The Journal de Trevoux and the Philosophes

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THE JOURNAL DE TREVOUX AND THE PHILOSOPHIES

by

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A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of Loyola University in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts

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LIFE

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INTRODUCTION

The leaders of the liberal movements in French politics and philosophy in the eighteenth century, Voltaire, Rousseau, Diderot, Montesquieu, and others, are familiar names to the student of modern European history. Not so well known are the conservative thinkers of the period. Most especially, as far as this present study is concerned, the Jesuit periodical, the Journal de Trévoux, has received little direct attention from scholars of the French Enlightenment.

What is generally known about the Journal comes from the writings of the philosophes themselves, especially Voltaire. His sharp satire of the last Jesuit editor, Father Berthier, the Relation de la maladie, de la confession, de la mort, et de l'apparition de Jésuite Berthier, along with Diderot's vigorous criticisms of the Journal's treatment of the Encyclopédie, did much to create a one-sided view of the periodical which has not been completely overcome even to this time.¹ A careful investigation of the Journal and its relations with the philosophes will not then be out of place.

Our study deals with the period 1748-1762. Montesquieu's publication of the Esprit des lois in 1748 marked the beginning of a more public dissemination of the philosophes' ideas.² At the same time the Journal de Trévoux met the anti-religious notions of these writings with a determined criticism of the

¹See below, p. 31, footnote.

²In this I am following Daniel Mornet, Les Origines Intellectuelles de la Révolution Française (Paris, 1933), p. 71 ff.
significant *philosophe* works issued during the decade of the 1750's. In the past the *Journal* had objected to one or other work of the *philosophes*; now the magazine registered its disapproval of the movement as a whole. Our discussion of this controversy is, unfortunately, incomplete. The *Journal*’s criticisms of Voltaire’s works are omitted. A study of his relations with the Jesuit writers would entail a thesis equal in length to the present one.

Some important studies have been made of the *Journal de Trévoux*. P. C. Sommervogel’s *Essai historique sur les Mémoires de Trévoux*, and Gustave Dumas’s *Histoire du Journal de Trévoux* are short external histories of the periodical, which make little attempt to evaluate its intellectual content. Emmy Allard’s volume, *Die Angriffe gegen Descartes und Malebranche im Journal de Trévoux*, deals with a controversy which arose in the first two decades of the *Journal*’s history. Donald Schier has written a book on one of the contributors to the periodical during the 1720’s, ’30’s, and ’40’s, Louis B. Castel. Castel however was not on the staff of the *Journal* during the period we shall study.

While our attention will be directed towards an understanding of the *Journal*’s defense of orthodoxy, it should be remembered that the magazine was not a religious tract. Even during the 1750’s the majority of the articles in the *Journal* were not concerned with the *philosophe* controversy.


His influence on the magazine in the last decade before the suppression of the Jesuits was at best indirect, as will be seen in the chapter on Montesquieu's "Esprit des lois." To date, the two most significant studies of the *Journal* are Alfred R. Desautel's *Les Mémoires de Trévoux et le Mouvement des idées au XVIII° siècle,* and John N. Pappas's *Berthier's Journal de Trévoux and the Philosophes.* Desautel's work does not go beyond 1734. Pappas treats the period 1745-1762, roughly the time span covered in this thesis. His study is an excellent one. The present thesis does not contradict his work; rather, it emphasizes a different aspect of the *Journal* 's history. The viewpoint of the journalists can best be understood in terms of their commitments to the traditional faith and philosophy. This viewpoint Pappas has not sufficiently considered, as is clear from his neglect of the journalists' attack on Pierre Bayle. From the standpoint of determining the Jesuits' commitment to tradition, the *Journal* 's critiques of Bayle are of the highest importance.

The *Journal* 's attack on the *philosophes* was a vigorous reiteration of the Catholic cultural and religious tradition in all its complexity. In this thesis we shall touch on some of the problems which vexed the orthodox mind in mid-eighteenth century France: the question of ecclesiastical authority, the religious sanction for monarchy, toleration, censorship, morality, intellectual freedom, cultural relativism, historical method and the veracity of Scripture,

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papal infallibility, the problem of evil, the existence of God, the legitimacy of the theater as an art form, miracles, scholastic philosophy, the value of the classics. The Journal de Trévoux represented a way of life, a Weltanschauung, which was fighting for its very existence. The conservation of this way of life, at whose heart was the Catholic faith, spurred the Jesuits on to denounce the philosophes movement with real force and conviction. An understanding of the Journal's relations with the new intellectuals depends on an understanding of its commitment to the cultural, philosophical, and theological tradition of Catholic Christianity. It is from the standpoint of this commitment that the following pages have been written. 10

