonidas' agonizing--the political cul-de-sac of solipsistic relativism his saviors faced. In seeking valid criteria to replace that relativism he cast about for enlightenment and turned, or perhaps

art, psychology, and politics, a whole man, nothing but a man. And Mathieu was there, confronting him, irresolute, half his life gone, and still half-raw, assailed by all the vertigoes of non-humanity; and he thought: 'I don't even look like a man . . . if I choose, I must choose your side, for there is no other choice.'"27

28Ibid., p. 104.
more accurately returned, as have so many others, to the two most lasting and powerful Western traditions—Greek classicism and Christian doctrine. As Bien states, "Kazantzakis seems unable to avoid Christianity and Hellenism when he bodies forth his visions of future man." 

The Human Condition And The Classical View

Seeking universals for his saviors, following his Marxist disillusionment in the 1930's Kazantzakis focused an encompassing gaze on his Greek heritage in much the same manner as he had once focused on his Cretan ancestry. For his most ambitious work, The Odyssey—completed on Aegina—Kazantzakis went to one of the fountainheads of Greek culture, Homer's Odyssey, for sustenance. The novels of the late 1930's and thereafter provide ample evidence of his Greek enthralment—Zorba, The Greek Passion, Freedom or Death, The Fratricides, are all set in Greek locales. Report abounds in praises to Hellenism. Bien notes this return to Greece and its effect on Kazantzakis' life and art:

By rooting himself once more in Greece (or rather, by relaxing sufficiently so that Greece's soil could embrace him, for rootedness demands humility and passive acceptance) he was able to introduce into his works a natural, unforced and therefore convincing particularity which they had hitherto lacked, a particularity which no amount of universalizing could then erase. Moreover, in helping him escape the tyranny of Mind and Self, this rootedness had the additional effect of allowing

29 Bien, Nikos Kazantzakis, p. 142.

30 What we offer in this and the next section is an "interpretation" of the development of Kazantzakis' political philosophy. Kazantzakis at no time indicated specific intent to seek criteria in Hellenism and Christianity to supplement his socialist beliefs. It is obvious, however, that this is in fact what transpired. While non-Greek commentators have duly explored Kazantzakis' Christian themes they have, for the most part, ignored his borrowings from his Greek heritage. Kazantzakis was not a
a true sense of community to an œuvre which had tended formerly to individuation and indeed to solipsism.31

This solipsism was precisely the crucial political-philosophic problem of Kazantzakis' concept of saving God. There is evident in Kazantzakis' return to Hellenism for criteria for the exit from the transitional age a mystic love of the Greek spirit and country but he was not returning to the political view that "during the decade from 1912 to 1922 may be summed up as 'aristocratic nationalism!'"32 Rather, Kazantzakis sought in his Greek heritage insight for his saviors of universal, internationalistic validity. Prevelakis sees this internationalism as the central manner in which Kazantzakis' Odyssey differs from the literary stereotype of the nationalist genre.

classiciast in the sense of ignoring post-Hellenism contributions to Greek culture yet neither did he reject the ancient lessons. As always he sought to draw from all available sources. Stanford, The Ulysses Theme, p. 237, concurs: "He sees his hero (Odysseus) as the product of over three thousand years of Greek history. In those three millennia many different racial strains have enriched the Greek stock. Some Greeks of the present day would like to prune away all post-classical accretions and recover the pure antique tradition as they imagine it. This policy Kazantzakis rejects. Far better, he thinks, to create a synthesis of all those varied racial elements and to find a way of expressing their variegated richness. His Odyssey embodies his conception of this synthesis, and is an expression of this 'hyperhellenic' tradition." Within this tradition Kazantzakis begins where many non-Greek literatists stop, as Friar, "Introduction," to Kazantzakis', The Saviors of God, p. 26, describes: "Like all modern poets who have attempted epical works, whether as concentrated as T. S. Eliot's The Waste Land or Hart Crane's The Bridge, or as all-inclusive as Ezra Pound's Cantos or James Joyce's Ulysses or Finnegans Wake, Kazantzakis was forced to create his own ideology, since his age gave him none which he could accept as myth, religion, or symbol. He was fortunate to live in the one country in the world where ancient myths are still part of the blood and bone of its people."

31Bien, Nikos Kazantzakis, pp. 34-35. Kazantzakis' rootedness is demonstrated even further through his choosing, once he was exiled from Greece, to settle in an ancient Greek city, Antibes, on the French Riviera.

32Prevelakis, Nikos Kazantzakis And His Odyssey, p. 16.
Kazantzakis withdrew to Aegina to write his Odyssey. . . . the new Odysseus would not be a national hero: he would be a rebel, uprooted, even a desperado. The arena of his actions would be the whole world. Instead of the friendly setting of his native land, there would be threatening horizons. Instead of well-known faces, there would be magic masks.33

Bringing this internationalist inquiry to bear on his Greek heritage Kazantzakis discerned valuable criteria for his saviors' struggle within the two central missions of Hellenism--liberty and the reconciliation of East and West.

Kazantzakis believed with Augustine that "Every great people has its own bluebird, the supreme and mystical ideal in which all its urges coalesce. Ancient Greece had beauty; Rome, the state; Jews, divinity; the Hindus, Nirvana; Christianity, the everlasting Kingdom."34 Approaching the cumulative experience of the Hellenes in this fashion he discovered "the beloved bluebird, bloodstained but immortal, that first on this planet built its nest in Greece--freedom."35 This immortal bluebird was the Hellenes' hallmark; the overriding "mission of the Hellenic race: Man's struggle for liberty."36 The Greeks sought, as Stanford suggests, to fulfill their mission in many ways--politically and spiritually:

Freedom, _eleutheria_, has long been the political and spiritual ideal of the Greek mind--at times a deluding will-o'-the-wisp, at times a spur to greatness. The Athenians at Marathon, the Greeks of the war of Independence (with Byron as a heroic emblem among them), the Greeks of the campaign against the invaders in the second World War; Socrates, the Desert Fathers of the early church, the ascetic monks at Athos:

33Ibid., p. 56.
34Kazantzakis, _England_, p. 280.
36Kazantzakis, _The Greek Passion_, p. 305.
these, and many more, at different times and in different ways, spent their lives in seeking freedom.37

Greek political quests for liberty from ancient to modern times are well-documented. It was to the spiritual-religious quests that Kazantzakis, in keeping with his search for directional aid in saving God, turned his attention. The primary spiritual manner in which the Hellenes, in Kazantzakis' view, have sought freedom involved the transformation into Greek terms of the God figure of the Jews. On Crete and Greece "the Greek soul accomplished its destined mission: it reduced God to the scale of man."38 Thus, God was rendered a dynamic concept and with the wedding of classical Greek thought, politics, art, etc., which represented the high point of Western culture, to the God-Christ myth, the tempo of Western civilization was set. In exiting the transitional age the saviors must reaffirm this basic truth of the ancient Greeks; again the "time has come when we must make Christ laugh; yes, must! No more scourgings, weeping, or crucifixions. Christ must bind the strong, happy gods of Greece inside him; He must assimilate them all. The time has arrived for the Jewish-Christ to become a Greek."39

The otherworldly God, the slave ethic, the crucified Christ of humility, will all be transvalued into an affirmative man-god. Through such reaffirmation will come a release of the spirit, joy, happiness, and a ressurection of civilization. This ressurection will be made even more meaningful if the second mission of the Hellenes is fulfilled. This corollary task was to synthesize Eastern and Western concepts of life, that is, to "give features to the featureless and measure to the measureless, balancing the

37Stanford, The Ulysses Theme, p. 235.

38Kazantzakis, Report, p. 151.

39Ibid., p. 208.
blind clashing forces, such is the mission of the much-buffeted sea and land known as Greece.\textsuperscript{40}

Greece, located geographically at the historic crossroads of the world, represents the meeting place of East and West. For Kazantzakis this meeting is symbolized through the interaction of Apollo, God of the West, and Dionysos, God of the East. Apollo dreams of the worlds harmony and beauty, beholding it in serene forms. Entrenched in his individuation, motionless, he stands tranquil and sure amidst the turbulent sea of phenomena. . . . his look is full of light; even when sorrow or indignation overcome him, they do not shatter the divine equilibrium.\textsuperscript{41}

On the other hand, Dionysos is the God who seeks to shatter individuation, flings himself into the sea of phenomena and follows its terrible, kaleidoscopic waves. Men and beasts become brothers, death itself is seen as one of life's masks, the multiform stalking-blind of illusion rips in two, and we find ourselves in breast-to-breast contact with the truth. . . that we all are one, that all of us together create God, that God is not man's ancestor, but his descendant.\textsuperscript{42}

This fusion of Apollo and Dionysos provides important revelations for Kazantzakis' saviors. Historically in this process the "turbid, unsettled cry of the Orient grows pellucid when it passes through the light of Greece; humanized, it is transformed into logos—reason. Greece is the filter which, with great struggle, refines brute into man, eastern servitude into liberty,

\textsuperscript{40}Ibid., pp. 165-66.

\textsuperscript{41}Ibid., p. 323.

\textsuperscript{42}Ibid., p. 323. In Spain, p. 46, Kazantzakis describes beautifully Dionysos; "Dionysos had set out from the Indies, so they say, dressed in brightly colored silks, laden with bracelets and rings, his eyes smeared with rouge and his nails dyed cinnabar red. He went on and on in the direction of Greece, and as he approached her clear, graceful shores, he cast off his clothes one by one, threw his bangles into the sea, and stopped dying and smearing himself. When at last he reached the Gulf of Eleusis and set foot on the sacred shore, he was stark naked." Needless
barbaric intoxication into sober rationality. This filtering process unites radically different weltanschauungs.

Eastern and Western outlooks on life represent contradictory concepts of humanity. Eastern values are the primacy of the state, the people as mass, the superiority of the idea over the individual; self-sacrifice before a dispassionate God; obedience to an omnipotent Creator; and the calm, unquestioning acceptance of human suffering without justifying it as having an intellectual place in the world. Western values are, on the other hand, the primacy of the individual over the state, the mass and the idea; pride in the potential of man; resistance to God in Whose image man is made; the rigorous search for truth depicted metaphorically in the highest symbols of the West—Prometheus, Odysseus, and Faust; and finally, a questioning spirit, an inability to accept calmly life's suffering, injustice, inhumanity, and ignorance. The Westerner, who is both the creator and product of the West, is normally pragmatic, realistic, and sure that life is real, actual, and worthwhile. The Easterner considers insistently that life is merely a dream and that actual experiences which have happened will happen again in the same fashion. To the Westerner each moment and action is novel; to the Easterner each action is insignificant, because if life is dream-like and cyclical, then Fate does not admit any unique quality or essence to particular events. Kazantzakis uses this conflict between the dream world of Eastern withdrawal and the actual world of Western commitment as the foundation of his new synthesis. Hellenism's synthesis of

to say, Kazantzakis owed a great debt to Nietzsche for the fertile Dionysian-Apollonian dialectic.

\[43\] Kazantzakis, Report, pp. 165-66.

these produced the paradigm of harmony and creativity, in contrast with
the present age which is the paradigm of disharmony and destruction. In
that taunt, symbiotic moment in time Apollo and Dionysos collaborated to
produce a wedding of the divine and the diabolic, irrationality and reason,
beast and god, and Thanatos was brought under the control of Eros for a
spiritually creative civilization. Kazantzakis' reliance on this ancient
synthesis is evident throughout the section in Report entitled "Pilgrimage
Through Greece." By viewing the temples, myths, and heroes of the various
regions of Greece Kazantzakis believed he could see in what manner the spirit
had passed over and bequeathed the suitable soul to each. Thus he placed
importance on the insights attained through a receptive, openly sens-
sitive journey through Greece. Such a journey passes from spiritual victory
to spiritual victory in an uninterrupted and magic unity. Kazant­
zakis comments that the white race would have great power if
it had a great faith, but 'we either smile idly and eruditely or spin fiercely
in a hell of individuality, uprooted, without coherence, without hope.' For
Kazantzakis, Western man pits himself against the world around him and imposes
his ego upon it, while Oriental man plunges into the world and harmonizes
his rhythm with it." Friar, "Introduction," to Kazantzakis', The Odyssey,
pp. 30-31, testifies to her agreement with this interpretation; "His (Kazantzakis') Dionysos figure
is a good key by which to explore this problem of East-West synthesis, Kazantzakis wrote; 'Buddha, Christ and Dionysos are one---the eternal suffering
man'; another time he wrote that Dionysos left Greece and settled in the
Orient where he is 'now wearing a kimono and holds cherry blossoms in his
hands.' Kazantzakis comments that the white race would have great power if
it had a great faith, but 'we either smile idly and eruditely or spin fiercely
in a hell of individuality, uprooted, without coherence, without hope.' For
Kazantzakis, Western man pits himself against the world around him and imposes
his ego upon it, while Oriental man plunges into the world and harmonizes
his rhythm with it." Friar, "Introduction," to Kazantzakis', The Odyssey,
p. xv, says, Kazantzakis believed "that Dionysos as well as Apollo was a god
of the Greeks and that the noblest of Greek arts was a synthesis of the
two ideals."

place man most truly succeeded in "imposing order over chaos, in establishing a 'cosmos'--and cosmos means harmony."\(^{46}\)

Today, as in ancient times, contradictory Eastern and Western forces of individuality and community, quest and acceptance, Nirvana and secularism, dream and commitment, etc., are clashing:

New forces are rising from the East, new forces are rising from the West. . . . Following the tradition of reason and empirical inquiry the West bounds forward to conquer the world; the East prodded by frightening subconscious forces, likewise darts forward to conquer the world.\(^{47}\)

The saviors must incorporate the lessons of ancient Greece in the task of once more wedding these chaotic forces and creating order. Hellenism's examples are not, however, in and of themselves, complete and infallible guides, for the creative equilibrium of Hellenism--of mind and body, East and West--was, as are all syntheses, but a momentary one. Hellenism's transformation was wrought in the unimspired Hellenistic period through the surrender of the Hellenes to the extremes of mind, i.e., rational extirpation of reality, and/or body, i.e., bestial desire. Kazantzakis, echoing Plato, ascribes the fall of Hellenism in part to the domination of the appetitive pleasures of the body. At the time of Greece's initial decline the athlete's body began to hypertrophy, killing his mind. Kazantzakis cites Euripides and Galen as among those who protested and denounced this development. Heracles, the great martyr, demonstrated this decline as he gradually degenerated into a huge-bodied, low-browed, drinker and glutton. Greece thus arrived at the realistic, magniloquent, and faithless Hellenistic era that had no suprapersonal ideals. Emotions and passions dominated. The free individual lost his discipline and the bridled instinct

\(^{46}\) Ibid., p. 164.

