

THE HELLENIZATION OF ROME
AND THE QUESTION
OF ACCULTURATIONS

The Hellenization of ancient Rome is not a rare kind of event in history; “outer” India or the Chinese world have offered several other different examples. Roman civilization was an important part of Hellenistic culture¹ much like present day Japan participates in Western civilization. Our purpose is not to recall this evidence nor to argue for Roman originality. (Where has an acculturation ever been total?) We shall not allow either the forest or the trees to hide the other and shall ask ourselves rather what “acculturation” might mean in the case of Rome. For the question of acculturation, which describes so well the present condition of the Third World, is inapplicable to other historic situations. The richness of the past is such that our sociologies or our praxeologies² are often nothing other than rationalizations of a particular case in history.

Translated by Scott Walker

¹ The expression is from Eduard Norden, *Die römische Literatur*, 5th edition, Leipzig, Teubner, 1954, p. 22.

² For example, our current praxeology of international relations can only

And with reason, for an acculturation is not a determined phenomenon like vases which stack one inside the other. No two examples of acculturation are alike any more than two wars or two revolutions are alike. The present political situation is such that we think in terms of power relations (the weaker party receives from the stronger) and in terms of national originality (the people who give their culture are foreigners). But there was a time when, on the contrary, foreign values belonged to the victorious nation like a kind of booty: Mongols or Tibetans adopted Chinese ways by right of their victory.³ Acculturation is not always a *violence* worked on a nation; it is always supported by a feeling of legitimacy (even if only the legitimacy of booty), that is by a relation of power. Nor is it concerned with a nation as such, a global society, for global society does not exist.⁴ There is only a loosely-tied package of organizations and groups which remain separated by boundaries which have no external edge: what concerns one does not touch the others.

One can only be surprised then if one imagines acculturation like a patriotic Epinal. Consider the Japan of the Tokugawa officially closed to the world where the existence of Napoleon was known only through the annual report on the state of the world which the handful of Netherlanders, admitted once a year to Nagasaki, submitted to the Shôgun. However, this narrow opening in the national facade was large enough for interested sub-groups. In 1858 a Japanese patriot proclaimed the need for “a Napoleon to bring freedom”. He had transcribed the Dutch word *vrijheid* into Japanese.⁵

We know also how much Western art influenced Japanese prints beginning around the 1740's. Then artists of grand stature such as Hokusai and Hiroshige began to study Italian perspective

be applied in a world where there are nations; but nations or countries are not transhistoric objects. Roman “imperialism”, this archaic isolationism, occurred in a world completely different, and Roman praxeology of war and peace was not our own. Cf. *Y a-t-il eu un impérialisme romain?* in *Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire de l'Ecole française de Rome*, 1975, p. 847.

³ P. Demiéville, *Le concile de Lhasa*, Paris, Publications de l'Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient, 1952, p. 182.

⁴ Raymond Boudon, *Effets pervers et ordre social*, Paris, P.U.F., 1977, p. 172.

⁵ P. Akamatsu, *Meiji: révolution et contre-révolution au Japon*, Paris, Calmann-Lévy, 1968, p. 157; cf. J. Mutel, *La Fin du Shôgunat et le Japon de Meiji*, Paris, Hatier, 1970, p. 36.

until, by a reversal, their violent originality was discovered by Manet, Van Gogh and even Bonnard.⁶

Such is the barely visible progression of workshop methods and fashions. In the same way in republican Rome where Hellenization had become a matter of state, Hellenistic architecture spread not through a great political action but by a side channel, the free-masonry of the workshops.⁷

For an international group of technicians feels free to borrow wherever it finds something good. Imitation becomes in a sense the norm, even when it goes as far as conformism. In France many provincial traditions were lost after World War II. From force of contact with the events and the news of this vast world, the people of the provinces felt themselves inadequate and that they no longer had the *right* to dress or to speak differently from others. The sense of a right extends even into the domain of linguistics. Adolf Bach has shown how in a given geographic area the diffusion of a suffixal formation or the elimination of synonyms are not phenomena of machine-like imitation.⁸ Rather, they are explained by a feeling of belonging to the same group and by the desire to produce a "good" manner of speaking which would be common to all members of the group. A people does not always demand a national language simply because this language is still spoken and thus preserves a feeling of originality in the group. It can be, on the contrary, that the people wishes to have the right to be itself in the act of demanding its language. Inversely, a sign of

⁶ R. Lane, *L'Estampe japonaise*, tr., Paris, 1962, p. 237; L. Hajek, *Japanese Graphic Art*, London, Octopus Books, 1976, fig. 42; A. Terukazu, *La Peinture Japonaise*, Geneva, Skira, 1961, p. 176; J. Hillier, *Hokusai: Paintings, Drawings and Woodcuts*, Oxford, Phaidon, 1978, p. 35; M. Narazaki, *Hiroshige: Famous Views*, Tokyo, Kodansha, "Masterworks of the Ukiyo-e", 1968, p. 12; J. Rewald, *Histoire de l'impressionnisme*, Paris, Albin Michel, 1955, p. 261; A. Terrasse, *Pierre Bonnard*, Paris, Gallimard, 1967, p. 24; James A. Michener, *Estampes japonaises*, tr., Fribourg, 1961, p. 27 and pl. 43; L. Aubert, *Les Maîtres de l'estampe japonaise*, Paris, 1922, p. 123 and 248; J. Hillier, *The Vevey Collection*, Sotheby, 1976, vol. 1, fig. 31 and 59-61; vol. 3, fig. 808, 837, 940.

⁷ To use the expression of P. Gros, *Les Premières Générations d'architectes hellénistiques à Rome*, in *Mélanges offerts à Jacques Heurgon*, Ecole Française de Rome, 1976, p. 409.

⁸ A. Bach, *Deutsche Namenkunde*, vol. 2, *Die deutschen Ortsnamen*, 2 (Heidelberg, Carl Winter, 1954), p. 438 and 444; *Deutsche Volkskunde*, 3rd edition, Heidelberg, Quelle und Meyer, 1960, p. 529.

rejection of a hated people is the refusal to adapt any of its customs.⁹

Here the paradoxes begin. For in earlier times it could happen that, although a neighboring people was looked down upon, its customs were adopted by others without scruple. All that is necessary is that these customs (being the better way of doing things) be considered the property of all, or even that they have become the property of the conqueror. Evidently acculturation is simply a word which designates the various and subtle consequences of historic situations which are also consequences of complicated and varied intrigues. As a matter of fact acculturation is a constant and universal phenomenon; every society is constantly and silently sending the rays of its example shining on its neighbors. We only begin to speak of acculturation if this action becomes the object of a spectacular drama, a "historical crisis." Which drama?