10 In quotations I have used English translations where such already exist. Where these have been lacking, I have kept to the original French, or, in a few places, to the original Latin.
CHAPTER I

THE BACKGROUND

Throughout the first half of the eighteenth century, the Journal de Trévoux enjoyed the distinction of being one of the most influential Catholic periodicals in France. One reading the table of contents for any issue would very likely find articles on physics, chemistry, mathematics, astrology, numismatics, history, interpretation of Scripture, philosophy, theology, and belles-lettres. In their resumes and criticisms of current publications in France and the rest of Europe, the Jesuit authors from the very beginning professed a strict impartiality in all matters except those pertaining to religion and morality. The very first issue of the Journal put it this way: "Dans les contestations qui s'élèvent souvent entre les hommes de lettres sur les matières de science, les auteurs des Mémôires ne prendront jamais aucun parti... Il observeront aussi la même neutralité dans tout le reste, excepté quand il s'agira de la religion, des bonnes moeurs, ou de l'état: en quoi il n'est jamais permis d'être neutres." For the most part this policy was maintained as long as the Journal remained under Jesuit auspices.

1 Mémoires pour l'Histoire des Sciences et des beaux Arts, Recueillis par l'Ordre de Son Altesse Serénissime Monseigneur Prince Souverain de Donbosc. Printed at Trévoux from 1701 to 1731; at Lyon from 1731 to 1753; at Paris from 1754 to 1762. It was popularly known as the Journal de Trévoux or Mémoires de Trévoux. This periodical will henceforth be known as Journal.

2 Journal, Jan.-Feb., 1701.
It is not clear where the initial impetus came from to start such a magazine as the *Journal*. Ostensibly, it was the idea of the Prince of Dombes,\(^3\) the natural son of Louis XIV by Madame de Montespan. However, the article "Trévoux" in the *Dictionnaire historique* of Louis Moreri, republished in 1749, credited Father Jean-Philippe Lallement with the origin of the project. The *Journal* in reviewing Moreri's book found no fault with the "Trévoux" article, which would seem to indicate that the article in the *Dictionnaire* was correct.\(^4\)

But regardless of where the initial idea came from, the Prince of Dombes, Louis-Auguste de Bourbon, was quite favorable to the project of the Jesuits, and both sponsored and subsidized the early beginnings of the *Journal*. Printed from 1701 to 1731 at Trévoux, the capital city of the principality of Dombes, the *Journal* soon became one of the leading periodicals in France.

The discussions and controversies that the *Journal* took part in mirror the intellectual movements of the age. Prior to 1745, the Jesuits were not primarily concerned with the *philosophe* movement. During the first half of the century, the writings of the *philosophes* circulated for the most part only in manuscript form. Their influence was not so widespread or so keenly felt. The challenges of Jansenism, Cartesian philosophy, Gallicanism, and *quietism* were of greater concern to the journalists than the writings of the *philosophes*.

In the first years of the magazine's existence, the Jesuits under the leadership of Father Tournemine attacked the Cartesianism of the Benedictine

\(^3\)Ibid., the frontispiece.

\(^4\)Ibid., January 1750, 142-168.
Francois Lamy.\textsuperscript{5} Tournemine's difficulties with Lamy's doctrine were not primarily philosophical, but theological. Cartesianism was looked on not so much as a metaphysical system, as a departure from orthodoxy. The fundamental objections to Descartes's philosophy were two: its questioning of tradition and its incompatibility with Catholic dogma. Methodic doubt seemed to jeopardize the general adherence to the teachings of the ancient Christian masters. Its skeptical attitude towards tradition made it impossible for the majority of Jesuits to accept the Cartesian doctrine. More directly, many Catholic theologians found Descartes's identification of matter with extension incompatible with the dogma of the Transubstantiation.\textsuperscript{6} These reasons prompted Tournemine to criticize Lamy's doctrine, especially the proof for God's existence and the union of body and soul. The ensuing debate proved that Tournemine was no great metaphysician. While rejecting Descartes's ontological proof of God's existence, he offered an argument which was just as conceptualistic as the one found in the Meditations.\textsuperscript{7} His objection to the Cartesian split between body and soul was based on an analysis of the soul's interaction with the body. Tournemine's adversaries needed only to point out that such an analysis assumed

\textsuperscript{5}Tournemine was editor-in-chief from 1701 to 1719, succeeding the Journal's first editor, Father Lallement. Tournemine was also a teacher of Voltaire at the Collège Louis-le-Grand.