\(^{47}\) Ibid., p. 175.
which maintained necessary balance became runaway depravity. Following
the Peloponnesian war Greece began to disintegrate. Belief in the
fatherland is no more as individual self-sufficiency triumphed. The
protagonist on the stage was not God or the idealized youth, but the
wealthy citizen with his lascivious passions and pleasures—a skeptic,
materialist, and libertine. Genius had already been replaced by talent;
now good taste replaced talent. Children, coquettish women, and realistic
scenes fill art. Men are portrayed as either brutal or intellectual.48
As Nietzsche taught, those who betrayed the delicate balance through
excessive intellectualism murdered that mythical tragedy that was the
highest expression of Hellenic civilization

by logical analysis. Socrates, with his dialectics, killed the
Apollonian sobriety and Dionysiac intoxication. . . . Would the
Socratic spirit—in other words, science—keep Dionysus forever in
chains? Or, now that human reason recognized its own limits,
might a new civilization perhaps appear with Socrates as its
symbol—Socrates at long last learning music.49

Consequently, Kazantzakis would conclude regarding the relevance and
utility for his saviors of the legacy of ancient Greece; "Here lies the
danger and the price of the love we bear Greek civilization. It is difficult
to distinguish which elements are still useful and which will remain for-
ever a divine spectacle devoid of practical relevance."50 One "still
useful" element of Hellenism manifests itself in Kazantzakis' thought as
a passionately daimonic quality. This important theme becomes evident when
Kazantzakis' system is discussed within the framework of Rollo May's critique

48 Ibid., pp. 169-70.
49 Ibid., p. 325.
50 Kazantzakis, Toda Raba, p. 207.
of the contemporary predicament.

May, who once visited Greece's holy Mt. Athos (one of Kazantzakis' favorite retreats), based his critique on the insights of Greek mythology. He, like Kazantzakis, sees an important role for the artist rather than the scientist in this transitional time. May argues; "Our curious predicament is that the same processes which make modern man so powerful—the magnificent development of atomic and other kinds of technical energy—are the very processes which render us powerless."51 This is so because man's will is undermined by the impersonal technical power spheres within which we exist—mass advertising, drugs, machines, etc.—that disassociate us from one another and from nature. This vacuity of will occurs precisely at the time when we must take ever-increasing responsibility for crucial choices in leisure, sex, politics, etc., and when—in this transitional time—the symbolic valuative and normative criteria for responsible for choice are chaotic; "We are caught, as Laing puts it, in a 'hell of frenetic passivity.'"52 The perimeters of our captivity have been portrayed by Dostoyevsky, Kafka, Beckett, Sartre, and others as despair, anxiety, and alienation. May suggests that the essence of this entrapment is apathy—the lack of feeling, passion, emotion. To him the opposite of love and will is not hate and indecision but the detached, indifferent, uninvolved apathetic attitude we have adopted to maintain sanity in a mad age and which has come to characterize existence. This apathy is translated into non-interference in street rapes and murders, withdrawal, etc.


52 Ibid., p. 187.
It is intimately related to violence; "It was not until the mid-60's that this problem erupted in the form of several incidents that shook us to the very foundations. Our 'emptiness' has been turning into despair and destructiveness, violence and assassination; for it is now undeniable that these go hand in hand with apathy."53 This dialectic of apathy and violence proceeds unabated. It nourishes on the multi-faceted deterministic co-options of our era and the corollary despairing sensation in the pit of our stomachs that life has passed us by. May asserts that it is solely through a reinvigoration of will undergirded by forward-looking, purposive intentionality that man can reformulate his values, transcend the impersonality of his predicament, and attain freedom. Drawing from the Greek synthesis that Kazantzakis relied upon he concludes that the only way to meaningfully reconstitute our will as intentionality is through an erotic, vibrant, integration of the daimonic. The elaboration of this integrative process is May's chief concern and has important implications for Kazantzakis' thought.

The daimonic, which May uses according to the classical Greek meaning as distinguished from modern perversions of the term, is "Any natural function which has the power to take over the whole person."54 Examples given are sex and eros, anger and rage, and the craving for power. The daimonic has both constructive and destructive elements. It can engender creativity and evil. A person's daimon confers creativity when confronted and evil when it takes over the self through being repressed and/or projected onto others. This process is applicable on a societal scale. In analyzing

53 Ibid., p. 28.
54 Ibid., p. 123.
the daimonic as both good and evil May observes, "All life is a flux
between these two aspects of the daimonic. We can repress the daimonic,
but we cannot avoid the toll of apathy and the tendency toward later
explosion which such repression brings in its wake."55 The mythology
of ancient Hellenism portrays par excellence the recognition of the
imperative need to integrate the daimonic. Such integration underlay
and gave rise in part to the symbolic richness of Greece. In the
Hellenistic and Christian periods this integrative synthesis dissolved.
There was a splitting of the daimon into concepts of good and evil, passion
and rationality, eros and sex, death and life, etc. Although

something is gained in moral dynamism for the Hellenistic Greeks
and early Christians by this splitting of the struggle of good and
evil into devils and angels, much is also lost. And what is lost
is important; namely, the classical organismic concept of being as
combining both good and destructive possibilities.56

The loss of this concept of being has extracted heavy payment down through
the centuries. May cites approvingly Rilke's epigram; "If my devils
are to leave me, I am afraid my angels will take flight as well."57 We
moderns have sought to deny and repress our devils and have discovered
the truth of Rilke's statement. Our angels have left us also. Thus, in
this century we have waged the most intensely destructive, fratricidal
wars of history. To reverse this trend we must undo the damage done in
the Hellenistic period and at the time of the early Christians and emphasize
once more the Hellenistic knowledge that good and evil are constructive
only in symbiotic fusion with one another. We must recognize the daimonic

55 Ibid., p. 123.
56 Ibid., p. 138.
57 Ibid., p. 122.
as an element of human experience and not as an other-directing force. We must live with the daimonic, i.e., the capacity for cruelty, evil, aggression, etc., if we are to live creatively; "Not to recognize the daimonic itself turns out to be daimonic; it makes us accomplices on the side of destructive possession." 58 The inspiring recognition of the daimonic is the ultimate lesson Kazantzakis, Zorba, and Odysseus teach. In the prologue to The Last Temptation of Christ Kazantzakis explains this common life-dominating inner struggle—the Supreme Duty, to reconcile the divine and the daimonic:

I loved my body and did not want it to perish; I loved my soul and did not want it to decay. . . . Every man partakes of the divine nature in both his spirit and flesh. . . . The struggle between God and man breaks out in everyone, together with the longing for reconciliation. Most often this struggle is unconscious and short-lived. A weak soul does not have the endurance to resist the flesh for very long. It grows heavy, becomes flesh itself, and the contest ends. But among responsible men, men who keep their eyes riveted day and night upon the Supreme Duty, the conflict between flesh and spirit breaks out mercilessly and may last until death. 59

Theirs is the example of one who confronted and listened to the daimonic and thereby integrated it into the self. Recognizing the daimon of his time—"Our age is a savage one; the Bull, the underground Dionysian powers, has been unleashed; the Apollonian crust of the earth is cracking" 60—Kazantzakis sought to harness the destructive, diabolic elements of his age to the constructive ones. Faithfully following his daimon, his Dionysian élan vital (May says of the daimonic, "It is nonrational in its resembling the 'Dionysion' of Nietzsche and the élan vital of Bergson"), 61

58 Ibid., p. 131.


60 Kazantzakis, quoted in Friar, "Introduction," to Kazantzakis', The Odyssey, p. xix.

61 May, Love And Will, pp. 142-43.
called the voice of God, the tigress, the spirit, Kazantzakis searched for a valid, whole existence. He discovered in a dream that he who attains a redemptive manner of life is "He who perceives, loves, and lives the totality." In living the totality we must not deny instincts or the underground powers. We must be open to all passions or these daimons will extract their revenge. Kazantzakis relates a tale of his meeting in an abbey in the Sinai Desert with one Father Joachim. This holiest of men who spoke only to God passed on to Kazantzakis the fruit of an entire life spent in apprenticeship to flesh and spirit:

"Angels are nothing more--do you hear!--nothing more than refined devils. The day will come--oh, if only I could live to see it!--when men will understand this, and then . . ."

He leaned over to my ear. For the first time, his voice was trembling.

". . . and then the religion of Christ will take another step forward on earth. It will embrace the whole man, all of him, not just half as it does now in embracing only the soul. Christ's mercy will broaden. It will embrace and sanctify the body as well as the soul; it will see--and preach--that they are not enemies, but fellow workers. Whereas now, what happens? If we sell ourselves to God, He urges us to deny the body. When will Christ's heart grow sufficiently broad to commiserate not only the soul but also the body, and to reconcile these two savage beasts?"

Kazantzakis lived this counsel and incorporated the daimonic--the devils


63 Ibid., p. 303. In the Nietzsche section of ibid., Kazantzakis elaborates on this theme, pp. 319-20. "Although I did not have this consciously in mind at all, the two figures, Christ and AntiChrist, gradually merged. Was it true, then, that these two were not eternal enemies, that Lucifer was not God's adversary? Would evil eventually be able to enter the service of good and collaborate with it? In the course of time, as I studied the work of this prophet opposed to God, I mounted step by step to a foolhardy, mystical unity. The first step of initiation, I said, was this: good and evil are enemies. The second and higher step was: good and evil are fellow workers. The highest step, the highest I was able to reach at present, was: good and evil are identical! On this step I halted, shuddering from a terrible suspicion that flashed across my mind: perhaps this Saint Blasphemous was prodding me to join him in his blasphemy!"
as well as the angels—in an exact opposite existence to that which May
describes as characterizing our existence. This insight of Kazantzakis
that we must recognize the savage Dionysian powers within each of us
individually and within all of us collectively is the antithesis of
apathy and the denial of eros and passion. It is a demonstration of the
path out of the dialectic of apathy and violence through love and will,
and thus Kazantzakis' most important borrowing from classical Greece.

We might deduce at this point several more "still useful" elements
for Kazantzakis' saviors—in addition to the recognition of the daimonic—
derived from his exploration of ancient Hellenism. As we have previously
seen the new visionary/rhythm which we must find in order to save God and
achieve deliverance from the transitional age has to be such as to ennoble
man's mundane life when confronted with the twin, terrifying abysses of
human mortality and historical temporality. From Hellenism we learn that
for world-wide applicability this aspirational ideal must incorporate the
wisdom of East and West. It must fill the demands of community--to provide
coherence, and individuation--to allow sponteneity. It must also incorp-
orate, as did Greek tragedy, the insight of art, the arena of imagination,
intuition, and predictive foresight, and dialectical science, the arena of
intellect and analysis. It must heed as well the lessons and wishes of the
the heart. The ideal must maintain the proper harmonious balance between
mind and body. This ideal-order must be founded on a comprehensive understand-
ing of the natural world and human nature--the diabolic as well as the
divine. As its essence the vision must possess a universal normative-ethical
schema cognizant of the natural-historical milieu in which humanity's life
exists. It must follow faithfully the "immortal bluebird" of liberty. Ancient
Greece's failure to dynamically persevere in the pursuit of these goals due to the staticism of later Hellenism rendered the noble synthesis vulnerable to dismemberment in the Hellenistic period and ultimately made Greece easy prey for the Macedonian conquerors. Hellenism's insufficiency in meeting these many demands caused Kazantzakis to search the other of the two dominant sources of his view of future man--Christianity. He sought not to negate the lessons of ancient Greece but rather to augment them with the spiritual criteria of Christianity. His success in that endeavor is signaled by his writing Prevelakis in 1950 while working on The Last Temptation of Christ that;

The old antinomies are beginning to become organized into an organic synthesis. It seems to me that, as the Byzantine mystics used to say, I am attaining the peak of endeavor, which is called the lack of endeavor. In the book I'm writing, perhaps I shall be able to formulate this organic resolution of contradictions. I'm beginning not to be bothered by any "problem" now, by any "agony." I've found the solution I have outside the realm of intellect of analysis--i.e., beyond the purlieus of "Satan."

Christianity: Criteria of the Spirit

Noting the importance of certain Christian teachings, as exemplified by the Christ figure, for Kazantzakis' thought Blenkinsopp observes;

It may seem strange at first sight that Kazantzakis finds a place for Christ in his dialectical scheme of reality, and yet it is precisely here that he differs from his mentor Nietzsche. He followed the same road as Zarathustra but further along it he rediscovered Christ as a traveller who had gone before him. Like Joyce and many others before and since, he had had luck with the particular form of institutionalized Christianity in which he was raised. He rejected it and it rejected him; the Greek archbishop would not allow his body to lie in church chiefly

because of *The Greek Passion* and *The Last Temptation of Christ*, and the last named novel was, for good measure, put on the Roman Catholic index. He has some hard things to say about conventional Christianity as 'a well organized fairy tale promising paradise and immortality' and the churches are 'taverns of hope where you go to forget your real duty.' Yet his work, like that of Joyce, is pervaded with Christian symbolism and the action in almost all the novels is played out within the time sequence of the Christian calendar.  

Kazantzakis had looked at the often horrid record of institutionalized Christianity and seen that the church was at times guilty of dehumanizing actions. However, it became increasingly obvious to Kazantzakis that the Christian myth was of the utmost importance; "Like Dostoevsky, Kazantzakis regarded the Christian myth and the existence of God as indispensable to human sanity; both saw nothing but chaos without them." Believing this, Kazantzakis rejected tradition and institutionalization and chose the resurrected Christ, not the crucified one, as the embodiment of Christianity. He cut away the layers of judgemental-devitalizing crusts covering the true power of the myth and looked to the positive, ennobling elements of Christianity. Kazantzakis rejected the dehumanizing hypocrisy of the ethic of humility; "I am less afraid of the major vices than of the minor virtues, because these have lovely faces and deceive us all too easily. For my


66 Hoffman, *The Imagination's New Beginning*, pp. 63-64. In Report, p. 250, Kazantzakis expresses this belief; "What does *There Is no God* mean? It means there is no bridle on our instincts, no reward for good or punishment for evil, no virtue, shame, or justice--that we are wolves and she-wolves in heat."