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The question is not when did the Hellenization of Rome begin, since Rome always was on the fringes of Hellenism. The question is when did a so-to-speak "forced" Hellenization begin, and why.¹⁰

For since the 6th century at least, Rome, like the other Etruscan cities, had a Hellenizing art and a religion tinged with Hellenism. Not that Etruria forced itself to imitate Greece, but this was one of the cultural sectors of international Hellenism which included many other zones of the Mediterranean basin.¹¹ The Etruscans imported Greek vases as well as making them themselves. But this is no more "Hellenization" than the International Gothic style of the 15th century was a "Gallicizing" of art. The Hellenizing style was not perceived as some foreign superiority to be caught up with nor as an amusing exoticism.

⁹ G. Devereux, *Ethnopsychanalyse complémentaire*, Flammarion, 1972, p. 150 and 201-231; W. E. Mühlmann, *Messianismes révolutionnaires du Tiers Monde*, Paris, Gallimard, 1968, p. 224, 226, 265.

¹⁰ The distinction between the two Hellenizations, the first of which goes back as far as the 6th century at least and only the second of which merits the name acculturation, was made by Eduard Fraenkel, *Kleine Beiträge zur klass. Philologie*, Rome, 1964, vol. 2, p. 24.

¹¹ Caria, Sidon, Lycia, Cyprus, Egypt (the tomb of Petosiris)...

It was the language in which every craftsman worked in his own fashion even to occasionally looking at models brought in from Greece. Working in the Hellenistic style, Etruria produced masterpieces as original as the Apollo from Veii and the Capitoline She-wolf. The Greco-Roman fable, which lasted until the 19th century, continued the Greco-Etruscan fable. Etruria's mythology is Greek mythology whose heroes are represented on vases and mirrors with their names translated into the Etruscan language. Aphrodite and Adonis are called Turan and Atunis by the Etruscans, just as they will be called Venus and Adonis in Rome and in humanist Europe. The Etruscans made no more effort to distinguish their deities from those of the Greeks than the Romans did. In the pre-Christian world all gods were true, and Jupiter was everywhere Jupiter just as an oak is everywhere an oak, except that the names had to be translated from one language to another, from Zeus in Greece to Tinia in Etruria.¹²

We cannot call this acculturation. The international character of the fable and of artistic decoration had no painful background, did not imply humility before a foreign power. Greece at this time did not yet dominate the political scene. Certainly, in order to imitate the Greek style, a certain superiority in its domain had first to be recognized in this style. Thus other regions sought an artistic language from the Greeks like one seeks out the merchant with the best quality products. International Hellenism was not the structuring of society along the lines of a foreign way of life. Etruscan artisans received from their princely clients the order for luxurious decoration. Where could this be found? That was the business of the artisans. "Hellenizing decoration" meant "deluxe quality" and no more. Italian ceramic was Hellenizing as long as vases were considered beautiful objects. When, around the 3rd century, tastes changed to embossed metal-ware, vases were no longer considered worthy of a Hellenizing decoration since by now they were only considered utensils.¹³

¹² G. Dumézil, *La Religion romaine archaïque*, 2nd. ed., Payot 1974, p. 659-62. On the *interpretatio* of foreign gods see A. D. Nock, *Essays on Religion and the Ancient World*, Oxford, 1972, vol. 2, p. 752; James Bryce, *Studies in History and Jurisprudence*, 1901 repr. 1968, vol. 1, p. 44-7; M. Nilsson, *Geschichte der griech. Religion*, vol. 1, p. 766, and vol. 2, p. 31.

¹³ J.-P. Morel, *Céramiques d'Italie et Céramique hellénistique*, in *Hellenismus*

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There was an international technique just as there was an international decoration and fable. Religious recipes had no home country. At this time before churches, gods and rituals were not the banner of national resistances. For rituals and their language the Greeks were good suppliers. The oldest Latin text which has come down to us, the chant of the Arval priests, is a paean in the Greek style.¹⁴ In the case of a political crisis Rome went to one of the Greek cities of Italy to borrow a divinity much as one might go to a neighbor for a remedy when the family medicine chest is deficient. On the other hand, institutions and laws were not considered “techniques” since this name was reserved for means which could be changed without altering the interests of those who used them. Rome hardly ever imitated Hellenic law and institutions. In the ancient Law of the Twelve Tables, Greek influence seems more probable in the titles and the fact of codification itself than in the content of its dispositions.

Several centuries before conquering that Greece whose civilization in turn reconquered, Rome was already Hellenized; and this first Hellenization was in no way an upheaval. We only have to read the oldest preserved piece of Roman literature, the theater of Plautus, to see this. The comedies of Plautus seem themselves to be adaptations of Hellenistic plays; their characters are Greek and the scene is set in Greece (inasmuch as an imaginary world can be set somewhere); Greek mythology is as familiar to the poet and his audience as the Arthurian legend is to the medieval audience. Nevertheless Plautus manifests no kind of

in Mittelitalien (P. Zanker, ed.), Göttingen, 1976, vol. 2, p. 495-6. On the other hand statues (honorary and funerary) were always Hellenizing products in Rome even if they were produced by very mediocre local ateliers (Zanker, *Hellenismus*, vol. 2, p. 601).

¹⁴ Eduard Norden, *Aus altrömischen Priesterbüchern*, Lund, 1939, esp. p. 129. Similarly the triumph, that barbaric ritual, a sort of scalp dance whose high point was the announcement made to the public that the conquered and imprisoned enemy chief had just been strangled in his prison (Flavius Josephus, *Bell. J.*, VII, 5, 6; Marquardt, *Römische Staatsverwaltung*, II, 585), is named from a Greek acclamation where the Greeks cried *thriambe* as they had cried *io pean* in the past. Another example of an identity of phrasing in other domains is the archaic inscription placed on an object consecrated to a god where the object seems to speak personally to the reader. This practice is common in Greece (“I am Charos and I am a gift for Apollo” is on an archaic statue of a man offered to the god), in Etruria (“I belong to Tinia, Untel consecrated me as an ex voto”) and among the Latins (“Manius made me for Numasius”).

fascination in or feeling for Greece. Greece does not yet mean for him enlightenment; one can even find some traces of xenophobic disdain, appropriate in a popular genre. There is very little curiosity either; the exoticism of Greek manners interest Plautus little who seeks only to amuse his Roman spectators by making them consider the most interesting object there is—humanity itself, i.e. themselves. His is an entertaining art. He uses his Greek models shamelessly and does not treat them like sacred texts. He is not making a cultural effort; he is not trying to give Rome a literature nor that which a more nationalistic and romantic age would call a “national theater”.