\textsuperscript{6}Journal, January 1701, 40-44. Years later the Journal turned again to Descartes's doctrine: "En identifiant la substance matérielle avec l'étendue, Descartes rendait sa définition de la substance incompatible avec la Transsubstantiation... C'est ce qui entraîne la condamnation prononcée le 20 novembre 1663... Journal, Sept., 1722, p. 1646.

\textsuperscript{7}Ibid., July, 1702, 108-114.
the union of soul and body, which was the very point at issue. To these criticisms, the Jesuit merely hid behind some quotations of St. Thomas and Aristotle without giving any positive justification of his position. In rejecting Lamy's Cartesianism, Tournemine could offer little else in its place, which is an indication of the state of scholastic philosophy in France at the time. Father Desautels sums up the journal's early attack on Descartes in this way: "En outre, on peut regretter, pour l'histoire des idées, que les rédacteurs aient persisté à signifier leur opposition, à mettre en garde, au lieu de réfuter nettement des propositions qu'ils considéraient comme dangereuses." 9

The journal's attitude towards Malebranche and Fenelon was similar to their attitude towards Descartes. With Leibniz it was a different matter. The journalists greatly respected the German philosopher and even printed several articles by him. 10 Their admiration of Leibniz stemmed from his vigorous affirmation of the capacity of the human mind to know truth. At the time Bayle's skepticism was causing the Jesuits much concern, especially as regards the problem of evil. Leibniz's resolution of the problem by reason alone acted as an effective counter-doctrine to Bayle's Pyrrhonism. The journal's acceptance of Leibniz's philosophy entailed some reservations however. In the review of his Theodicy, the journalist commented on the philosopher's notion of pre-

8 Ibid., October 1703, p. 1870.
9 Desautels, p. 15.
established harmony: "Si nous ne l'admettons pas entièrement, du moins sommes-nous convaincus qu'il est très favorable à la liberté." The Journal's sympathies for Leibniz's refutation of Bayle prevented it from offering any penetrating criticisms of the work. Not till after the philosopher's death did the Jesuits criticize his doctrine more severely. Father Castel, writing in 1721, reproached Leibniz for the lack of unity in his thought: "S'il eût rassemblé ses forces, quelles découvertes auraient échappé à un homme qui, partagé, compte tant de victoires." Still later the Journal's attitude was decidedly hostile: "Leibniz... n'a abouti qu'à des raisonnements et à des idées vagues, ou tout au plus à un spiritualisme qui n'est qu'un matérialisme déguisé." Remarks such as these indicate that the Journal's initial admiration for Leibniz had little or nothing to do with his philosophy. Leibniz offered a refutation of the skeptics, and it was for this reason that the journalists praised and made much of him. Once Bayle receded into the background, the Journal turned against Leibniz. Such actions, while not especially praiseworthy, are concrete manifestations of the journalists' mentality. The important thing was to defend the tradition. How this was done was of secondary moment.

In addition to the remarks on Leibniz made by Father Castel which we noted

11 Ibid., July, 1713, p. 1189. Quoted from Desautels, p. 38.
12 Ibid., August 1721, p. 1362. Quoted from Desautels, p. 39.
13 Ibid., April, 1724, p. 618. Quoted from Desautels, p. 39.
above, the Jesuit also contributed a polemic against Newtonian physics. Convinced that the emphasis on experimentation could only be harmful, he accused the Newtonians "de vouloir réduire les hommes à n'avoir absolument que des yeux."\textsuperscript{14} Newtonian mechanics had materialistic overtones for Castel which made him a determined opponent of the new system. Influenced by the deductive approach of Cartesian natural science, as well as by the rationalistic method of Aristotle, he vied with the experimentalists most heatedly during the early 1720's. Castel was no mere obscurantist, as his membership in the Royal Society of London shows. Yet he succeeded in adding one more phase to the series of controversies which marked the \textit{Journal}'s history.