67 Father Yanaros, *The Fraticides*, pp. 249-50, angrily cries out to the Almighty; "This is when we need strength; get up, help me save them! You forget that You're not only the crucified Christ, but the resurrected Christ as well! The world has no need of crucified Christs any longer, it needs fighting Christs! Take a lesson from me. Enough of tears and passions, and crucifixions; get up I say, call out for the army of angels to descend; bring justice! Enough they've spit on us, beaten us, made us wear a crown of thorns, crucified us; now it's the turn of the resurrected Christ."
part, I want to give the worst explanation [for not castigating a deceitful monk] . . . because I want to shame my soul and keep it from doing the same thing again."68 The minor virtues can, in Kazantzakis' view, imprison man in a cage of habitual cowardice and expediency. Focusing on the Christ figure Kazantzakis sought, particularly in The Last Temptation of Christ, to

renew and supplement the sacred myth that underlies the great Christian era of the West . . . a laborious, sacred, creative endeavor to reincarnate the essence of Christ, setting aside the dross—falsehoods and pettinesses which all the churches and all the cassocked representatives of Christianity have heaped upon this figure thereby distorting it.69

For this immensely creative process Kazantzakis emphasized therefore, the affirmative existential possibilities for man in a chaotic, materialistic, transitional age that lay within the actions of Christ. These actions are lessons which teach that if man is to save God he must uphold: the freedom to do as Jesus did and choose one's path to God; human dignity, pride, and the soul; brotherhood and the force of love. Kazantzakis consistently called on his fellows to realize their immense potential through a joining of these within and among themselves as ennobling criteria for saving God. The first of these lessons, the capability of choice—freedom of the will—is a logically essential precondition to saving God.

If we are to save God, i.e., the cause of moral goodness in the world, a necessary prerequisite is that we must be able, as Kazantzakis recognized, to choose the commitment which enables each in his own way to liberate the spirit. A person who rejects the power to choose between alternatives, between doing and not doing could not logically believe in the existence of the creative

68 Kazantzakis, Report, p. 213. The schoolteacher in The Fratricides, p. 90, appeals from the horror of the times not for humility but, "Oh, proud virtues of man—purity, obstinancy, courage—help us!"

potential of man the responsibility of each person for advancing the
divine. For if there be no such thing as free will, if the slaveholder
and Hitler, who actualized not divine but evil potentiality, could not avoid
their acts of tyranny and oppression, then they have no responsibility for
evilness. They can not, therefore, reasonably become the objects of moral
blame and moral indignation. If the will is not free, then no one is
morally responsible for his acts, be they good or bad. The men and the
nations that stifle the spirit of the Good are no more justly liable to con-
demnation than an earthquake or a hurricane. The point is that if the will
is not free no ethical appeal can reasonably be made to those attempting to
halt the flow of the \textit{vital}, the life force— the bourgeoisie, the techn-
nocrats, etc.— to refrain from their suppression. They can logically reply
that they are not free to refrain. On the other hand, those who struggle to
transubstantiate matter into spirit can not logically have recourse to moral
indignation for both groups are victims of forces over which they have no
control. Obviously most men in their everyday conduct, judgement, and atti-
tudes, act as though they believed in free will yet some reject it in theory.
By this rejection they inevitably weaken their belief in internal and external
freedom. In applying this theoretical assumption to political situations they
are logically prevented from moral opposition of men who destroy political
and social liberty. They can not rationally denounce a Hitler for such a man
possesses no free will and was therefore inevitably compelled by character
and circumstance to fall under the domination of motives which irresistibly
forces him to conquer and kill. An evaluation of his conduct must be stated
in terms not of blame but of regret. Thus the practical effect of denial of
free will is to render man unable to condemn violations of political and civil
liberty.
In creating and keeping alive the belief in free will, "Christianity," in the words of one observer, "has exercised vastly more influence than all other social forces combined."\(^{70}\) The entire body of the Christian religion is based on the free choice of man. This is that man is free to choose God. There is no hint of circumstance nor of inevitable force which shall cause man to either choose or reject God. This is the basic right of all men and can not be taken away from man by man. As stated in the New Testament, "who soever will let him take the water of life freely."\(^{71}\) In Kazantzakis' system this prerequisite act from which all follows is cast as the freely chosen commitment to save God. Zorba chooses to dance and affirm life for that is his manner of spiritualizing his being. On a higher level, El Greco chose to paint penetrating and beautiful portraits of the spirit hidden deep within men's souls. And, on still a higher level, Jesus chose the cross when faced with the alternative of human happiness for that was his way of saving God. Chilson says, "The actual path to salvation appears to depend upon the individual. . . . there is no universal pattern for salvation. Thus Odysseus finds it impossible to agree totally with any of the Saviors he met in his later journeying. He cannot take the path of Buddha, Faust, Don Quixote, or Christ; he must find his own way."\(^{72}\) Finding one's


\(^{71}\) Rev. 22: 17.

\(^{72}\) Chilson, Thought, XLVII (Spring 1972), p. 73. Bien, Nikos Kazantzakis, p. 19, echoes Chilson's opinion; "The ways of saving god are many, he said. In various ages men as diverse as Jesus, Genghiz Khan, Shakespeare, Lenin, El Greco, Zorba, Buddha, Psycharias (the 'Saint George' who killed the dragon of puristic Greek), Don Quixote, Nietzsche, and Dante have been saviors of god, each in his own manner. But not all paths are applicable in any given era
path is made terribly more difficult by the complexities of transitional times. Kazantzakis relates, in the last summation of his life and work, how he tried many different paths before discovering his God on Mount Athos and thereby choosing the intent and purpose of his creative actions;

I tried many different roads to reach my salvation: the road of love, of scientific curiosity, of philosophical inquiry, of social rebirth, and finally, the difficult and solitary path of poetry. But when I saw that all these led to the Abyss, fear would seize me, and I would turn back and take another road. This wandering and this martyrdom lasted for many years. Finally, in despair, I sought refuge on Athos, the holy mountain of Greece, where no woman has ever set foot, to prayer and chastity. There, in the solitude of the Holy Mountain, in an old hermit's retreat above the sea, I began a new struggle. First of all I exercised by body in obedience to the spirit. For many months I taught it to endure cold, hunger, thirst, sleeplessness, and every privation. Then I turned to the spirit; sunk in painful concentration, I sought to conquer within me the minor passions, the easy virtues, the cheap spiritual joys, the convenient hopes. Finally one night I started up in great joy, for I had seen the red ribbon left behind him in his ascent--within us and in all the universe--by a certain combatant; I

73 In 1940, a year which may well have epitomized the transitional age for Kazantzakis what with the Hitler terrors and with totalitarian communism rearing its ugly head, Tillich--a giant of twentieth century theology--issued an immensely intriguing trace, "Freedom In the Period of Transformation," in Freedom, ed. Anshen, which at least implicitly relates to our discussion. It does so through its emphasis on the fervid necessity of an adequate protected vital sphere of choice in crises times. Tillich put forth a brilliant analysis and a rousing defense of freedom which, both logically and theologically, resembles Kazantzakis' concept of saving God through free creative choice. In his analysis Tillich gives the prerequisite of freedom as being, (p. 131), "freedom exists only if there is a realm of free creativity, a realm within which everyone is able to determine history and to transform human nature through history." The presence of this creative freedom is the core of man's liberty; and by its presence or absence, it is the determinant of whether or not man has freedom. Tillich cites the conditions of creative freedom as being freedom for meaningful creativity, freedom for autonomous creativity, and freedom for self-fulfilling creativity. It may be stretching a point and reading too much into these conditions but seemingly he has listed as the primary conditions of man's freedom something very akin to Kazantzakis' postulate of free choice. The conditions of freedom--to choose, to will to do what one wished to do, and (p. 133) "to decide about the meaning and purpose of one's creative actions"--are the same criteria for saving God. A quite clear example of the place which choice occupies in relation to the cause of liberating moral betterment in the world for Tillich and Kazantzakis.
clearly saw his bloody footprints ascending from inorganic matter into life and from life into spirit.\(^7^4\)

From that time on Kazantzakis sought forever to follow those footsteps and appealed to his contemporaries to do the same. The efficacy of Kazantzakis', and all men's, actions in fulfilling this quest is dependent upon, interrelated with, and made viable by the second postulate--pride and the power of the soul.

Kazantzakis saw men as endowed with potentially powerful souls which are born with them and remain so long as life remains. Historical neglect of this tremendous potential does not diminish it for "man's soul is omnipotent."\(^7^5\) Fulfilling the commitment to freeing Crete Captain Polyxigis charges into battle chastizing those who timidly hang back; "The holy splinter, you idiot, is the soul of man. I know of no other."\(^7^6\) In Report Kazantzakis tells of the lesson of his Vienna illness;

Ever since that day I have realized that man's soul is a terrible and dangerous coalspring. Without knowing it, we all carry a great explosive force wrapped in our flesh and lard. And what is worse, we do not want to know it, for then villainy, cowardice, and falsehood lose their justification; we can no longer hide behind man's supposed impotence and

\(^7^4\)Kazantzakis, quoted in Friar, "Introduction," to Kazantzakis', The Odyssey, p. xxiii. Kazantzakis evidently first formulated his theory of saving God during a forty day pilgrimage with Sikelianos in 1914 on Mt. Athos. No women are allowed on the sacred mountain which is dotted with monasteries. With Aegina, Antibes, Mt. Sinai, Crete, and Knossos, this holy place became one of the world-traveler's favorite places. He always wanted to spend a two year retreat on Mt. Athos but had to be satisfied with several shorter visits. In his Paris study in 1939 he kept, among pictures of Saint Francis, Dante, and a copy of a madonna from Mt. Sinai, a copy of a madonna from beloved Mt. Athos. Extracts from Nikos' journal of his first pilgrimage are in H. Kazantzakis, Nikos Kazantzakis, pp. 53-57. Kazantzakis also discusses the trip in Report, in the section "My Friend The Poet. Mount Athos."


\(^7^6\)Kazantzakis, Freedom or Death, p. 296.
wretched incompetence; we ourselves must bear the blame if we are villains, cowards, or liars, for although we have an all-powerful force inside, we dare not use it for fear it might destroy us. But we take the easy, comfortable way out, and allow it to vent its strength little by little until it too has degenerated to flesh and lard. How terrible not to know that we possess this force! If we did know, we would be proud of our souls. In all heaven and earth, nothing so closely resembles God as the soul of man.\footnote{Kazantzakis, Report, p. 357.}

This omnipotent, divine soul lays the basis for the worth of each human being. The power of the soul and consequent moral dignity of the human personality is another elementary lesson of Christ. Christianity teaches that man is created in the likeness of God and possesses an immortal soul. Man is made free through this likeness and given worth by it as related by Paul, "where the Spirit of the Lord is present there is freedom. All of us, then, reflect the glory of the Lord with uncovered faces; and that same glory, coming from the Lord who is the Spirit, transforms us into his very likeness, in an ever greater degree of glory."\footnote{Cor. 15: 17, 18.} The possession of an immortal soul and the likeness of man to God connotes basic human dignity which means that the human being is an end in himself and not to be used as a means or instrument to any other end. Man possesses great stature in Kazantzakis' eyes because of this moral dignity of person and although recognition of this stature may be prevented by external force or internal incapacitation, men who realize their potential will answer their oppressors as the nationalist soldier Ninios, in \textit{The Fraticides}, answered his rebel capturers, "My dignity as a man does not allow me to be forced into obedience."\footnote{Kazantzakis, \textit{The Fraticides}, p. 247.}

Augustine had stated the traditional Christian view of man's image and
soul, "God made man in his own image. For he created for him a soul endowed with reason and intelligence, so that he might excel all the creatures of earth, air, and sea which were not so gifted." Kazantzakis' heretical theme that man now possesses the capability to surpass God and in fact creates God in the image of man was anathema to the church (which was still tied to the Augustinian view), but not to many of his contemporaries. Bonhoeffer also sought to strike the chord of man's greatness. Bonhoeffer sees the dominant movement since the thirteenth century toward the autonomy of man as reaching a certain completion in the twentieth century. This is evidenced in religion with the substitution of reason for revelation; in ethics with the substitution of moral principles for the ten commandments; in politics with the substitution of reasons of state for religious morality; in international relations with the substitution of the law of nature for divine law; in philosophy with the substitution of mechanism for providence; in science with the substitution of infinitude for a finitely created cosmos. There is no longer any need, says Bonhoeffer,

for God as a working hypothesis, whether in morals, politics, or science. Nor is there any need for such a God in religion or philosophy (Feuerbach). In the name of intellectual honesty these working hypotheses should be dropped or dispensed with as far as possible. A scientist or physician who seeks to provide edification is a hybrid. Christian apologetics have tried in various ways to oppose this recognition. They have confronted the self-assurance of the modern world with the needed tutelage of God to answer the ultimate questions of death and guilt. The secularized offshoot of that movement, the existentialist philosophers and the psychotherapists, attempt to talk to man about God by demonstrating to


81 Bonhoeffer, Letters and Papers from Prison, p. 218.
him that he knows nothing, that he is unhappy, and that he is in severe straits. Bonhoeffer sees these approaches of the Christian apologetics as pointless, ignoble, and ultimately un-Christian:

Pointless, because it looks to me like an attempt to put a grown-up man back into adolescence, i.e., to make him dependent on things on which he is not in fact dependent any more, thrusting him back into the midst of problems which are in fact not problems for him any more. Ignoble, because this amounts to an effort to exploit the weakness of man for purposes alien to him and not freely subscribed to by him. Un-Christian, because for Christ himself is being substituted one particular stage in the religiousness of man, i.e., a human law.

Such attempts posit Christ as undynamic, inflexible, and in opposition to the autonomous development of man. Writing from prison in Hitlerian Germany Bonhoeffer argues that if we are to be faithful to man, avoid the counsel of despair and false emergency exits, and maintain our intellectual sincerity there is only one valid way:

The only way is that of Matthew 18.3, i.e., through repentance, through ultimate honesty. And the only way to be honest is to recognize that we have to live in the world etsi deus non daretur [even if God is not there]. And this is just what we do see—before God! So our coming of age forces us to a true recognition of our situation vis-a-vis God. God is teaching us that we must live as men who can get along very well without him. The God who is with us is the God who forsakes us (Mark 15.34). The God who makes us live in this world without using him as a working hypothesis is the God before whom we are ever standing. Before God and with him we live without God. God allows himself to be edged out of the world and on to the cross. God is weak and powerless in the world, and that is exactly the way, the only way, in which he can be with us and help us. Matthew 8.17 makes it crystal clear that it is not by his omnipotence that Christ helps us, but by his weakness and suffering.