The attitude of Plautus is not new. It was exactly the same with the Etruscan sculptors and painters and their Greek models.¹⁵ The thing which has misled many historians is that this attitude is applied here to a new object, namely the theater, which at the time Plautus was writing had just been introduced into Rome as an innovation from Greece in a religious disguise. Despite everything, Plautus does not mark the beginning stage of the coming Hellenization; instead he is the end of the first Hellenization where specialists used as their models Greek subjects, but without the intention of Hellenizing themselves. Between imitators and imitated the relations were only superficial without a dialectic of fascination or inequality or resentment. But even before the time of Plautus this had begun to change. The new Hellenization will not take place without secret suffering for Rome even though she played the privileged role, that of conqueror. Although false, literally, the verse about conquered Greece overcoming her conqueror does strike a proper affective tone with its vocabulary of violence.

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This affective aggravation has a political reason. A century before Plautus the world had changed. It continued to be divided into several areas in which were played dramas independent one from another. One of these areas was Italy, conquered by the Romans. But with Alexander the Great another area, Greece, extending

¹⁵ F. Messerschmidt, *Probleme der Etrusk. Malerei des Hellenismus*, in *Jahrbuch des deutschen arch. Instituts*, XLV, 1930, esp. p. 82.

from Cyrene to the Tigris, had become the principal and true protagonist. For the entire known world Hellenism was the primary political force of the time so much so that from the 300's Greek civilization imposed itself as the universal civilization. From India to Carthage to Spain, civilization meant Hellenization. The celebrated Roman pride was formed, before the Greeks, of a formidable humiliation in power and prestige.

Here chance has preserved for us the memory of a small anecdote which says much.¹⁶ Around the 300's the most famous man of his day was naturally a Greco-Macedonian, the conquering king Dimitrios Poliorcetos. Now in the distant Roman territory, a half-civilized city, Anzio, had become a pirates' den. Dimitrios captured their ships and sent them back to Rome with a message: "Aren't Romans related to the Hellenes? Don't they have in their forum a temple of Castor, the Greek god who protects sailors? When one has these signs of civilization, pirating can no longer be tolerated." Dimitrios treated the Romans like honorary Greeks to incite them to imitation and to teach them good international manners.

But while Hellenism became a world power, Rome conquered Italy and became, with Carthage, one of the two other political powers of the times. Power has its obligations. Rome had to teach itself world civilization. To equal the superiority of the Greeks, Rome did what Japan later did to free itself from Western domination. A voluntary and selective Hellenization pushed it up to the international level. Hellenistic civilization was at that time what Western civilization is today in the eyes of the Third World. It was not Greek civilization or foreign civilization, but civilization pure and simple. The Greeks were only its first possessors, and Rome did not intend to allow them exclusive possession. In our times the countries of the Third World, as soon as they were liberated from Western domination, took as their most pressing task to assimilate the civilization of their ex-colonizers. The Greek way of doing things was taken to be the best and the truest in all domains, from diplomacy to religion. We can almost bet that one of the secret embarrassments of the most imperial Roman generals who entered in contact with Hellenistic kings or states was

¹⁶ Strabon, V, p. 232 C.

good manners: what is the best way to phrase a decree or address a letter?

Once it was no longer just a provincial seat but the capital of Italy, Rome must have had ambitions and weaknesses. The first form of Hellenization could not continue without pain. The Greeks were always the accredited furnishers of the finer things in life; the free-masonry of the workshops existed and it functioned now in both directions. An astonishing event, the urbanization of Italy during the last two centuries before Christ, only caused demand to increase. For archeologists Pompei is above all a Hellenistic city.

But alongside this popular Hellenization, two new motives appear. As a political body Rome wanted to enter into international culture; as a society she allowed herself to be tempted by Hellenic values. She saw there something which could only be overlooked under pain of failure. The present motivation of the Third World is similar; Westernization is the means of international independence and, for individuals, is a distinction.¹⁷ With only one difference: less than a century after bringing Italy under submission and becoming the second world power, Rome, in a spectacular upset, had reduced this Hellenic world, which had been the real world political stage and the holder of civilization, into its protectorate. The second Hellenization was thus an acculturation where it was the student who was powerful. Rome did not have the misfortune of the Third World which suffers from the impossibility of accomplishing a painless cultural change as well as from economic backwardness. This is the cause of the series of paradoxes we shall see.

As a political entity Rome wanted to adapt the new culture without identifying herself with its source; Rome Hellenized in order to affirm herself, whereas in the eyes of the Greeks Hellenization equaled naturalization. Rome confounded them in the sense that she was a Hellenizing city who broke loose. Ideas concerning foreigners vary much in the course of history. The Japanese wanted to stay among themselves, and a foreigner could not become Japanese. On the other hand every Japanese had as a duty to enrich his country by introducing useful knowledge

¹⁷ G. E. von Grünebaum, *L'Identité culturelle de l'Islam*, tr., Paris, Gallimard, 1973, p. 195.

gained from foreigners. The Greeks thought like the Chinese: everything which was civilized was Greek, or rather civilization was Greece itself. In this sense Hellenism was universalist: whoever Hellenized himself became Greek without question of race.¹⁸ The major proofs of Hellenization were the Greek language, the games (Olympic and others) where the elite did not hesitate to appear publicly, and the gymnasia, those institutions of scholarly and sportive education.¹⁹ Rome refused to accept all three. Senators spoke Greek but wrote in Latin which always remained the official language. Two centuries later Nero lost his throne for having built a gymnasium and for participating in the games, something which only base clowns did in Rome.

Even while refusing the Hellenistic way of life, Rome entered into the society of Hellenizing nations. She found for herself ancestors, a historiography, a national epic and all such official panoply. At this time the "relationships" between cities and their legendary origins had as much importance as geneologies and marriages at the Faubourg Saint-Germain. The Etruscans knew the legend of Aeneas and all the rest of the Homeric fable, but I have no doubts that the idea of making this same Aeneas the ancestor of the Romans was an invention of the Hellenistic age which came up with many other similar ideas. In the Book of Maccabees we see how one day when the Jews were looking for an alliance with Sparta against the Hellenistic kings of Syria, they invented a legendary relation ... between Jerusalem and Sparta. Rome did the same thing with her historians who described in Greek, the international language, her national origins. She too had her Homer. Plautus never dreamed for an instant of creating a national theater, but Ennius gave Roma a national epic. Diplomacy was not the last thing to set itself on the international standard; the Roman *Senatus-consultes* are molded in the canonical form of Greek decrees. It was the same with public honors and honorary statues which were the titles of nobility of the times.