In theological matters, the Jesuits had much to contend with. Jansenism was strong in France at the time, and the \textit{Journal} did not hesitate to attack the doctrines condemned by the bull \textit{Unigenitus} of 1713. The discussion in the \textit{Journal} lasted over the better part of the periodical's first thirty to thirty-five years.\textsuperscript{15} The attacks of the Jesuits were instrumental in driving the Jansenists underground. The result of the cleavage among Catholics would have its effect in later years. Robert Palmer writes of the split this way:

\begin{quote}
Made criminal and clandestine, Jansenism came to flourish in darkness and ignorance. This was an unfortunate consequence for the church and for France. It meant that stern morals could henceforth be explained as a product of superstition, and strict living ridiculed as provincial and uncouth. It meant also that a solidly religious element in the church, if not a highly intellectual one, was estranged from the hierarchy at a time when united
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{14} \textit{Ibid.}, May, 1721. Quoted from Desautels, p. 52.

action was needed against the infidels. 16

This estrangement would have its effect in 1762 when a Jansenist compilation of selected writings of the Jesuits was influential in raising public sentiment against the Society, and bringing about their expulsion in the following year. 17

The bull Unigenitus posed the question of papal authority, and ultimately the rights of the Gallican church. The Jesuits' tradition was profoundly ultramontane, and no one could seriously doubt what their stand on this issue would be. Yet it is interesting to see how cautious the Journal was not to offend the sensibilities of the Gallicans immediately after the promulgation of the bull. Their arguments for acceptance of the bull tried not to alienate the partisans of a strong French church: "Le témoignage de la vérité de l'Église c'est le suffrage des évêques unis à leur chef." And further on: "tous les évêques hors un très petit nombre ont accepté la Constitution." 18 The appeals for acceptance stressed the "witness of the Church" and the consent of "all the bishops," phrases quite acceptable to the most ardent conciliator. Gallicanism, however, could not always be so neatly bypassed, and gradually the Jesuits were forced to declare themselves on the issue. However, even here they tried to mitigate the effect their views would surely have by expressing them through judicious quotations and comments upon the writings of strong

16 Ibid., 27.

17 The name of the work was Extraits des assertions dangereuses en tout genre que les soi-disants Jésuites ont soutenues.

18 Journal, April, 1715, p. 581. Quoted from Desautels, p. 155.
advocates of papal supremacy. A second-rate life of St. Francis of Assisi was published in 1728 which the Journal lavished with praise. The reason for this was that the author, a Récollet named Chalippe, defended a strong ultramontane thesis throughout the volume.

In 1729, the canonization of Gregory VII further complicated the Gallican issue by raising once again the question of the extent of the papacy's power in temporal matters. The Journal noted that these claims of the popes were things of the past. The political structure of Europe prevented any usurpation of power by the pope. A refusal to recognize the papacy's authority in spiritual matters through fear of an eventual abrogation of political power failed to appreciate the differences between the world of 1730 and that of Gregory VII. 19

In moral questions, the journalists were anything but conciliatory. An example of their attitude was the early attack on Pierre Bayle's separation of morality and religion. 20 His doctrine was vigorously censured in the first

19 Desautels quotes this significant passage from the Journal: "Il était inutile de faire un étalage odieux de ces anciennes prétentions des Papes sur tous les pays de l'Europe; comme si nous étions menacés d'en voir revivre prochainement l'usage. . . . Les temps ne sont plus les mêmes, les objets sont distingués, les principes éclairés, les possessions séparées. Les princes mettent leur gloire, à protéger l'Eglise et à conserver l'autorité qu'elle tient de l'Evangile; et l'Eglise à son tour n'est occupée qu'à donner aux sujets des exemples touchants et des leçons continues de la soumission qu'ils doivent à leurs princes." Journal, May, 1734, 374-375. Quoted from Desautels, p. 161.

20 Paul Hazard expresses Bayle's separation this way: "The evidence being thus complete, Bayle now comes to his summing-up. Morals and religion, far from being inseparable, are completely independent of each other. A man can be moral without being religious. An atheist who lives a virtuous life is not a creature of wonder, something outside the natural order, a freak." The European Mind (London, 1953), p. 286.
years of the Journal's existence, yet the secularization of morals continued. Commentaries on the ethical maxims of Socrates and Epictetus increased in number, and were carefully scrutinized by the journalists. Their analyses and criticisms of these works were substantially the same as those made against Bayle's separation of religion and morality by Father Berthier, the Journal's editor during the 1750's, which we shall discuss in Chapter V.