This is the decisive difference between Christianity and all religions. Man's religiosity makes him look in his distress to the power of God in the world; he uses God as a Deus ex machina. The Bible however directs him to the powerlessness and suffering of God; only a suffering God can help. To this extent we may say that the process we have described by which the world came of age was an abandonment of a false conception of God, and a clearing of the decks for the God of the Bible, who conquers power and space in the world by his weakness. This must be the starting point for our "worldly" interpretation.

---

82Ibid., pp. 196-97.

83Ibid., pp. 219-20. Harvey Cox, a prominent contemporary theologian,
Working before and with God we must wreak the creative ordering of the world. This creative ordering, in which choice and free will are logically essential and which relies on the potential of man's divine soul, is given ethical-moral unification, in Kazantzakis' view, by the demands of brotherhood and love.

Kazantzakis' view of the role of love in saving God is revealed in Spain where he speaks of God "astride his Pegasus, Love." As God's Pegasus love aids man's efforts to save God. It provides an ethical-moral starting point, "Love is the beginning; it is not the end. I cry 'Love!' because man must begin with that." It is also a means to personal salvation; "Ah! An erotic love, a passion for something other than yourself--I believe, Genossin, there is no other salvation." In addition, through love is expounded in The Secular City (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1965), similarly on the inherent worth of man and places him almost on a level with God. Like Kazantzakis and Bonhoeffer he views the tragedy of modern Christianity as being the relegation of man to a position inferior to that to which he is entitled. This is due to a threefold development, for Cox: (1) following the conversion of Constantine, Christianity was sometimes used to justify oppressive rule; (2) the emergence of pride as the cardinal sin with a resulting emphasis on subordination; (3) the willingness of the classical philosophers to allow the God of the Bible to be blurred into Plato's Idea of the Good or Aristotle's Prime Mover, which in Cox's view, relegated the creativity and ability of man to a subordinate position. Cox finds an exalted view of man in the Bible, and he feels that in the above processes something essential to Christianity has been lost. He is of the opinion that man works as God's partner in a meaningful ordering of the world and criticizes biblical scholars, (p. 76) who "claimed by the spell of the Greeks, have overlooked or minimized the astonishing fact that creation is not completed by God in the Bible until after man is formed and begins to work as God's partner in ordering the chaos." The oneness of Cox's view with Kazantzakis' is not merely coincidental. Blenkinsop: Commonweal, XCIII (February 26, 1971), p. 514, tells us that in the mid-1960's when the theologians discovered Kazantzakis, "quotes, mostly from Zorba, appears with increasing frequency in the works of such trailblazers as John Robinson, Harvey Cox, and Sam Keen."

34Kazantzakis, Spain, p. 128  
35Kazantzakis, The Fraticides, p. 69.  
attained—as Saint Francis demonstrated—the crucial uniting of man with his fellows, nature, and the cosmos, leading to insights into solutions for mankind's perpetual problems;

Saint Francis becomes contemporary both because in his own heart he had realized the perfect union with the cosmos—to which present day science is leading us along other roads—and also because his heart had found the solution to the problems that are still insoluble: poverty, injustice, violence. Only the love preached by him could bring us to a solution of these problems.

Who was the woman saint who ran through the corridors of his monastery uttering a piercing cry, "There is no love for love?" In our own epoch there is no love for love. And this is the only key which can unlock happiness on earth.

Surpassing the ego, men should love others as themselves, as persons having the same dignity, the same potential, the same needs. Perhaps the greatest of these needs is immunity from interference in those creative activities essential to life and the development of the personality, i.e., freedom from "poverty, injustice, violence." While the postulate of brotherly love is knowable by reason this cognizance of needs of others due to love of fellow man owes most of its force and appeal to the lesson of Christ whose life's testament equated the love of neighbor as akin to love of God.

Many people feel that if the tenets of Christianity were reducible to one word that word would be "love." The doctrine of love is expounded throughout the New Testament. Christian believers, followers of Christ, are warned—as Kazantzakis warned his friend Sikelanos—against self-adulation and told that "thou shall love thy neighbor as thyself." This love is seen as freeing man from the artificial entrapments which he is so prone to devise for himself. While this concept has been neglected it would, if adhered to, free man from his passionate and often self-destructive quest for power, dominance, and economic superiority. The force of love is heavily

37 Kazantzakis, Conversation with H. Kazantzakis, Ibid., p. 520.

relied upon by St. Augustine who sought to turn the Romans away from their
transgressions. He felt that the perversion of goals in the later Roman
Empire led to ever-greater desires for conquest and domination of other
people. This destroyed, to a great extent, the love of man for man. August-
tine disavowed any state ability to aid man in his true aim of salvation and
tried through the advocacy of the permeation of brotherly love throughout
Roman society to free man from his often fatal fratricidal struggle. He
conceived the Christian's role as:

That a just and pious man should be ready to bear with patience the
wickedness of those whom he desires to be good; rather in order that
the number of the good may increase, not that with similar wickedness
he may himself join the number of the evil; and in the next place, that
they relate to the internal affection of the heart more than to the
external actions; in order that in the secrecy of our minds we may feel
patience and benevolence, but in our outward conduct may do that which
tends to the advantage of those to whom we ought to feel benevolent
affections. 89

Therefore, the Christian, through love of God and love of his brother, is
freed from the fight for earthly wants to seek an increase in the number of
those who worship God, i.e., give God His due. Kazantzakis would agree--
recall his thoroughgoing critique of materialism—that man should forego
goals of economic or political dominance but he would turn the force of love
released through this process from the heavens wholly to the world:

Love wretched man at last, for he is you, my son.
Love plants and beasts at length, for you were they, and now
they follow you in war like faithful friends and slaves.
Love the entire earth, its waters, soils, and stones;
on this I cling to live, for I've no other steed. 90

Kazantzakis' opposition to the other-worldly attention of traditional
Christianity receives agreement from Cox, who rejects a passive role for the

89St. Augustine, The City of God, p. 331.
90Kazantzakis, The Odyssey, Book XV, lines 1165-69, p. 477.
Christian in the twentieth century. He desires to paint a more vivid, live picture, thus his conception parallels Kazantzakis'. With Augustine and Calvin, Cox emphasizes that man should love his brother as in a similar manner he loves God. However, Cox seeks to refute the dominant transcendent aspect of this love and turn man's attention primarily to the world and to the many social problems confronting the world. He is very much concerned with the inequality in the world, and with the polarization of people in the world. Cox views the teachings of the Gospel and the role of the church as reconciliation, freedom, and hope, and thinks an emphasis on brotherhood would hasten the actualization of these teachings into reality.91

Unfortunately, all too many people agree with the old archon, Patriarcheas; brotherhood is "very fine when it's said in church, when the priest pronounces it on Sunday from the pulpit. But you Manolios blessed sucker, you must be completely cracked to put it in practice!"92 If it were put into practice however it would, as Cox and Manolios know, forcefully advance the cause of the Good because as Father Yanaros recognizes, "Love is a sword, Andreas, my son; Christ had no other sword but love, and with that he conquered the world."93 Kazantzakis' is truly a provocative and "a precious message of love to come in our time of disparity, what warm affirmation of life, not unrealistic, for a world of anxiety, bitterness, disaffection, frenzied rejection and predilection."94

91 In addition to The Secular City see Cox's, God's Revolution and Man's Responsibility (Valley Forge: The Hudson Press, 1965).


93 Kazantzakis, The Fraticides, p. 216.

94 Decavelles, Poetry, XCV (December 1959), p. 177.
Freedom of choice, the recognition of man's divine soul, and love, are then the important criteria of the spirit based on and made effective by the example of Christ. These postulates form the core of a positive, humanistic political theology. As normative values they can and, more than that, must be brought to bear with more intensity on modern life if man is to, in Kazantzakis' terms, save God, man, the divine, and thereby negate the evil in the world and advance the good. For we have seen that contemporary, mass technological existence leads to distraction, disillusionment, and to a highly regimented and regulated life which in many ways is highly oppressive as well. The individual has quite often been lost sight of or incorporated into the mass by the social planners who, through their reliance on the technocratic outlook, initiate overly grandiose schemes for salvation. Many have lost sight of the fact that seldom is a liberating social order brought about by technocratic innovations or system adjustment from above. Neither will this order come, says Kazantzakis, through alliance with an other-worldly dictated order for there is no directing Being. A constructive liberating order can, in Kazantzakis' view, be wrought only through the spirit of man--action flowing from individual's sense of injustice and accompanying quest for social justice--joining in pursuit of an ennobling ideal. Kazantzakis had learned from Hellenism that such an ideal must be based on the criteria of East and West, intellect and heart, demonic and divine, community and individuation. Brought back to the lasting power of the Christian myth in search of further criteria he now found that the ideal-order must, like Christianity, be of such inspirational power and richness as to provide a vehicle for man's attentive, unrelenting allegiance. It must be rigorously conducive to the cognizance and fulfillment of the soul's potentiality. It must allow man's choice. Further, this ideal must heed the selfless unifying requirements of
love. Learning these things Kazantzakis sought the universal theme underlying those all-important three faces of God—Marxism, Hellenism, and Christ—as an answer to Leonidas' query of how one tells a good ideal from a bad one. This answer is found in his equation of God with freedom in his ultimate interpretation of Christ's message as the attempt "to transcend man's destiny and unite with God, in other words with absolute freedom." The struggle for freedom or God is the universal underlying the movements of Marxism, Hellenism, and Christianity. Therefore, saving God—which can and must occur only within the parameters of Marxist social justice, Hellenism's synthesis, and Christian humanistic criteria—becomes not freedom but the creation of order produced through a quest within these parameters for freedom;

The greatest virtue on earth is not to become free but to seek freedom in a ruthless, sleepless strife.

George Polley has said of Kazantzakis' work, "The primary contribution in Nikos Kazantzakis' work, as in his life, is struggle, 'the struggle for freedom.'" The recognition of this theme as the culmination of Kazantzakis' thought is shared universally. Blenkinsopp observes of the struggle to save God/freedom,

The journey is that of Christ from the carpenter's shop to the summit of Golgotha, that of the dispossessed to freedom in The Greek Passion, the Neo-Platonic movement from purification to union, and in its uttermost expression, that of the Great Combatant from the lowest forms of life to points beyond man. It is undertaken neither out of blind instinct nor a sure knowledge of the goal. Its reality is experienced as struggle, ascent, suffering; itself its only reward.

95 Kazantzakis, Report, p. 454.
96 Kazantzakis, The Odyssey, Book XV, lines 1172-73, p. 478.
Hadjopoulos agrees,

The true success of Kazantzakis' heroes is that they refuse to yield to human power for its own sake; they maintain ideals by which they live and if they fail in establishing their ideals, their worth as heroes lies in their struggle and spiritual self-attainment, not in their defeat or victory.99

They do not yield to human power "for its own sake" because they are uniformly motivated by that great passion which underlies all liberating political movements--the unquenchable desire for freedom. This struggle allows the release of the spirit from the inhibitions of institutionalized ideology and religion. It presents itself as an unconquerable foe of the technocratic-materialistic ethos. It is conducive to an invigorating theoretical perspective. The political struggle, while at times necessarily utilizing violent means, leads to a lowering of the total level of violence in the world through its awareness of the demands of brotherhood, unity, love, and respect for the divine in each man. In leading men to gladly shoulder the responsibility of freedom this quest is irrevocably opposed to the abdication of freedom. This quest, through its fulfillment of these many rich criteria, points to an exit from the unique, novel dilemma of contemporary life posed by the conflict between the determinism of necessity, i.e., Spinozistic mathematized naturalism and/or Hegelian absolutized historicism, and the freedom of cosmological limitlessness, i.e., Sartrean meaninglessness and/or Kafkaesque absurdity. This exit of struggle toward which we have been striving with Kazantzakis throughout our analysis is a truer harmonious truth created in myth which gives birth to a higher man. It is our last and most important concern.

CHAPTER V

A POLITICS OF FREEDOM AND HOPE

In Chapter IV we analyzed Kazantzakis' ambitious endeavor to render the insights of the Cretan glance into a comprehensive saving socio-political decalogue. Evaluative criteria were specified from the ethical, theological, artistic, economic, political, and philosophic elements of Kazantzakis' prescriptive theory which are of immense potential value as judgmental standards vis-a-vis politics. We discovered the most enduring characteristic of Kazantzakis' life, art, and political theory as the struggle for freedom. During his lifetime Kazantzakis was bombarded with philosophies, religions, and developments inimical to man's freedom. He was reared a Christian within a family and society who believed very strongly in God's providential intervention in history. Many of his childhood neighbors as well as the rulers on Crete during his youth were Turks who believed strongly in Moslem fatalism. He was aware of the manner in which technological mechanization was structuring men's lives. He knew also that the socialization process had a tremendous effect on the direction of one's life. Two influential intellectual sources were Spengler, who ascribed to a scheme of cultural determinism, and Marx, who ascribed to a scheme of economic determinism. He was cognizant of the manner in which Hegel's scientific historicism linked history, nature, and idea in a cosmic mind which comprehended and ordained past, present, and future. He was equally aware
of the manner in which Spinoza's scientific naturalism postulated man as a quantifiable variable in a mathematized universe based on necessity. Kazantzakis was versed in Freudian theories of the cultural and genetic determinants of life which replaced will with unconscious motivations. He sought to deliver man from the inhibitions of these many forms of deterministic necessity by offering a new liberating myth-ideal for modern man—the "struggle for freedom." Seeking to define the worth of this struggle in view of an inhibiting world, Kazantzakis explored the questions of metaphysical versus socio-political freedom, unity, and the efficacy of individual action. In this last chapter we shall analyze this exploration seeking why Kazantzakis does not offer freedom qua freedom as a rebuttal to these deterministic forces. In doing so we will examine his belief that freedom is the essence of man and his view, as expressed through his literary characters, of what constitutes the various levels of freedom. Following that, we will explore through the Odysseus characterization how Kazantzakis came to the important realization that man cannot support full freedom. Kazantzakis portrays Odysseus as one who struggles "beyond freedom" realizing that absolute freedom is that mythical non-existent, attainment of which would be its negation, therefore, it is through a never-ending and never-fulfilled quest for freedom that we both create our freedom and transcend the hope for freedom. In this erotic stoicism, as Joseph Flay terms it, there is a wedding of fate/necessity and freedom with ontology, history, and nature to form an alternative role for man on a continuum between determinism and meaningless, absolute freedom. We will assess the perceptiveness and utility of this new decalogue, i.e., man's erotic struggle in harness to the God-rhythm beyond hope and freedom, for modern man in this seventh decade of the twentieth century.
Freedom: The Essence of Man

Stanford says of The Odyssey, "Kazantzakis has singled out the wish to be free as the dominant passion of his hero. In fact, psychologically, his epic is an exploration of the meaning of freedom."¹ One would not overstate Kazantzakis' concern with liberty in saying this is the dominant theme not only of The Odyssey but, indeed, of all his works. There are many dimensions to Kazantzakis' philosophy of freedom with all of his major characters expressing some element of that philosophy. This is evident not only in The Odyssey but in the Christ novels, in the aptly titled Freedom or Death and "The Immortal Free Spirit of Man," as well as in Zorba whose central theme, along with the clash between action and writing, is the contrast of a free being with one who is not free. Perhaps the most fruitful way of approaching Kazantzakis' comprehensive view of freedom is through looking at its interrelated personal, political, and metaphysical levels, and examining the manner in which both Kazantzakis and his characters express these levels of freedom. From this one is then able to analyze Ulysses' freedom wherein personal, political, and metaphysical freedom are united and, paradoxically enough, transcended in favor of the struggle for freedom. Of primary concern for an exploration of Kazantzakis' philosophy of freedom is his evaluation of the degree to which modern man does or does not persevere in the maintenance of his liberty.