On the other hand politics and the army were not standardized; the institutional facade did not receive a Hellenizing cover.

¹⁸ E. Bickermann in *Mélanges syriens Dussaud*, vol. 1, p. 95; see for example *Antilogie grecque*, VII, 417.

¹⁹ Second Maccabees, chap. 4.

Neither an enlightened monarchy nor a plutocratic democracy, Rome remained a society ruled by a caste of politico-military specialists where the assembly of the people stood to listen to its seated leaders. A social or political group is capable of changing its values or its way of life and becoming the contrary of what it was as long as in doing so it does not find itself further down the pyramid. Japanese samurai adopted certain foreign institutions for the same reasons that the Romans refused Greek institutions: to perpetuate a political practice where they had the first roles. On the other hand Chinese scholars could not Westernize without degrading their mandarin culture which was their patrimony and without ceding their place to a new bureaucracy; they preferred to let their society die and to die with it.

We have seen the current problematic of acculturation, the principles of which are found already in de Tocqueville;²⁰ penetrating in its sociological rationalism but a bit formal. The Mongols, according to De Tocqueville, accepted Chinese culture because they had conquered China; their victory authorized them to show themselves sensible to foreign superiority without losing face. True, but others would have acted differently from these Nomads and would have remained blind to the spectacle like certain tourists passing through a museum. The Mongols had not waited to conquer China to be in contact with it; an exchange of values, however, did not begin. It would seem that each society differs on the point at which foreign values begin to count for it and are no longer something from another world. Only a historical casuistry can determine at what point each society is brought to treat this contact as a challenge to be faced. There remains the formal condition of the possibility which is philosophical: why should one accept this challenge? Is it because important defined interests would be at stake such as economic backwardness, class struggle, national independence, as our interpretation of the present course of Westernization would have us believe? Or rather does the list of possible interests remain open, and does their nature itself change from one historic conjuncture to another, just as the word "foreign" changes meaning? In brief then, is it human nature (or "materialism"

²⁰ *Démocratie en Amérique*, ed. *Oeuvres complètes*, vol. I, p. 346.

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which is the same thing) or, on the contrary, the “will to power”, and by this we mean that quality of an elastic gas by which it tends to occupy whatever space is offered to it at whatever conjuncture. There is no economic underdevelopment in history; this concept can only have importance for a certain political attitude, that of the welfare state. A Roman emperor would never even have thought of this, and the emperor Meiji saw his underdevelopment as strength and prestige. Before explaining acculturation by having recourse to theories of economic underdevelopment, it would first have to be shown for what conjuncture it is an underdevelopment.

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If a *nouveau riche* buys a historic chateau with a gallery of paintings and a fine cellar included, inflates himself in a manner appropriate to the dimensions of his new property and applies himself to gastronomy and painting, this proves at least that he does not define himself solely by the profession he exercises, but that he considers himself man in general. This also proves that in his eyes paintings do not begin to exist until he possesses them. The second Hellenization, when Rome established its protectorate over the Greek world, brought with it an important innovation: beyond the Grecomania of the generation and the Greekness of daily life, Rome, like Greece, had a learned culture. This came from rhetoric: political and judicial eloquence became the most appreciated artistic genre in this society. It also became what we might call the favorite indoor sport of a highly-trained elite. This culture was equally one of philosophy (with Greek sects being introduced in Rome just as the Chinese sects were brought to Japan) and erudite literature which, as distinct from Plautus, required an effort from its readers and created a feeling of scholarly complicity among its initiates. Thus was formed a human ideal which would last for five centuries: the true man will not be satisfied to be simply sheltered from need and not excluded from public affairs. He must also attempt to be cultivated, in a very dated sense of this adjective.

How was this transformation of the old “Roman spirit” possible and why did it occur? The second question is easy. Even

in our own times one of the motives for Westernization is the desire to attain and to exhibit a social difference in one's own social group; the other motive, it is said, is the admiration for the superiority of the West. There is the danger that these two motives become one and the same expressed first in too sociological terms and then in too noble terms. Westernization cannot be a distinction for individuals unless the group has the ambition to take possession of the Western values. Valuing and admiring are the simple correlatives of a desire for growth. And why should this ambition arise to covet other ways? For the simple reason that they are there. Since man is culture and not nature, we should never ask of him why, but only why not. Man has no predetermined list of needs of class interests to be satisfied after which he can rest seated in peace. He opens himself to every new possibility which a historical conjuncture may offer him. If he does not attain it, he sees there something missing which he must acquire. This search, not for happiness but for expansion, i.e. practically speaking for unhappiness, means that the only question is to know whether the new ambition is compatible with preceding ones. There was no need that Rome be ordered by some interest or another to Hellenize herself; the natural elasticity of things saw to this. It was sufficient that other ambitions did not preclude the process.

As soon as Hellenism entered into the realm of its possibilities, the Roman aristocracy had to Hellenize itself or risk decline, a true alternative as we shall see. This was one of those historic movements like the conversion to the Enlightenment at the time of the encyclopedists which remains incomprehensible to those who speak of class interests and to those who call snobbish motives which are not their own. The Greek way of life with wine, courtesans and young boy companions was itself boldness and dignity rather than weakness. To Hellenize did not mean to cede to sentimentalism or a fad, to ape another people, to abandon all national pride, to hope to be rewarded for one's humility. It was to choose, on the contrary, to put oneself with the avant-garde. Certain family clans like the Scipio were specialists at this. When the richest *entrepreneurs* did the same, grouping their old Roman customers into battalions of "friends" like the Hellenistic political personnel, they betrayed their own high idea of themselves, and

others saw in their ambition a danger for the republic.²¹ At other times Hellenism as a kind of individual superiority was not easily reconcilable with Hellenism as a means of giving the Roman nation international standing. Flamininus, for whom love for the Greeks was a point of personal honor (and by loving he meant to protect them), wanted Rome to evacuate certain military bases which she hoped to maintain there.