Liberty on a personal level has, for Kazantzakis, both physical and

intellectual dimensions. In discussing the former Kazantzakis echoes Christian and Platonic teachings of freedom from the dominance of appetitive pleasures of the flesh. With Plato, Kazantzakis believed the soul must rule both mind and body for man's existence to be truly free and just. Unlike Plato, however, Kazantzakis, under the influence of Buddhism and Christianity, was at times wont to push this view to an ascetic extreme of extirpation. As a dramatic vehicle for expounding this view Kazantzakis utilized on several occasions an illness known as "ascetics disease." While in Vienna in 1921 Kazantzakis met an attractive young woman named Frieda with whom he made an assignment for her to spend the next night with him in his quarters. Yet when she was to come to him on that night and others—all of which were postponed by Kazantzakis—Kazantzakis' face became swollen and filled with yellowish-white liquid. Seeking an explanation from Wilhelm Stekel, the leading Freudian in the city, Kazantzakis was reminded of similar outbreaks in the saints' legends and told;

Plunged as it is in the Buddhist weltanschauung, your soul—or rather what for you goes by the name of soul—believes that sleeping with a woman is a mortal sin. For that reason it refuses to permit its body to commit this sin. Such souls, souls capable of imposing themselves to so great a degree on the flesh, are rare in our age.2

On leaving Vienna Kazantzakis' face became healed. In a like manner, Manolios, the Christ figure in The Greek Passion, contacts ascetics disease when he is tempted by the immoral widow, nee Mary Magdolene, of Lycovrissi, yet when he resists the temptation to succumb to the dominance of the bodily appetites his face becomes healed. Kazantzakis and Zorba never attained this freedom from the sexual demands of the flesh and, as Durant indicated earlier, there seemed

2Kazantzakis, Report, pp. 355-56. Twenty years later in the mid-1940's Kazantzakis again suffered an outbreak of facial skin disease which bothered
little regret on either's part for this fact. It must be kept in mind that while Kazantzakis believed in the spirit of man he did not reject the flesh—only slavery to lusts—for Kazantzakis' was not a puritanical soul. In fact, one of his chief complaints against Christianity was that it "soiled the union of man and woman by stigmatizing it as a sin. Whereas formerly it was a holy act, a joyous submission to God's will, in the Christian's terror-shaken soul it degenerated into a transgression."³ Kazantzakis emphasized the happiness present in the sexual joining of creative, self-actualized men and women, but knew that the repression of legitimate sexuality brought about by the bourgeois Christian ethic militated against the ecstatic integrity of the sex act. In a like manner the hypocritical moralizing inherent in that institutionalized ethic creates, as Nietzsche perceived, profound debilitating implications for man's freedom in a related aspect of the personal, physical dimension of liberty which received Kazantzakis' attention—marriage. Throughout his life Jesus resists marriage for this would turn him from his God-chosen path. When, however, he faints on the cross Jesus confronts in his imagination the "last temptation" of earthly domesticity. He is led by Satan's angel first to Mary Magdelene and, after she is slain by Saul, to Lazarus' sisters, Mary and Martha. When castigated by Paul for abandoning his mission through becoming husband to the sisters, Jesus answers, "Here I lead the life of a man: I eat, drink, work, and have children. The great conflagration subsided, I too became a kind of tranquil

³Ibid., p. 371.
fire; I curled up in the fireplace. . . . I set sail to conquer the
world but cast anchor in this tiny domestic trough." 4 Later, when he
attempts to justify his action to the apostles, Judas scorns him:

your post, deserter, was on the cross and you know it. Others can
reclaim barren lands and barren women. Your duty was to mount the
cross—that's what I say! You boast that you conquered death, Woe is
you! Is that the way to conquer death—by making children, mouthfuls
for Charon! You've turned yourself into this meat market and you
deliver him morsels to eat. Traitor! Deserter! Coward! 5

But, as Jesus discovers when he wakes on the cross, his domestic desertion
exists only in his subconscious. He had not deserted his post and abandoned
the struggle to liberate God but had fulfilled his duty; "A wild, indomitable
joy took possession of him. . . . Temptation had captured him for a split
second and led him astray. The joys, marriages, and children were lies . . .
ilusions sent by the Devil. He uttered a triumphant cry: IT IS ACCOMPLISHED.'
In The Greek Passion Manolios is also tempted to marry yet resists in order that
he may be free to carry out God's mission. Kazantzakis' concern with the
cumberments of domestic life not doubt owes something to Nietzsche but is
traceable primarily to his first marital experience—a very unhappy one. Mar-
ried to Galetsa from 1911 to 1926 Kazantzakis suffered the torment of the artis

4Kazantzakis, The Last Temptation of Christ, p. 476.
5Tbid., p. 491.
6Tbid., p. 496. Chilson, Thought, XLVII (Spring 1972), pp. 82-83, notes
that "women play a major role in the novel. They are a source of temptation,
almost symbols of the great temptation, the symbol of bodily embrace and
wifely companionship in God's law, against the harsh way of God alone and
the symbol of the Cross. The final temptation of Jesus is to forsake his
life of struggle for the life of domesticity. This is the greatest and most
enticing threat to the great Cry of the Invisible. . . . God's salvation
does not advance through home-making but through setting out from the
home, leaving it behind, and facing the unknown and the uncertain."
ensnared in domestic conflict; "her attitude toward him became ironical and derisive—as reflected in her novel *Men And Supermen*. There is nothing more destructive for a creative genius than to be married to a woman who regards him with a critical and mocking eye." Kazantzakis lived with Eleni Samios, i.e., Helen Kazantzakis, for some eighteen years prior to their marriage in 1945 (an informal though legal ceremony which occurred only because Kazantzakis expected, incorrectly as it turned out, to be sent to North America to plead the cause of reconstruction as Greek cabinet minister without portfolio and desired to take Helen with him). This second marriage, characterized by deep love, understanding, and mutual respect, mitigated to some degree Kazantzakis' view of domestic enslavement, though he never truly lost his initial fear.

The other dimension of personal liberty, the intellectual realm, involved several things for Kazantzakis all of which flow from the freedom from the "inner Turks" of ignorance. Though Kazantzakis rejected the overambitious claims of intellectualism and scientific-rationalism he realized that a rigorous intellectual preparation was, for the great majority of men, a vital prerequisite to answering—and perhaps even to formulating—those agonizing questions of the spirit which were his abiding concern. This belief was acted upon in lifelong study beginning, as we have seen, on Naxos and Crete, continuing formally from 1902 until 1906 at the University of Athens and from 1907 until 1909 in the School of Law at the Sorbonne and the College de France, and informally, thereafter. As one commentator says:

> In preparation for his task, Kazantzakis, his race's destiny seriously in mind, has studied the Eastern philosophies and religions, learning the original languages, reading deeply in Mohammedism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism, as well as the Modern Western philosophers, Aquinas,

---

Kant, Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche, and Bergson. He has used the Ancients, the root of Greek thought, as a basis for his own and his nations' philosophical synthesis. In essence, Kazantzakis' collected work represents the final justification of the Western man's active search for truth as distinguished from the Easterner's passivity before truth. It must be mentioned that in the final analysis Kazantzakis doubts the saving power of the intellect of man, though he reaffirms the Western idea that it is necessary to have an educated and sensitive mind in order to comprehend its final inadequacy.8

From this rigorous and amazing search for truth came intellectual liberation from comforting religious falsehoods as well as from scientific "proofs."

With Kazantzakis' continual study and questioning also came escape from inertia and vegetative satisfaction—as brought on either by worship of materialistic goals, which received elaboration above, or by intellectual and ideological dogmatism and inflexibility. A consequence of all of the above was Kazantzakis' belief that the intellectually liberated man would scorn, like Nietzsche, the inhibitions of conventional social strictures—mores, creeds, etc.—and it is with this view that Kazantzakis moves out of the personal realm of freedom into the public arena.

Kazantzakis' philosophy of freedom on the political level can also be discussed in terms of physical and intellectual realms. Viewing the latter, Kazantzakis emphasized freedom from the enslavement of ideology—be it of left or right, East or West;

You must look with unclouded eye (unclouded by either hate or love) upon present-day reality in the world at large. You must admit the infamy as well as the virtues, the dark as well as the light, for here on this earth every living thing—human beings and ideas too—has always been composed of both. In a word, you must be a free person. This becomes an increasingly dangerous feat for the spirit.9

Kazantzakis was suspect at various times by all political and religious factions because of his resolute effort to maintain his intellectual independence to

---

8Douliis, Northwest Review, VI (Winter 1963), pp. 36-37.

criticize the deficiencies of all sides of the political spectrum.

While the Greek Communist could call him decadent, fascist, bourgeois, incurably religious, and a warmonger, the Chinese Communist could hail him as an apostle of peace, the Orthodox could try to prosecute him for atheism, the monarchists could see him as a bolshevik rabble-rouser and the communist controlled resistance movement during the occupation could reject him as an agent of German intelligence.\textsuperscript{10}

Kazantzakis was concerned not only with the intellectual dimension of political liberty but also with the physical realm of political freedom. This latter concern accrued from his childhood experience under Turkish rule on Crete. \textit{Freedom or Death} is a fictionalized account of that experience which embodies two views of political freedom. First, there is the traditional quest for liberty—acted out by Captain Michales and his fellow freedom fighters in periodic uprisings—of throwing off the yoke of tyranny and attaining self-rule. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, Kazantzakis presents another view of freedom on this level which expresses in political terms his basic ontological grounding, i.e., that the man who has an ideal—myth to believe in is free even though ruled by others. Captain Michales knows the futility of his position after the uprising has been put down and others have returned to their villages yet he fights on valiantly under the banner "Freedom or Death." In a similar vein, Prometheus proclaims his freedom even in his chains for his soul soars beyond tyranny. Like Victor Frankl, Alexander Solzhenitsyn, and others in this century, Kazantzakis agrees with Nietzsche that "He who has a why to live can withstand any how." There is, however, no quietist content here—either for Frankl, Solzhenitsyn, or Kazantzakis—for the "why," the guiding belief or idea, will inspire great souls to emulate Captain Michales and never submit willingly to any "how"—of

tyranny, injustice, and oppression. The next and highest level of freedom, the metaphysical level, is founded on a personal basis yet has important political implications.

Zorba, Kazantzakis' most brilliant characterization, is an attempt to portray, through the powerful contrast between a free being, Zorba, and an unfree being, the Boss, both a description of and a prescription for metaphysical freedom—the immortal free spirit of man. This spirit only fulfills its freedom and immortality insofar as man persists in the affirmation of life. It is only through this affirmation of life and the corollary victory over the authority of mortality that humanity in its highest sense is attained.

The struggle for freedom of spirit over matter is essential to Kazantzakis' metaphysical level of freedom. He expresses it thusly, "Guileful matter has chosen this body . . . slowly to dampen and extinguish the free flame which flickers within me."11 From whence comes the impetus to this dampening of the flame of freedom, this denial of reality and vitality, this surrender to the void? From the basic dualism which has dominated in one manner or another both man's life and philosophy—the inherent mind/rationalism versus body/passion make-up of man. This dualism is of primary importance at the moment, to recall an earlier citation, when we "reach the edge of the leaf . . . hear the noise of the other leaves of the tremendous tree, feel the sap rising . . . and our hearts swell. . . . From that moment begins . . . " That moment is the ultimate, the most shocking, the most abrasive of our lives, and it too is possessed of a dualism as it can be the most fulfilling, beneficial, enriching, and liberating of all possible moments or it can be the most fearful, oppressive, sterilizing, and enslaving of all possible moments. One, at that powerful and potent moment, can affirm

11Kazantzakis, Zorba, p. 113.
his vital, vivid, and rich, free life or can fall into the effete, devitalized mode of existence which is the predicament that arises from our surrendering to the oppressiveness of the metaphysical void. The mortality of the body, of mundane material existence, can lead man to two equally enslaving outlooks from which he must escape. Bien relates Kazantzakis' view that man must "extricate himself from both hope and fear, the two great millstones which grind Socratic man." It is obvious in what manner fear—arising from the haunting presence of death—can immobilize and destroy the essence of existence—freedom and vitality. Camus is another who found in this fear and consequent abdication of freedom the supreme paradox of the contemporary age. Camus draws attention in the twentieth century, as Dostoyevsky did in the nineteenth century, to the contradiction of men—that they sing accolades to freedom yet are unwilling to bear the constant tension which true freedom demands. In The Fall Camus reveals through Clemence the existential burden that is freedom without God, "Ah, mon cher, for anyone who is alone without God and without a master, the weight of days is dreadful." He describes his contemporary's reaction to that burden;

I didn't know that freedom is not a reward or a decoration, nor yet a gift box of dainties.... Oh, no! It's a chore, on the contrary, and a long distance race, quite solitary and very exhausting. Alone in a forbidden room, alone in the prisoner's box before the judges, and alone to decide in face of oneself or in the face of other's judgement. At the end of all freedom is a court sentence; that's why freedom is too heavy to bear.

This being true then in what manner do Camus' men, like Kazantzakis', seek

---


14 Ibid., pp. 132-33. Ortega, The Revolt of the Masses, believes that through its portrayal of freedom as "a gift box of dainties" liberal democracy
to relinquish their burden of freedom? To whom or for whom do they look for mastery? Camus argues that though God is dead much of the harsher side of the Christian ethic hangs on and it is this judgemental morality, this Christian ethic without Christian forgiveness, coupled with the fear of mortality, that leads men to judge their fellows—that leads them to "believe solely in sin, never in grace." Men "don't want freedom or its judgements, they ask to be rapped on the knuckles, they invent dreadful rules, they rush out to build piles of faggots to replace churches." Modern man has, for Camus and Kazantzakis, succumbed to this intransigent morality, these absolute judgements and oppressive rules/religion, and built his "piles of faggots to replace churches," primarily by surrendering to ideological comforts through fear. Illusory hope can do the same thing. Hope is capable of channeling men's lives into false and unfulfillable quests, with postponement of life, as evinced primarily in the hope of other-worldly existence which can be enslaving. Hope can lead, to quote Bien further, "to optimistic illusion, whether it be the false optimism of Western capitalism or the salvationism of Western religion, or the romantic dreams of non-tragic art." Even Nietzsche, the great destroyer of illusion, has given rise to mass man. This has occurred precisely through the success of its "programme," that being the investiture of men with rights of birth—regardless of social, economic, or political status. In Ortega's elitist view whereas in the nineteenth century men were—though adherent to the natural rights idea—still willing to allow the proper qualitative minority to govern all public matter, in the twentieth century, mass man has come to the fore and not only demanded these rights in name but also in actuality—hence, (p. 11) the "accession of the masses to complete social power." The key to the degenerative aspect of this lies in that these "natural rights" were not fought for, not earned, and therefore, are not qualitatively upheld—appreciated. The holders of these rights are not able enough to defend them and therefore do not appreciate the civilization—both historic and modern—which gave rise to their rights.

15Camus, The Fall, p. 135.

falsehood, and hope, succumbed in the end and built his pile of faggots; "the superman is just another paradise, another mirage to deceive poor unfortunate man and enable him to endure life and death." 17 Again crops up the protest against illusion, against comforting yet emasculating ideas or beliefs which are dangerous to metaphysical freedom. What man must do is mobilize the immense powers and capabilities of his spirituality and combat that which threatens his humanity. For Kazantzakis, just as freedom is the determinant belief of his philosophy, so it is also the determinant essence of humaness, "I think only those people who want to be free are human." 18

What are the implications and meaning of the view of freedom espoused by Kazantzakis for contemporary man? Does his philosophy have any direct relevance for today? We think it is of the utmost relevance and has many profound contemporary implications. Many of the problems to which Kazantzakis addressed himself are timeless as testified to by the attention devoted to them by philosophers over the centuries. The primary importance of Kazantzakis' view for us comes from the application of his personal, political, and metaphysical concepts of freedom to the experiential odyssey of twentieth century man in his Ulysses characterization. Ulysses is Kazantzakis' most important character and represents the cumulative account of the many contradictory contemporary themes which run through Kazantzakis' thought:

Since Kazantzakis brings to bear on his subject a lifetime of study in philosophy, anthropology, history, religion, and literature, the result is that the basic terms of the exploration become a catalogue of the central motifs and dilemmas of modern Western literature. For it is his purpose to expose Odysseus to all the strains and counter-strains

---

18 Kazantzakis, Zorba, p. 151.
that beset modern man, to guide him to a revelatory synthesis that can
give him clarity of understanding and ultimate peace, and to do this
without depriving him of his status as man.19

Odysseus: A Higher Truth

While some may dispute the modern suitability of Kazantzakis' ambitious
sequal to the Homeric epic, few deny that it "is the most monumental work of
Kazantzakis, and his greatest achievement. In it he comes closest to presenting
a unified world view, transcending the antitheses of flesh and spirit."20 The
crucial difference in Kazantzakis' and Homer's Ulysses is freedom. Homer has
Ulysses return from his voyage to his wife Penelope, his son Telemachus, his
friends and subjects on Ithaca, and willingly to submit to the placidity of
that existence. Kazantzakis, on the other hand, begins his epic with Ulysses'
dissatisfaction on his return to Ithaca and sends him once more in quest of
the elusive invisible Cry of ... freedom, immortality, truth? Kazantzakis
begins The Odyssey with a paean to freedom:

19George Scouffas, "Kazantzakis: Odysseus and the 'Cage of Freedom,'

20Wilson, Minnesota Review, VIII (1968), p. 175. Decavelles, Poetry,
XCV (December 1959), p. 176, concurs; "This modern epic of 33,333 lines,
first published in the original Greek in 1938 in Athens, is undoubtedly the
greatest long poem of our time, a colossal achievement in art and substance.
It is the mature product of Kazantzakis' deep familiarity with the best in
world literature and thought, of intense living, traveling, and thinking.
The creator, himself another Odysseus, came to know 'the cities and minds of
many people,' and made them his own in a passionate record of wide experience
which he has given meaning and value. Its hero, Odysseus, is Homeric only
so long as he does not conflict with Kazantzakis' own self. It is not without
significance that the old Adventurer was re-created once more in his own
native land, and in his own tongue. Odysseus has never ceased to be the
supreme and lasting embodiment of Greece, its spirit of an unflailing faith
in life and freedom, of enrichment and rebirth through ever new experience.
Yet the range in which Odysseus shapes and fulfills his destiny in this new
poem is far wider than when he gave us his old, Homeric report. Three thousand
years of further physical and spiritual exploration have passed since then."
O Sun, my quick coquetting eye, my red-haired hound, 
sniff out all my quarries that I love, give them swift chase, 
tell me all that you've seen on earth, all that you've heard, 
and I shall pass them through my entrails' secret forge 
till slowly, with profound caresses, play and laughter, 
stones, water, fire and earth shall be transformed to spirit, 
and the mud-winged and heavy soul, freed of its flesh, 
shall like a flame serene ascend and fade in sun.21

Thus, Kazantzakis expresses his belief that man has settled for less from 
life than it has to offer. Acting out the stages outlined in The Saviors 
of God Odysseus seeks the meaning of life and arrives at the perspective 
afforded by the Cretan glance--which is freedom;

Odysseus is the man who has freed himself from everything--religions, 
philosophies, political systems--one who has cut away all the strings. 
He wants to try all forms of life, freely beyond plans and systems, 
keeping the thought of death before him as a stimulant, not to make every 
pleasure more acrid and every ephemeral moment more sharply enjoyable in 
its brevity, but to whet his appetites in life, to make them more 
capable of embracing and exhausting all things so that, when death finally 
came, it would find nothing to take from him, for it would find an 
entirely squandered Odysseus.22

Kazantzakis describes in Books I through XII the manner in which Odysseus

once wrote to Prevelakis, Nikos Kazantzakis And His Odyssey, p. 63; "My Odyssey 
continues the enormous epic of the white race--the epic of Homer. It closes 
a circle left open for so many centuries. And it closes it when the state of 
the world is astonishingly like it was in the twelfth century B.C., shortly 
before the descent of the Dorian and the creation--after a middle age--of a 
new civilization."

22 Kazantzakis, cited by Friar, "Introduction," to Kazantzakis', The Odyssey 
p. xi. Compare Kazantzakis' sentiment above, which was essentially his goal 
in life, with Thoreau's purpose in life, as stated in Walden, The Portable 
Thoreau, p. 343; "I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately 
to confront only the essential facts of life, and see if I could learn what 
it had to teach, and not when I came to die, discover that I had not lived. 
I did not wish to live what was not life, living is so dear; nor did I wish 
to practise resignation, unless it was quite necessary. I wanted to live 
deep and suck out the marrow of life, to live so sturdily and Spartan-like as 
to put to rout all that was not life, to cut a broad swath and shave close, 
to drive life into a corner, and reduce it to its lowest terms." Although 
Thoreau's and Kazantzakis' lives and prose differed substantially, the oneness 
of the goal in life of the parochial New Engander immersed in the study of 
nature who ventured very little from his beloved Concord woods, and the cos-
begins his quest for attaining the union of personal, political, and metaphysical freedom—through abandonment of wife and family, sexual orgies, revolutions—in a fashion disturbing to many. One who is uneasy concerning Ulysses' satanic revelry's says,

on several occasions, Odysseus' bestiality and cruelty call in question his author's wisdom. Granted, Odysseus' inability to rest from travel is to be construed not as wanderlust or Faustian insatiability but rather as the noble quest for the meaning of life and the knowledge of how to live. Frequently, however, he loses sight of his estimable goals and gives way to unedifying displays of sadistic blood lust, depraved sensual orgies, wanton displays of his strength and craft, and senseless ventings of his wrath and indignation on all and sundry. He is as often man Transmogrified as Man Transfigured. He is unhappy at rest, and scarcely more happy in his restless wanderings. In addition, he is the cause of dissatisfaction, if not disquietitude, in others. He sows discontent like a political agitator, and stirs up dangerous thoughts in men's minds and forbidden lusts in men's hearts.23

Kazantzakis' concern for greatly expanded liberty and his orienting his philosophy in Books I through XII around the individual as the supreme value is seen to prove—and if one stops at this point indeed it does prove—that he was an amoral anarchist, for an important aspect of the affirmation of life is the capability of man for both good and evil. When man—in his embracing and exhausting all things by joining with Zorba and Odysseus in the overcoming of the void and the absolute affirmation of life—casts off the phantoms of "Gods, motherlands, ideas," and rips away the web of superficial socio-religious agglomerations that enmesh him to stand as a defiant giant mocking the abyss, then he has transcended the ethical and social institutions which restrict action—he is free. How does Kazantzakis answer the capacity for evil of this giant in his absolute freedom? While Kazantzakis recognizes in metropolitan world-traveler whose flights of brilliance took him far beyond the reality of the world of things is, at the very least, startlingly similar.

Zorba that man is both "A great brute and a God,"\textsuperscript{24} he does not satisfactorily answer the socio-political implications of his philosophy of absolute freedom. In keeping with the orientation of his philosophy, which at this point is concerned with the divine element of those great souls in the world, indeed he is not required to answer the ethical and social implications. For Kazantzakis' concept of freedom is primarily an ontological one which transcends socio-political concepts. It is concerned with the being of freedom, with the primordial and eternal infinitude of that freedom. It is because of this that Bien could correctly describe this issue of Kazantzakis' freeing the beast as well as the angel in man in the following manner:

Zorba, then is a union of god and goat, an incarnation of dissonance. And in all this he directly mimics the contradictory nature of life itself. Kazantzakis confesses that he "had never seen such a friendly accord between a man and the universe." Since Zorba mirrors the universe, in expressing himself he expresses the universal will. This is why his only guide to action need be: Do as I please. If he is true to his nature he will be true to universal nature, and therefore "good." He is, in philosophical language, "the thing-in-itself": everything he does is Zorba. "Whatever you do," Kazantzakis tells him, "you can't go wrong. Even if you wanted to, you couldn't. You're like a lion, shall we say, or a wolf. That kind of beast never behaves as if it were a sheep or a donkey; it is never untrue to its nature. And you, you're Zorba to the tips of your fingers."\textsuperscript{25}

The capacity for greatness lies in this defiance of evil; in the overcoming of evil. This is man truly freed. Therefore, while there is certainly room for valid criticism of Kazantzakis' excesses, which constitute one of his most severe problems in the area of political philosophy, perhaps such critics take only a superficial view. By reading further in The Odyssey one gains a fuller picture of the issue, for Kazantzakis qualifies his position in such a manner as to negate the immediate and political import of Odysseus' more undesirable behavior. He has Odysseus, in Books XIII, XIV, and XV,

\textsuperscript{24}Kazantzakis, Zorba, p. 24.

\textsuperscript{25}Bien, Antioch Review, XXV (Spring 1965),
overcome and surpass in Nietzschean fashion his baser, evil drives, accept responsibility, and a more disciplined liberty. Odysseus matures and leads his fellows as a political prophet in founding the ideal city. When this is coupled with the importance in Kazantzakis' mature thought of the concepts of unity, brotherhood, and man's duty, and the recognition that although Kazantzakis sought, i.e., in Marxist fashion, to destroy outmoded dogmas and political forms, he still fought not only to destroy but to rebuild, one comes to the conclusion that it "is no longer possible to dismiss The Odyssey as a glorification of total 'freedom'—that is, of immorality—a kind of belated echo of Schiller's Robbers. There is something far greater at stake here." This greater, more profound theme underlying Odysseus'...

---

26 Stavrou, Southwest Review, LVII (Winter 1972), pp. 58-59, elaborates in some detail on the parallels between The Odyssey and Nietzsche's Thus Spake Zarathustra; "In the two works we discern many similar ideas: scorn for herd morality together with a compassionate concern for man's destiny; worship of creativity and of man as sole creator; redefinition of nihilism as that which militates against life; celebration of conflict as a spur to higher and higher forms of life.

Nietzsche and Kazantzakis preferred vehement paroxysms of Promethean defiance to passive babblings of hopeless apathy. They adjured man to retrieve from programmed electronics a portion of his instinctual spontaneity. They besought man to find life's good and meaning. . . . They demand that man master his panic impulse for oblivion sought through an escape out of life or a frenetic submersion in life. . . . . . . . . . .