The strange thing is that it took victory for Rome to begin to see in Hellenism a superiority which (*noblesse oblige*) could no longer remain foreign to her. Because she had saved face on the battlefield? No, but because each society is materially led to establish in its own manner the boundary between its horizon and foreign planets. Certain peoples think themselves to be the fragments of a past or an imaginary community—Christianity or Europe—so that techniques or masterpieces produced by any one of these peoples are valuable for all the others who adopt them immediately, whether it be surrealism or a system of credit cards. In other times it was thought, rather, that cultures and techniques were like national cuisines: each was suited only to the stomachs of the respective natives. For each nation is an organism with its own idiosyncracies, and at the same time all cuisines are basically the same since it always remains simply a matter of satisfying the fundamental need for nourishment. England has Ben Jonson and France Corneille; they are very different one from the other while remaining somewhat the same thing so that it is not necessary to make the trip.²²

In Rome the question of values was similar to that of politics. With her archaic isolationism Rome felt herself alone in the world. She lived like Robinson Crusoe in a hostile and untamed environment where she opened a clearing for herself in order to distance herself from the dangers of the surrounding forest. The forest remained for her pure otherness; Rome found there enemies, rivals, sometimes peaceful and indifferent foreigners. She

²¹ Seneca, *De beneficiis*, VI, 34, in reference to Caius Gracchus; Scipio Africanus distributed rings with his portrait engraved on them (M. L. Vollenweider in *Museum Helveticum*, XV, 1958, p. 27) and Roman emperors did the same (Pliny, *Naturalis historia*, XXXIII, 41); no doubt this was a Hellenistic custom (*Athénée*, V, p. 212 D-E).

²² It is surprising to find the name of Ben Jonson, completely mangled, in *Albion, caprice héroï-comique* of Saint-Amant.

also found suppliers who furnished her with Greek vases. But she did not find an *alter ego*, that is she did not find there foreign values which concerned her also. For nothing counted beyond the civic clearing which was her house.

However in the second Hellenization it was not as it had been in the first. The Greek values which became important to Rome, literature and philosophy, were no longer articles to be ordered from a craftsman or a supplier of comedies; the aristocracy itself had to practise these values. The leading class became one which tried to be cultivated as well. Rome also knew that alliance between learned culture and political power which is found in so many pre-industrial societies, including the China of the poet Mao Tse Tung. In these ancient societies superiorities were cumulative because careers were not yet specialized, so that the rich could exercise them all, including politics, at the same time, without bending under the burden. And they had to exercise all of them; for if one superiority remained foreign to them, it was a lack of gaining in dignity. (Nero, too, wanted to be an artist for even the best of principles have their abuses.) Politics, however, was not a specialty or profession in Rome but simply one of the natural activities of a well-rounded man.²³ A politician was not the shadow of the sovereign people who had elected him nor was he a bureaucrat or technician; he commanded by virtue of the excellence of his nature in general. The Roman aristocracy felt its cultural backwardness as such since it did not feel protected by the limits of specialization.

Rome made up her cultural backwardness as feverishly as we might do for an economic deficiency. Cato the Elder distinguished himself in this task, for this spiritual ancestor of Cicero introduced to his caste general culture in the Greek mode before becoming, in the eyes of posterity, an enemy of Hellenism by a gaffe recounted only by Plutarch.²⁴ "Culture," it is true, can mean many things, for example "to have read Horace" or "to think something of the social world in which one lives." This humanist culture, i.e. rhetoric in the ancient sense of the word, is close enough to us

²³ On the notion of profession and the accumulation of excellences see P. Veyne, *Le Pain et le Cirque*, Paris, Seuil, 1976, p. 117-38.

²⁴ Our ideas on Cato were restored by D. Kienast, *Cato der Zensor*, Heidelberg 1954, p. 101-116 and 135.

for us pass over this quickly. It was not technological civilization which made it out-moded, for humanist culture could still furnish phrases and vocabulary to capitalist and socialist technicians alike; instead it was done in by Nietzschean doubt about the transparency and the holiness of language. Rhetoric can espouse itself with any regime which happens to enjoy a moment of power of affirmation, or in other words, of persuasion, which does not enclose itself in either technique and which conceives itself in an edifying verbalism.

It is difficult to see why the "Roman spirit" did not adopt it. The opposition to Hellenism, which was only brief and very hesitant, is explained in another manner. In effect the Greek way of life cut through a social malady which Roman political medicine had thought mortal: softness, luxury and a certain disinterest which brings about secondary problems such as ambition which terminate in decadence and decay. The reader will remember that Latin class readings seemed to speak only of this. For us it is difficult to make sense of these phrases; the closest we can come perhaps is by analogy with the too-tight pants and too-long hair of hooligans. In Rome, on the other hand, the political physiology which reigned in spirit was such that the pathology of softness which seems to us as vague and magical as the medicine of the time of Molière, had a meaning as precise and fearful as the imbalance of the humors in older physiology. It remained to be seen if Hellenism was in fact this particular disease. The Romans realized quickly that the symptoms were misleading, that this was a false fever and that this was no time to wrap oneself in xenophobia and a too-Roman respect of ancestral customs which were to be brought out only in times of need and which had in fact been sources of error for certain historians.

The fact is that even if covered by praises of ancestral customs, the fear of softness was neither superstition nor ideology nor did it exist as an eternal truth.²⁵ This fear harmonized well with the

²⁵ All of this is based on the method and the present research of M. Foucault at the Collège de France. The idea of Foucault, it seems to me, is not at all that the little powers count for more than the great power of the State (as American sociologists have already said), or that power is relative, but that there is no horizon of rationality called politics. Behind these declamations against softness we should not look for an eternal rationality which we would have to find in order to "understand" these people and their obscure language; nor

political practice of the times, and they believed in it as strongly as we believe in Marx or in Keynes. The ancient political body did not have the same physiology as ours. It means little to say that a city, even though democratic, was not so in our sense because it had slaves. The hidden part of the iceberg goes much deeper and cannot be discerned simply from the words citizen, fatherland or liberty. Thus the reader should forget the political society in which he lives, instead thinking of a band of adventurers all dressed in white. They are armed (we are in a western!) and passing through an unknown and dangerous region led by their bosses. They are not looking for the promised land, but they are not simply passive either. They attempt collectively to survive the passage. Now the fears of this flock, its unwritten "public law", its angers, its group dynamics are all closer to those of an ancient city than anything in our contemporary political philosophy of the *Roman Public Law* of Mommsen. Occasionally one of the bosses gets into it with one of the others and goes off to camp at a distance with his own men. Later he returns, crossing the Rubicon, and puts the others to fire and sword. It is a quite understandable vendetta and not treason, for one can only betray abstract collectivities. An engineer who becomes angry with his firm and who leaves it for the company across the street does not commit treason. The differences between Rome and our

should we think that this language is an ideological cover or superstition, error, childishness or false science; or that it is an intrusion of snobbism, depth psychology, obsessional characterology or puritanism, etc. To thus distinguish between true and erroneous politics, between that which is truly politics and that which is not serious or between an ideological cover and reality, it would be necessary that politics actually exist. Let us suppose that instead of an eternal essence, more or less broadly fixed, in truth we had only a succession of narrow and twisted practices, then true politics would not have existed through history. It would follow also that true politics do not exist now either. The distinction between politics and that which one calls religion, morality, character impulses or millenarist movements, varies from one era to another, for religion or morality are no more essences than are politics. This renders moot the problem of heresies and millenarist movements as a cover for more "serious" movements, social or national. It is in this sense, I think, that Nietzsche said that the wars of the future would perhaps be philosophical wars. Roman fear of softness is neither an intrusion of morality in politics nor a psychological reaction nor the "eternal truth" that a society can only function if its people do not scandalize one another. It is simply an active part of a certain structure which we call political. If Rome had at this time a Christian king, we would have called her instead religious and pastoral.

politics are as great as those between a business or this western and the Fifth Republic. Nor is it pleasant to conceptualize this.

Roman practice was, therefore, to treat people like a flock which was guided through the dangers of historic adventure, opposed to every innovation and social concession which was not in harmony with this practice: the good of all before all else! Bread was given to the laggards so that the flock would not diminish in numbers, and from time to time the men went to the circus like sailors going on shore-leave with the blessing of their officers. This facilitates discipline. Since society was created in relation to the dangers it faced, it did not become a state of rights and duties like passengers on a cruise, nor did it become a global society like our population aggregates which are controlled by the natural economic pulls of the welfare state. Rather, society was treated like a regiment or a group of mountain climbers tied together with the same rope. The weakness of each can endanger the security of all. The major exigence is that each remains good according to his position; a virile tension should be apparent on the faces of all. There is no room for "private life"; that is good for kingdoms where each sheep feeds in his corner under the watchful eye of the shepherd, for the inhabitants of the welfare state where individual moves only begin to form a dangerous force when they come together despite the law of numbers or in the case of bourgeois cruises where the liberty of each passenger ceases where it begins to annoy another or to compromise the progress of the ship by seizing the helm.

Since virile tension was the duty of everyone in Rome, every innovation, every form of acculturation, was to be condemned even if it was agreeable as well as innocent. Better not to indulge in them even before knowing them for one could not accept them without showing approval and relaxing one's severity. The ideal would be that society remain fixed at those points which were known to have been its own at the historic moment held to be the original one (generally the moment of the speaker's youth). After two or three centuries of Hellenization Seneca condemned that softness which goes beyond that which is simply natural; it is natural to have a swimming pool and a boyfriend. Perversion begins when one wants to fill the swimming pool with salt water and to shave the boy. Each historic moment fixes its point of

no return and marks eternally its limits to evil.

Except that, despite Seneca, it was not a question of moral firmness but only one of politics, and it is for this reason that Hellenization was acceptable to Rome after a brief hesitation. Tension was not sought as a good, like a categorical end, but only as a means of collective security. However what happens if a morally lax man happens to be an energetic politician? In a Christian society, where the king forces each of his subjects to pursue salvation even despite opposition, a chaste life becomes an end in itself. In Rome it is only a means or even just a simple sign of firmness. The Romans realized that here there was an ambiguity in their practice and curiously they seemed to have delighted in it. Throughout their historiography there runs the theme of a senator whose private life is nothing but soft but who shows himself nevertheless to be a man of energetic action. This is true from Scipio Africanus to Sulla, Caesar, Maecenas, Othon and Petronius. The paradox of the great man who could not be set forth as an example seemed to them a secret among the augurs to which the people would not have access and which revealed to them that in their political attitudes there was an entire logic which they only half perceived but which fascinated them. This authorized them in effect to proceed with their *aggiornamenti*. They had to remain absolutely, permanently, firm and yet this firmness was only a relative means and was mired in an arbitrary historical rut. The means for resolving the contradiction was to advance the cog one turn each generation but without saying so. The augurs laughed in silence.

* * *

It does not take much for an acculturation to succeed or to fail and there are few precise and particular truths in this affair. If softness had been a sin for Rome rather than a danger, Hellenization would not have taken place. Rome was quickly reassured and understood that arts and letters did not bring on the decline of nations. From Cato to Cicero, Seneca and Marcus Aurelius, Hellenic culture allied itself and fused itself with the Roman spirit which did not really exist. The turn of the cog did not give contemporary Romans a stronger feeling that this was a his-

toric turning point. They forgot the first Hellenization and thought that Rome had only gone Greek lately. Cato, the enemy of softness, called up with emotion the terra cotta images of the ancestral divinities and opposed them to the statues imported from Greece without realizing that the former, discovered by archeologists, were as Greek as the latter.²⁶

In Japan in our own times every student who prides himself on loving literature speaks of Shelley or of Verlaine as if they were national poets.²⁷ This prodigiously original civilization has always used a foreign culture without affectation or frustration, first Chinese and then Western. To read their works one is surprised to find they know so much about us when we know so little about them. It can happen that one people adopts the culture of another, and this was the case in Rome for several centuries. After all, our *Ancien Régime* actually lived in its own way in a no less foreign culture, that of classical antiquity. In any case that which we call a culture remains always at a certain distance and presumes an effort even if it is a question of assimilating a product of the national territory. We must read Lucretius to see how naturally a Roman poet could live in a culture which was entirely Greek. For him it was the only culture; there was only one and no need for another. At first we cannot believe it was natural for Lucretius; we want absolutely to think that he added his own little grain of Roman salt to the dogmas of Epicurus. We suffer from this. This did not keep him from being a patriot in another way since the divisions of his mind were not in the same place as those of our own but were in the same place as the divisions in the minds of the Japanese. When a Latin poet seems to us to make an effort of nationalist reaction and proclaims that Tivoli is as beautiful as the landscapes of Rhodes or Mitylene, he is actually doing something else. He is renouncing the cultural effort, living passively and returning to the natural state of affairs.²⁸

The Romans considered themselves civilized just as the Greeks;

²⁶ P. Boyancé, *Etudes sur la religion romaine*, p. 263.