Nietzsche and Kazantzakis envisioned as their ideal a society which would be the very opposite of that in which anonymity is the most prized virtue, numerical strength the decisive factor, and majority opinion the divine oracle. . . . Both endeavor to aid man who, more often than not, refused to cooperate. Both are attracted to a hermit existence amid mountains and forests, although both disclaim the label of ascetic. Both are given to dreams, visions, and prognostication. Both see death as the last act in the interlude called life and conceive of it in terms of a sea voyage. Both soliloquize interminably, discourse garrulously, and harangue formidable. Both assail quietism, passivity and outworn conventions. Both refer their catechumens to the savage source of life: to the Dionysian frenzy of the dance, to the uninhibited laughter of the sartys. Both implore men to attain to self-mastery, even to the conquest of hope and pity. Both castigate those who, through benighted mores, self-distrust constitutional impotency, or reliance on superterrestrial Edens, are afraid of life and hence condemn it."

adventures is that total freedom is its own negation.

Colin Wilson, who sees Kazantzakis as an "outsider"--one that detests and fears the will-destroying power of contentment--states our thesis:

There is a strange and absurd paradox about human nature, which is expressed in Fichte's comment: "To be free is nothing; to become free is very heaven." In the moment when a human being experiences freedom, inner doors open; he sees over endless plains; his freedom stretches around him like the vast spaces of a cathedral. But within days or hours he has become accustomed to freedom; the mind closes; it yawns and falls asleep. This sleep is the greatest enemy of human beings. The cathedral turns into a narrow room with all the windows closed. Freedom ceases to be freedom. But how absurd! The freedom is still there, just as a window is still there, even when you have drawn the curtains across it.

This is still the greatest problem of modern man, the problem that blocks his evolution. . . . A few major writers have recognised it, indeed--Sartre, Camus, Thomas Mann--but have decided it is insoluble. 'It is meaningless that we live and meaningless that we die,' says Sartre, 'Man is a useless passion.'

Kazantzakis is the only contemporary writer who saw the problem, faced it, and spent his life fighting like a demon to solve it. The greatness of his work lies in this demonic quality. It is also heroic; Kazantzakis is the only modern writer of whom one could use the word 'Promethean.'

Odysseus' journey is an agonizing portrayal of Kazantzakis' effort to solve this problem and provide meaning to human life while at the same time preserving freedom. After his ideal city is destroyed in Book XVI the quest for freedom "dominates every stage of Odysseus' pilgrimage. Now his chief concern is to search his own mind and the mind of other freedom-loving persons for the essence of liberty." This is most evident in Book XVII (which Prevelakis calls Absolute Freedom) where in his mind Odysseus plays as the God-Creator of life. He calls to existence an old king, prince, slave, warrior-king, and maiden, and they perform the despairing drama of man's existence under his sentence of death. In Books XVIII through XXI Odysseus resumes his southward

---

28Ibid., p. 161.

29Stanford, The Ulysses Theme, p. 236.

30Prevelakis, Nikos Kazantzakis And His Odyssey, footnote #110, p. 179.
journey through life, meeting and rejecting representative types of Buddha, a nihilist, Don Quixote, and Jesus, all of whom falsely proclaim a unique escape from the death sentence. He arrives at a polar village in Book XXII and, in preparing to meet death, recalls his exhaustive, much-experienced journey through life. In the concluding Book XXIV his former companions, both live and dead, join him for the final reunion at the moment of his death;

Then Flesh dissolved, glances congealed, the heart's pulse stopped, and the great mind leapt to the peak of its holy freedom, fluttered with empty wings, then upright through the air soared high and freed itself from its last cage, its freedom.31

There are both positive and negative lessons to be derived from this magnificent pilgrimage.

The positive value lies in the dynamic example of one who rejects every false hope; who will not succumb to the void awaiting; who will not abdicate his freedom; who will not exchange his liberty for any Grand Inquisitor's mastery, mystery and miracle. It is at the same time a profound exploration by one of tremendous learning and intellect of the major world-views confronting modern man. Yet, as with Odysseus' excesses before the ideal city there is something disturbing about the excessiveness of his absolute freedom in the latter stages of his life. In this excessiveness lies the negative lesson of The Odyssey; "It is not that Kazantzakis has dared too much in his complete exploration of the meaning of freedom, but that, in a sense, he has exposed the subject beyond most profitable return in terms of meaning. Odysseus insists so obsessively on freedom that it becomes cleansed of definition."32 This

31Kazantzakis, The Odyssey, Book XXIV, lines 1390-94, p. 775.

32Scouffas, Accent, XIX (1959), p. 246. Prevelakis also points out this insistence on freedom. Whereas before the city was destroyed Odysseus had achieved freedom from public opinion, social confinement, necessity,
freedom which Odysseus seeks so rigorously eventually reveals itself as the negation of itself, as nothingness, as that which is not, as the non-existent, as non-Being. One is led ultimately to realize on this deepest, most profound level of The Odyssey that rather than emulate Odysseus after Book XVI and never commit ourselves we must learn from him how to commit ourselves:

In the experience of life itself, as in the art that renders it, freedom like all else must have its measurement. It cannot simply be asserted as an absolute. And this suggests the greatest irony of all in The Odyssey. Friar, in his Synopsis of the work, touches on it when he describes Odysseus' death as freeing his mind from its 'last cage, that of its freedom.' Odysseus has been imprisoned in an abstraction and a category.33

The true road for man lies neither in contentless self-destroying absolute freedom nor in such dogmatic, foredoomed commitments as exemplified by the tightly-structured scientific-naturalism of Odysseus' ideal city. Realizing after Book XVI, Nikos Kazantzakis And His Odyssey, p. 106, "Odysseus rebels against God, as if God had broken his promise. The world suddenly seems absurd to him: 'No master-god exists, nor virtue, no just laws, no punishment in Hades, no reward in Heaven' (XVI, 1241-42). Odysseus calls this void 'complete freedom.' The world is deserted, absurd, unreal. This is the moment for the free Odysseus to fashion a world of his own and to 'play'--to fashion and dissolve it: to play the part of God."

Stanford, The Ulysses Theme, p. 236, also notes this obsessive demand for freedom; after the city is destroyed Odysseus' 'chief task is to discipline himself in the way of true liberty. But, significantly, from beginning to end he is the Lonely One. The Lonely One: here is the nemesis of absolute freedom. Kazantzakis does not flinch from its terrors (although he lessens them a little for his hero at the last by introducing the negro boy [1.e., Jesus] in the death scene). Absolute freedom means absolute separation from one's fellow-men; and each degree of freedom must be achieved by giving up some element in social life. ... Kazantzakis sends his hero, when he has freed himself in turn from the Ego, the Race, and the World, to a much more desolate place--to the wastes of polar ice. ... The Odysseus of Kazantzakis has pursued personal liberty to the zero-point of the earth."

that "Freedom without virtue or goodness is of the devil," Kazantzakis knows that the egoistic path of Odysseus is in many ways as politically undesirable as the ideological paths of the bourgeoisie or the Marxists. Therefore, in Report, in the section "When the Germ of 'The Odyssey' Formed Fruit Within Me," he says,

The human being cannot support absolute freedom; such freedom leads him to chaos. If it were possible for a man to be born with absolute freedom, his first duty if he wished to be of some use on earth, would be to circumscribe that freedom. Man is able to bear working only in a fixed circumscribed arena. I had to submit to this human incapacity if I wished to surpass it.

The circle is closed and man goes beyond freedom to come back to the struggle toward freedom.

This powerful dialectic operates on only the highest level of existence once man has passed like Odysseus through the stages of The Saviors of God and joined with man, God, and nature in the cosmogenic struggle of life on earth. The cosmogenic harmony revolves around the insight that just as "the highest art is passion that is controlled; order in the midst of chaos; serenity both in joy and pain," so in like manner, the "highest politics" lies in the proper tension between liberty and unity, individualism and community, spontaneity and order, change and constancy. Neither absolute freedom nor absolute necessity is offered here but a compassionate roadway between and beyond the two which answers in a positive manner the central issues of anxiety, alienation, and the anomic condition of our time. In what is undeniably the most perceptive analysis of Kazantzakis' thought Joseph Flay goes directly to the heart of our theme. He sees the overriding

34 Kazantzakis, The Fraticides, p. 173.
35 Kazantzakis, Report, p. 469.
36 Kazantzakis, Spain, p. 46.
question confronting twentieth century Western civilization as "the fate of the individual in a cosmos which is seen as Godless and yet overwhelming in its power over the individual."37 Compounding the difficulty of arriving at an answer to this question are two contesting views: (1) The individual is only a function of a quantifiable whole as professed under the impetus of the scientific, industrial, and cybernetic revolutions; (2) The individual, with his desires, projects, and hopes, is irrevocably separate from historical necessity. In Flay's view this confrontation of views has given rise to a question of meaning "which has left us with the present existential theme, at once struggling against both the mathematized universe and the inexorableness of history."38 Hegel resolved this question of meaning in favor of historicity by saying the individual must stoically submit to historical destiny. Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, and Marx each resolved, in Flay's interpretation, to take the opposite course from Hegel and forever fight the agonizing battle against this absolute necessity. Kazantzakis accepts and rejects both views in taking a third course; "Beyond both the bland stoicism of Hegel and the agonizing eroticism of the existentialists, Kazantzakis finds a credo which I suggest might best be described as 'erotic stoicism.'"39 This "erotic stoicism" embodies Kazantzakis' hard won knowledge that Spinoza's and Hegel's insights into the forces of natural and historical necessity cannot be wholly rejected as the existentialists and Marxists have done. It incorporates the lesson that the ennobling yet futile battle against necessity does, however, call forth the qualities of the higher

38 Ibid., p. 294.
39 Ibid., p. 295.
man. Therefore, Kazantzakis argues, the correct path lies neither in completely accepting nor completely rejecting necessity but in choosing how to battle for and with it and thereby to surpass it: "Indeed," Friar says, "it is the greatest glory of man that he can set himself his own purpose, and in this manner not only control but also direct the mysterious forces which create him and which might one day destroy him as a species." Kazantzakis discusses the importance of setting a purpose in life which becomes the essence of life. This central passion of every integral man may be love, beauty, knowledge, etc., and "lends unity to his thoughts and actions; it helps him find or invent the cosmic harmony. . . .

Alas for the man who does not feel himself governed inside by an absolute monarch. His ungoverned, incoherent life is scattered to the four winds."

He reports to his "grandfather" El Greco, in a continuation of the above passage, on their essence;

Our center, grandfather, the center which swept the visible world into its whirl and fought to elevate it to the upper level of valor and responsibility, was the battle with God. Which God? The fierce summit of man's soul, the summit which we are ceaselessly about to attain and which ceaselessly jumps to its feet and climbs still higher. 'Does man battle with God?' some acquaintances asked me sarcastically one day. I answered them, 'With whom else do you expect him to battle?' Truly, with whom else?

That was why the whole of our lives was an ascent, grandfather—asc precipice, solitude. We set out with many fellow strugglers, many ideas, a great escort. But as we ascended and as the summit shifted and became more remote, fellow strugglers, ideas, and hopes kept bidding us farewell out of breath, they were neither willing nor able to mount higher. We remained alone, our eyes riveted upon the Moving Monad, the shifting summ. We were swayed neither by arrogance nor by the naive certainty that one day the summit would stand still and we would reach it; nor yet, even if we should reach it, by the belief that there on high we would find happiness, salvation, and paradise. We ascended because the very act of ascending for us, was happiness, salvation, and paradise.41

---

41 Kazantzakis, Report, pp. 494-95.
In setting our purpose, in not only realizing that we are determined but
choosing by what we are determined— which capability of choice is a
distinguishing feature of man—we become co-creators of our fate, co-
controllers of history and nature, collaborators with destiny. We are no
longer Beckett's and Kafka's apathetic victims of immobilizing fate. By
"loving fate" in the Nietzschean sense we are free and transcend its
terrors. Thus, Kazantzakis could say consistently in what is an apparent
contradiction: "Of my own free will I accept necessity;" and, "But an
exacting soul . . . was born precisely to declare war against this law of
necessity." Kazantzakis knows, however, that ultimately we are doomed
to defeat by the death sentence under which we labor, therefore, ours is
an absurd existence. This very absurdity, rather than negating the importance
of the struggle, enhances it;

I know perfectly well that death is invincible. Man's worth, however,
lies not in victory but in the struggle for victory. I also know this,
which is more difficult: it does not even lie in the struggle for victory;
Man's worth lies in one thing only, in this: that he live and die
bravely, without condescending to accept any recompense. And I also
know this third requirement, which is more difficult yet: the certainty
that no recompense exists must not make our blood run cold, but must fill
us with joy, pride, and manly courage.

This difficult process of self-salvation is never easy, never comfortable,
but always underlined with strife, suffering, and defeats. It is couched in
despair;

Only beyond absolute despair is the door of absolute hope found. Alas
to that man who cannot mount the final dreadful step which rises above
absolute despair; such a man is necessarily incurably despairing. Only
that other man who can mount that step can know what is meant by impreg-
nable joy and immortality.

\(^{42}\)Ibid., pp. 423 & 436 respectively.
\(^{43}\)Ibid., p. 432.
\(^{44}\)Kazantzakis, cited by Friar, "Introduction," to Kazantzakis', The
Odyssey, p. xxi.
This is rendered impossible for those weak in the spirit attracted to lesser, materialistic goals. Kazantzakis would say to despairing twentieth century man that he must weak a replacement of the Cartesian cogito to "I strive therefore I am." He must strive knowing the definitiveness of eventual defeat; strive within the parameters of human unity, virtue, reciprocity; strive for the higher existence beyond hope and freedom—this is Kazantzakis' solution to the anxiety, meaninglessness, anomie, ideological dogma, and atomic terror of modern life.\(^5\) Flay concludes of this solution,

Nothing is guaranteed, nothing is certain, neither victory nor defeat! We must accept and fight fate with all our energy, not in order to subdue it, but because it is our fate and our destiny and a worthy opponent. And we must accept the truth that we cannot force our eroticism on others, but that they themselves must either make that act of will which unleashes it, or remain submerged in their fantasies and their repression. We must hear the cry of mankind for salvation, but must not save them by giving them false hopes for certainty.\(^6\)

As political theorists look back upon Kazantzakis' life and thought they will find, in addition to his intense concern with freedom, a more subtle and in many ways equally pervasive idea which seems to stand out and dominate all others. This is Kazantzakis' profound recognition of the irrevocable tie between hope and politics. Kazantzakis' political thought is a stinging rebuttal to the false, ideological offerings of illusory "hope for certainty" of right and left. He offers an important, affirmative, affectionate, and stimulating politics for the spirit of hope and freedom.

\(^5\)"Man must," says Stavrou, Southwest Review, LVII (Winter 1972), p. 58, "assume the entire onus of responsibility and freedom; he must heft his Sisyphean rock and trudge up the hill, braced by the knowledge that human struggle can only end in provisional victories which will ceaselessly be called into question. Having posited life's patent absurdity and fortuity, man must then embrace them as the destiny he neither can nor wishes to propiate."

The implications of hope and despair has long been debated vis-a-vis politics by political theorists. Machiavelli once identified a major error of men as not knowing how and when to limit their hopes. Kazantzakis believed hope is extremely relevant to politics, particularly for Western man, primarily because of the manner in which the two central themes of Western culture--scientific rationalism and Christianity--have influenced both hope and politics.\footnote{On this point see above pp. 32-3, 72-3, 102-05, 111-12, 202-04, & 213-17.} Proceeding on this belief as an analytical approach to the study of contemporary political thought in the West one arrives at a particular "angle of vision": "each theorist has viewed the problem of political philosophy from a different perspective. . . . This suggests that political philosophy constitutes a form of 'seeing' political phenomena and that the way in which a phenomena will be visualized depends in large measure on where the viewer stands."\footnote{Sheldon S. Wolin, Politics and Vision: Continuity and Innovation in Western Political Thought (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1960), p. 17.} Standing in the midst of the complexities and apparently insoluble ideological contradictions of late nineteenth and twentieth century political thought as one unravels and distinguishes the intricate and shifting morass of modern politics he finds birth, ideologically speaking, in the important crucible of the latter half of the nineteenth century--during the time of Kazantzakis' birth. Midwifery duties were done by the central and
unique place in men's lives of hope and despair occasioned at that particular juncture in the West by both the increasing impetus of scienticism and the accelerating loss of faith. Valuable insight into this relationship of hope and despair and contemporary world politics is afforded by Kazantzakis' perspective. This is due to his creativeness and integrity. It is also due to his independence for as one analyst has remarked: "An intellectual position independent both of the Soviet creed and of the conventional assumptions dominant in Western society, can . . . point beyond accepted thought patterns to a new synthesis."49 If we are to better the anxious lot of man we must point beyond the accepted thought patterns which have mired our age in ideological confusion. Wolin, in his immensely important work, assigns to political theory the task of pointing the way out for man from his despair and hopelessness:

political theory must once again be viewed as that form of knowledge which deals with what is general and integrative to man, a life of common involvements. The urgency of these tasks is obvious, for human existence is not going to be decided at the lesser level of small associations: it is the political order that is making fateful decisions about man's survival in an age haunted by the possibility of unlimited destruction.50

Only through compassionate, intelligent use of a political philosophy which draws from all fruitful areas of political inquiry and, like Kazantzakis, "hear mankind's cry for salvation but does not save them by giving false hopes for certainty" can an exit be found.

Bertrand Russell has captured in his inimitable way this tragic, hopeless essence of the contemporary predicament:

That man is the product of causes which had no provision of the end they were achieving; that his origin, his growth, his hopes and fears, his
loves, and his beliefs, are but the outcome of accidental collocations of atoms; that no fire, no heroism, no intensity of thought and feeling, can preserve an individual life beyond the grave; that all the labors of the ages, all the devotion, all the inspiration, all the noon-day brightness of human genius, are destined to extinction in the vast death of the solar system, and that the whole temple of man's achievements must inevitably be buried beneath the debris of a universe in ruins—all these things, if not quite beyond dispute, are yet so nearly certain, that no philosophy which rejects them can hope to stand. Only within the scaffolding of these truths, only on the firm foundation of unyielding despair, can the soul's habitation be safely built.\(^5\)

Both East and West have sought, for various reasons, to escape the strictures of these basic truths and thus have not built on a firm foundation. Rather, they have eroded the creative potentiality within Russell's apt analysis and now find that not only no philosophy but also no political system which neglects that assessment "can hope to stand." Their evasion has taken two main forms. One is through attempts to replace teleological purposelessness with new artificial, homogeneous ethical-moral systems which, to recall Flay's comment, strive to "force their eroticism on others." This has resulted in a horrifying new political form—totalitarianism. Another, more subtle evasion evinced in the serene overlooking of the reality Russell speaks of is due to a misguided faith-belief in comatose, outmoded ideals and progressivistic illusionism. This is most evident in empirical democracy. Both of these embody the fatal sin, in terms of Kazantzakis' political thought, of abandoning the struggle. Speaking for a wide segment of humanity within the United States James Baldwin writes to his nephew, "You know, and I know, that the country is celebrating one hundred years of freedom one hundred years too soon. We cannot be free until they are free.\(^5\) They have learned as we all must learn the rightness of Kazantzakis' insight that "none are saved until all are saved ... none are free until all are free." This sentiment is


particularly apt as we approach 1976 and the grandiose rites planned by those in the satisfaction of power to glorify two hundred years of "freedom." What is this freedom to the poor, the illiterate, the powerless, the unspoken for, the ones left behind by the mad onrushing, uncaring directionless "progress" of our technological society. Existence is for these many segments of the citizenry of the supposedly more enlightened, liberated West, as well as for many people of the authoritarian East, truly bitter.

In this oppression, bitter isolation, and hopelessness there is a fusion of results of both rational empirical-democracy and totalitarianism. The bankruptcy of both theories for modern man is brought about by the ethical hiatus implicit in both, by the arbitrary basis for policy, by the failure of both to address themselves to the "essence" of man—to his liberated humaneness, and by the failure to build on the firm foundation of unyielding despair. It is in endeavoring to rectify these mistakes and to inculcate some common humanitarian values into a political ethic that Kazantzakis' political philosophy is valuable. His humanism and brilliance have become beacons for some in this era of awakening to the dangers of technocratic society and to the possibilities of man for great good and great evil. His counsel to confront and thereby to surpass the inhibitions of mortality is extremely relevant in this nuclear age when we live with the fearful capability of self-destruction. His concern with individual greatness through self-realization, his attack on ideological heresies of left and right, East and West, and his strong support of the demands of love, unity, will, and brotherhood, are extremely necessary in this fratricidal era with its racial, national, ideological, economic, and religious, Vietnams, Middle Easts, and Irelands. The strength, consistency, and integrity with which Kazantzakis stated his
themes have placed him in the forefront of those who have attempted, like
his hallowed precursor saviors, to carve a new riverbed of the spirit
leading out of the transitional age. The forcefulness and uncompromising
tone of Kazantzakis' explication of his beliefs is why Kazantzakis offers
a basis for a politics beyond illusory scientific faith, destructive
nihilistic despair, and ideology--hope for the future. In his politics
of struggle there is an operational ethic, a meaningful morality, an
answer for modern man. It is not merely a beautiful and haunting abstraction,
a powerful literary delusion as bankrupt in an empirical sense as so many
other proposals have proven to be.

Kazantzakis' heroic "cry" is enjoying ever-increasing attention, partic-
ularly among young people. Many are today seeking freedom and hope in
Kazantzakis' terms--new levels of consciousness, of salvation, of deliverance.
'His popularity and staying power is exhibiting greater potential than that of
many of his contemporaries. Kazantzakis' thought on theology, literature,
etc., are coming under increasing scrutiny and he is gaining recognition as
one of the seminal figures of the twentieth century. We believe that Kazant-
zakis, who is primarily a literatist, will be increasingly viewed from the
angle of political philosophy. There are many justifications for this belief

53Kazantzakis' appeal to the young, for whom in a large measure he wrote,
is recognized by a number of observers:
Blenkinsopp, Commonweal, XCIII (February 26, 1971), p. 514; "It no longer
occasions surprise on American campuses to hear students, especially theologica-
students, speak of prayer as reporting (to whom is not always clear), or of
being saved from salvation or going beyond hope and fear. The Ecumenical
Institute of Chicago has even modeled its curriculum on insights traceable to
The Saviors of God, Report To Greco and, yes, Zorba. With the dionysian
theologians now in the saddle and riding hard, it is safe to predict that his
influence will continue to be felt. And this might appear to call for an
explanation since Kazantzakis, who never visited the United States, speaks
out of an experience and in an idiom quite foreign even to a generation of
Americans nourished on Marcuse, Brown, Watts, and the rest."
three of the most important being the nature of his imaginative genius, the
nature of the times, and the nature of his infusion of Eastern thought into
the West. On the first point, one commentator on the relation of literature
and socio-political theory contends that the concern with an individual creat
consciousness suggests a "link between social thought and literature: 'con-
sciousness,' 'construction'--the fabrication of a personal world in which the
individual self can find existence bearable--these are the key terms that
social theory and imaginative literature hold in common."54 These are also
the terms that characterize the nature of Kazantzakis' genius and thus render
his imaginative literature pertinent to socio-political theory. The same
individual, in commenting on the turn of the immediate pre-World War I novelist
to political themes, explains; they were "living under high tension ... 
striving to hold together the contradictions that were tearing them asunder ..
living in historical circumstances in which all fixed norms were lacking:
the old ethic had collapsed--and it was far from clear where the new one was
to be found."55 Again, an apt description of Kazantzakis, the nature of his
times, his thought, his complexity, and an equally valid description of our
chaotic time. Kazantzakis is a true successor to Gide, Mann, Hesse, etc., in

Wilson, Minnesota Review, VIII (1968), p. 179; "I have spend a great deal
of time lecturing at American universities in recent years, and I have discover
that Kazantzakis is a cult with a certain type of highly intelligent student.
Almost without exception, someone asks me: 'Do you know the work of Kazantzaki
There is good reason for this, and it is the direct outcome of Kazantzakis'
peculiar greatness."

Chilson, Thought, XLVII (Spring 1972), p. 69; "In the last few years,
Nikos Kazantzakis has remained one of the most popular authors, particularly
among young college students."

54Hughes, Consciousness And Society, p. 365.

55Ibid., p. 364.
embodving the moving creative spirit of the literatist involved in socio-political themes and offers much sustenance for our age. In regard to the last point, the manner in which Kazantzakis incorporates Eastern thought to bring a true universalistic view to political questions,

Kazantzakis escapes simplifying definitions as a continent rejects them. Kazantzakis is Christian and heathen, anarchist, humanist and stoic sage, alternately and sometimes simultaneously. He belongs to no school. . . . Kazantzakis is, before everything else, Cretan; and as such he is more than European only. . . . Crete is as far removed from Europe as from Africa and Asia. . . . As Africa's flame scorches Crete in summer, so it burns in the blood of this man who strove for many long years, to build a synthesis from Greek and Oriental thought.56

Historically, there has been a dangerous overlooking of the contributions of thinkers not in the main channel of Anglo-American/European political thought. Whatever the reason for this, with the growing volume of translation today, with the inspiring move to more mutual understanding and cooperation between East and West, and with the welcome awareness of the timeless value of Eastern thought, it is only logical to expect that thinkers like Kazantzakis who have attempted a synthesis as a way out of the transitional age will attract increasing attention. In addition to these reasons pointing to an increased awareness of and interest in Kazantzakis' political thought we offer, by way of summation, our contention that Kazantzakis will be studied for his uniquely provocative offering of hope.

Kazantzakis resolutely condemned false hope and resoundingly counseled man to forever fight the battle for the ascent. Modern man must learn, as did Kazantzakis, that in questing for the summit of men's souls the casting off of mundane hope and illusory freedom is an occasion not for despair and anxiety but one for joy and celebration. At the zenith of human capabilities which, following Kazantzakis, we must seek, one passes from those debasing limits so

despised by Kazantzakis to link with God. This is done individually by man and collectively, i.e., politically, by mankind through operationalizing those ennobling, liberating, and eminently applicable criteria of free choice, respect for man, love, social justice, communitarian needs, individuation, integration of the daimonic, and by heeding the counsel of both intellect and heart. In this manner is discovered a multi-tiered political theory that reveals in their falsity those twentieth century masks of nihilism-escapism of Nietzsche or Buddha, the other-worldliness of the institutionalized church, and the materialism of both Marxist-Leninist revolution and Western scientific democracy. By following Kazantzakis' politics of salvation mankind successfully traverses the epoch of nihilism Nietzsche foresaw and achieves the vital transvaluation of an outmoded morality. They learn with Zorba, Odysseus, and El Greco how to link with the cosmological \textit{\'{e}lan vital} in a truly aspirational existence that defies the abyss and all debilitating doctrines founded on its terror. They reject the eschatologically justified ethic of homicide in fulfilling the extremely difficult demands of true rebellion, realizing that every moment is eternity and all men are brothers. They willingly uphold the cost of discipleship in rejecting the politics of secular messiahs. They utilize the benefits of science yet do not make a new faith of science, knowing that science is but one aspect of a truly well-rounded existence. They listen closely to those men of the spirit within their midst, always seeking as their leaders ones who understand not only outer but, more importantly, inner life. They strive to emulate the religious individual who lives on only the highest level, beyond the confines of the present. They emphasize not technique but content, not organization but spirit, not the few but the many. These are the true indices of hope that lead to the highest degree of beatitude attainable in political life.
LISTS OF WORKS CITED

Primary Sources

Books


Articles


Secondary Sources

Books


Articles


Unpublished Material


VITA

James Franklin Lea was born in Chesbrough, Louisiana on October 22, 1945. He received his B.A. from Southeastern Louisiana College, Hammond, Louisiana, in 1969 with a major in Government. He entered graduate school at LSU in the summer term, 1969. At the fall semester, 1969 he was awarded a graduate assistantship in the Political Science Department, and at the beginning of the fall semester, 1970 he was awarded an NDEA Fellowship in the same department. In September, 1971, he assumed an assistant professorship of Political Science at Livingston University, Livingston, Alabama. In December of the same year he received the M.A. from LSU, with a minor in Philosophy. After having taught one year he was awarded, through the auspices of Livingston University, an Advanced Study Grant from the U.S. Office of Education in the form of a sabbatical for the 1972-73 academic year.
EXAMINATION AND THESIS REPORT

Candidate: James Franklin Lea

Major Field: Political Science

Title of Thesis: The Politics of Salvation: An Introduction to the Political Philosophy of Nikos Kazantzakis

Approved:

Cecil E. Schumaker
Major Professor and Chairman

James D. Trahman
Dean of the Graduate School

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

James Bohner

Edward H. Henderson

Ace V. Anhalt

Rudolph V. Williamson

Date of Examination:

July 19, 1973