²⁷ The example is taken from the novel by Mishima, *Shôsei*.

²⁸ Horace, ode I, 7, who can do no better than to end his poem with an enraptured quotation of an admirable verse of Archilochus (*cras ingens iterabimus aequor*). Again in Japan under the Tokugawa if one wished to praise a native landscape, one said it was as beautiful as a Chinese landscape.

but since there can be only one civilization, its past is common to the two peoples, Homeric, just as all non-barbarian antiquity is Homeric. This was true even for the third civilized people; in the eyes of Virgil, Carthage had had an antiquity no less Homeric than Greece and Rome. Since civilization is one, the Romans are sometimes tempted to believe that Rome and Greece were similar line for line, that a Roman aedile is the same thing as a Greek agoranomos and that the Field of Mars is a gymnasium. At least their poets try to play on this and to cause effects of over-impression. Perhaps they even confused a little their own particular society and that of the Greeks since they took the latter as the norm and background, just as we confuse the norm and reality.²⁹ (Films showing bourgeois conventions are felt to show the “true” way to live.) In any case when the Romans abandoned the principle of reality and dipped into the imaginary, they created for themselves a fictive world, the world of the *Satyricon* and the theater of Plautus which Fraenkel has described succinctly: this world is located in an unreal place which is neither Greece nor Rome but is indistinctly both.³⁰

The Roman literary genres are those of Greece, likewise the poetic meters. Rome like Greece had that thing which is neither prose nor poetry, called art prose, which is realitively unknown to the medieval and modern West but which the rest of the world knows. We might call it prose with the obscurity of Mallarmé, and it is what causes the difficulty in Latin and Greek. An imitation of Greece? Not at all. For this it would be necessary for the epic and the elegy to be Greek genres. But they were not Greek but natural even if they developed in Greece. Latin poets introduced them to Italy like new plants, for everyone had the duty to enrich his own nation. Literary forms were as natural as flowers and as impersonal as truth. Thus they also had no age; they did not pass on with an outmoded epoch. Callimachus was still “operational” in the century of Augustus. There was no

²⁹ The author grew up in a family where his parents spoke French and his grandparents spoke Provençal. To my childish mind, French and Provençal were one and the same language since the meanings were the same. Only that Provençal was French which had grown old like the faces of those who spoke it.

³⁰ Eduard Fraenkel, *Elementi plautini in Plauto*, p. 378 and 441; *Journal of Roman Studies*, XLV, 1955, p. 7; Gordon Williams, *Tradition and Originality in Roman Poetry*, Oxford, 1968, p. 302 and 38.

such thing either as a national literature since techniques have no homeland. We see the contrast here with the modern West. When, for example, the genius of Pushkin was revealed, his compatriots praised him for being a genius and particularly a Russian genius. He had been able to recreate the themes of Western literature in a Russian style.³¹ The Russians thus supposed that literatures all preserve the flavor of the land where they developed. However, when Cicero showed himself to be as great an orator as Demosthenes, the Romans did not dream of praising him for having created a Roman eloquence. Instead they praised him for having proven by his example that Romans were no less capable than Greeks of using oratorical techniques correctly.³²

We must recall at once also that acculturation goes well with what we call originality. It even happens sometimes that the greatest power of assimilation allies itself to the most determined egocentricity or isolationism, both in Tokyo and Rome. Everyone knows that a great poet is original by definition, that influences are chosen and not passively suffered, that originality can consist in improving the model, that the supposed models are often only important names which one cites in order to hide behind them. More generally the question of originality would only make sense if an author was a substance and if language was only meaning. But language is part of convention. Moreover we can say that Roman love-poetry or "elegy" conforms to rules of metrification inherited from Callimachus, the Greek poet who reminds us a little of Gongora; these rules are common to three centuries of Hellenistic-Roman poetry just as Petrarchism, imposed on four centuries of European poetry, was common even to the most original poets. And then it is a prejudice to believe that a book has an author. This brings to light an insoluble problem: how can a purely active substance, which has all the merits of its creation, at the same time be passive to other influences. It

³¹ A. Koyré, *La Philosophie et le problème national en Russie au début du XIX^e siècle*, Paris, Gallimard, 1976, p. 237.

³² See also P. Koschaker, *L'Europa e il diritto romano*, Milan, Sansoni, 1962, p. 267. When Roman law was received into the Holy Roman Empire, jurists hardly felt they were imposing a foreign law on their compatriots. The idea that acculturation is denationalization is an invention of the 19th century with Savigny.

would be as difficult to explain how a metaphysical light, Truth, if it existed, could be deviated from its path by social ideologies.

Even more generally, that which is called national originality is measured by the attitude of the borrower, by the energy he feels and not by the personal iota he adds to the things he borrows or by that which remains of him after subtracting all that he took from elsewhere. As Nietzsche said, the Roman elegy laid a heavy hand on Callimachus with gestures which we would not have the courage to use and a candor which we could not have by reason of our so-called historic sense. "At that time one conquered when one translated."³³ The modern idea that culture belongs to a nation in the same way that its territory does and that it is the product of a national genius would almost make us forget that originality consists in imitating without fear and that dependence consists in fleeing into cultural nationalism to avoid cultural challenges.

When acculturation occurs with such assurance one has the feeling of imitating culture itself rather than that of another people. I would very much like to know how to explain why or how a given historic conjuncture leads to this self-confidence and how other conjunctures do the opposite so that there is not the sense of being capable of taking such an initiative because there is not the sense of being at the center of the cultural world. Alas it would be easier to explain the origins of those "epidemics of genius" such as Florentine art or why the female sex, according to a curious remark by Charles Fourier, is paralyzed when it is a question of daring to act ingeniously except in one specific circumstance: on the throne.³⁴ Our analyses are not yet sufficiently subtle to understand all the unforeseeable, unnameable and decisive ramifications.

To begin to summarize, the Hellenization of Rome was an example of that which the ethnologist Kroeber called diffusion by stimulation; all the paradox of acculturation is there. Stimulated by the Greek example, Rome did not, however, borrow every solution from the Greeks. It also happened that Rome developed and indigenous trait to fulfill a function imitated from the Greeks

³³ Le Gai Savoir, § 83; cfr. *Par-delà le bien et le mal*, § 224.

³⁴ Fourier cites Elizabeth, Catherine II, Maria Teresa (*Théorie des quatre mouvements*, Anthropos, p. 129).

instead of borrowing from them the custom which fulfilled the same function in Greece. Rome did not borrow the idea of contest from Hellenism, but she developed the Roman "games" in that direction. Having learned from Greece that an advanced society had to have a literature, she raised to the level of an important genre the purely Roman genre of satire. More generally once a society has been stimulated by a foreign example, it continues to live, to develop its own thrust, to invent its own solutions. What happened between Greece and Rome would happen two or three centuries later between Rome and the provinces.³⁵ Roman Gaul and Africa repeated or developed characteristics of Roman civilization, but they did so in their own manner as Gauls or as Africans.

The merit of the notion of acculturation is that it does not imply imitation. No one has ever imitated anyone, and the world is made of two kinds of things: real ones and their images. One does not imitate; one takes to keep from being taken or to keep from finding the grapes too green to be taken. As Nietzsche said, "Rigorously identical complexes could be interpreted and exploited in opposite manners. The facts do not exist: the theory of the influence of an environment and external causes is false. The internal force is infinitely superior, and that which seems to be an exterior force is only a modification of endogenous origin of the inner one."³⁶

This does not at all mean that a society does not transform itself except according to its own tendencies and that it stays always faithful to itself. In fact the inverse is true; there is no national identity. A society constantly becomes something different, and the transformations are dramas which it has with itself even when the model or the origin of one of these upheavals comes from a foreign people. The society cannot lose its soul since it does not have one. Certainly we frequently find societies in the process of acculturation who claim a national identity, affirm their attachment to their traditional values, proclaim their own

³⁵ See the conclusions of the book by Chr. Goudineau, *Recherches sur la romanisation de Vaison-la-Romaine*, Paris, Editions du C.N.R.S., 1979, p. 312, and the remarkable article of a young historian, Y. Thébert, "La Romanisation de l'Afrique" in *Annales, économies, sociétés*, 1978, p. 64.

³⁶ Nietzsche, *Wille zur Macht*, n. 70 (Kröner).

excellence before the idea of the superiority of the foreign source. Horace and Propertius exalted their Italian fatherland and belittled the classical landscapes of Greece; and the libraries of Tokyo are filled, they tell me, with books in which Japan affirms its attachment to its national spirit. But if this attachment existed, what good does it do to proclaim it? One has a tradition without knowing it: to want to preserve it is as contradictory as to want to be consciously unconscious. Crisis of identity? No, crisis of pride. Traditionalism betrays less a constancy of national values than the desire not to seem in a position of inferiority. As a matter of fact one always fears change less than seeing oneself in the position of disciple.

Frequently, as well, a society affirms its national originality in a language borrowed, without its knowing it, from a foreign society. Horace or Propertius boasted of the superiority of Italy in Hellenizing verses and Greek meters.³⁷ Cato wrote the history of the origins of Italy on the Hellenistic model of the genealogies of peoples and the foundations of cities. At the beginning of the 19th century, a Gallicized Europe, victim of Napoleonic imperialism, screamed its hatred of France in a style quite French. There is absolutely no relation to be made between the conscience of national originality and the reality of the changes. A people can be changed without even being aware of it. This is why so

³⁷ Horace, *Odes*, I, 7; Propertius, *Elegies*, III, 22. A striking example of the abyss which separates the awareness of national originality and reality is the *De natura rerum*. Lucretius, as we saw above, lived in a Hellenized cultural world and his national culture, if we dare call it such, is Greek. He knows it, except that to him this is the only culture which exists. Moreover Lucretius is a patriot like every good Roman; not that he was interested in politics (few Romans were less political than he who lived in a world of ideas). His patriotism was like the faith of a simple man. We are as astonished by him as a modern Western intellectual is astonished by a Soviet or Japanese intellectual; for these the most advanced ideas or the most sophisticated attitudes can all be harmonized with an indestructible and naive patriotism. A Hellenized patriot without the least discomfort, Lucretius wrote with the zeal of a reformer and his cultural universalism is in harmony with his Roman ethnocentricity. He recommends the philosophy of Epicurus to the Romans since this philosophy is true. There is no need to adapt it to Roman circumstances or to interpret the dogmas of Epicurus, as has been supposed in an unprovable, hardly plausible and useless manner. Epicureanism, just as it is, is perfect in the eyes of Lucretius who is anxious to introduce this useful plant into Italy. Since Epicureanism is excellent, it will be excellent for Rome. Epicureanism is worthy of Rome, and for Lucretius there is no greater praise.

many societies seem to be open and without self-renunciation and to be able at the same time to respect their faithfulness to themselves with the necessary adaptations. Nothing is more misleading than a self-consciousness which persists throughout changes of which it does not know and which is only reactive. Societies change constantly, and they can be transformed down to the tiniest cell of their bodies without ever losing consciousness of their identity throughout history. The conscience-taking, if it occurs, reacts less to change than to an eventual difficulty of change and this difficulty is not that of a dialectic between the self and other, but a relation of powers. The true drama of the Third World is economic inequality and not loss of an elusive identity.

This disease would be the same if the societies considered had difficulties with themselves. Acculturation is not based on any other principle of explanation than revolution. The only difference between an endogenous revolution and acculturation is that the second can be accompanied by a burst of pride. But this pride is misleading and shameful; it proves less the inertia of structures and faithfulness to self than it is a symptom of weakness. Acculturations produce both a belief in the superiority of what is foreign and an affirmation of national excellence, and these alternatives betray the highs and lows of the internal force in its relations with its environment.

The detail of acculturations finds its meaning in this force or in the wariness one has of oneself. Our rationalism brings us to believe that it is impossible to adopt the techniques of the West if at the same time one does not adopt the values and liberties which seem to be the condition for rendering these techniques operational. At least we can observe that a Westernization which succeeds in those areas held important does not occur without the adoption of Western styles in lesser areas, clothes or dances for example. In Rome Hellenization was accompanied by Greco-mania; one could not have the first without the second. Because they were connected in the nature of things? Not at all, but because xenophobia, which rears up before innocent and visible customs, is a symptom of weakness, and because a weak person will not appropriate useful techniques; rather he will flee the challenge. In the Japan of Meiji, on the day when the clan who

had taken power in the shadow of the throne was sufficiently sure of itself to lift the ban on foreign customs and so to end the isolation of Japan, it also had the strength to appropriate foreign techniques which were useful to its power and the strength to refuse the political values which would have threatened its dominance. It does not seem that techniques and liberties are rationally associated; on the other hand techniques and jazz are symptomatically related.