While it was pointed out earlier that the majority of articles in the magazine were cultural rather than controversial, the Journal's impact was not primarily in the areas of belles-lettres, or painting, or sculpture, or numismatics. The periodical is significant because it defended orthodoxy. This defense of Catholic tradition is plain in its debates with the Jansenists and Gallicans, as well as later on with the philosophes. Although the Jesuits did not openly clash with the philosophes movement before 1748, we should not think that controversy was something wholly new to the journalists. In the 1750's the adversaries were different, but the defense of tradition remained the same.

Prior to 1745, there were marked deficiencies in the Journal's defense of orthodoxy. Its polemical tone often clouded over the basic issues, and the too frequent inconsistencies among the journalists themselves diminished the value of much of their argumentation. Good examples of such inconsistency were the extremes and excesses of Joseph Tournemine, Louis Castel, and Jean Hardouin. Hardouin, a writer for the Journal during its first two decades, published his Opera varia in 1720 in which he stated that anyone outside the Catholic Church, Protestant or pagan, was an atheist. This highly unorthodox view was attributed to the Jesuits as a group, and they were thus dubbed
Hardouinists. Twelve years before, in 1708, the Journal published a formal denunciation of Hardouin's writings on the status of non-Catholics, but his eccentric ideas were to dog the Journal for years to come. Upon his death in 1733, and the publication of his Opera posthumae, the editor, Father Brumoy, felt it necessary once again to print an attack on Hardouin's writings.

Under Tournemine's editorship the Journal engaged in polemics against Descartes, Malebranche, Habillon, and J. B. Rousseau. Many of the controversies we noted above occurred during his term of office. He justified his battling spirit on the grounds that men looked to the Journal for sound judgments on current literature. His aggressive methods were perhaps not wholly satisfactory to his superiors, for in 1713 Tournemine was removed from office. His successor immediately published a policy statement in the January, 1720, issue which rejected Tournemine's polemical method.

We have already mentioned Castel's vigorous opposition to Newtonian physics. We shall have occasion later to speak about his falling out with Father Berthier over Montesquieu's Esprit des lois. His tendency to go to extremes in his reviews put him at odds with Reaumur, J. B. Rousseau, and even his fellow journalists.

In 1745, Father Berthier assumed the editorship of the magazine, a position he would hold until the suppression of the Jesuits in 1762. Above all else, Berthier was a moderate, and he took care that the Journal should reflect a spirit of impartiality and urbanity. Castel could not submit to such

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21 Journal, January 1712, avertissement.

22 Pappas, p. 21. See also Father Brumoy's remarks in the footnote, p. 25.
leadership, and so he was removed from the magazine's staff. So pronounced was
Berthier's influence during this period that Augustin and Aloys de Backer have
not hesitated to say that all the volumes between 1745 and 1762 could be con-
sidered as Berthier's own work. 23 In January, 1746, Berthier announced the
policy the Journal would follow under his direction: "Ce journal n'a point
coutume d'user de représailles contre les satyriques de profession. Pour
répondre à ces écrivains, il faudrait prendre le ton des personnalités, des
terms de mépris, des accusations hazardées; manière odieuse d'exercer sa plume,
d'ennui pour les honnêtes gens." 24 The Journal on occasion failed to live up
to such high standards, but these were exceptions which proved the rule.

Berthier imparted to the Journal a consistency and firmness, tempered by
prudence, which the magazine had lacked in the past. His continuing efforts at
moderation had their effect on both friends and enemies alike. The Jansenist
Goujet respected the Journal highly; Charles de Quens, a follower of Malebranche
attested to the high quality of the Journal's articles. Similarly, the
Nouvelle bibliothèque d'un homme de goût praised Berthier's critical acumen:
"Les Mémoires de Trévoux n'ont jamais été plus intéressants ni plus utiles que
quand le père Berthier y a travaillé. Il a su répandre dans ses différents
extraits une sagesse de critique, une pureté de goût, une sûreté d'erudition
qu'il serait à souhaiter de voir dans tous les journaux." 25

23 Augustin and Aloys de Backer, Bibliographie des écrivains de la Com-
pagnie de Jesus (Paris, 1890), vol. 1, p. 1378.
Berthier's moderation was not so much in evidence in the debates with the philosophes. Where religion or morals were in question, he would countenance no deviations from tradition. And by 1750, the philosophes had gone too far to escape the Jesuit's strictures. The Prades affair confirmed the suspicions of the orthodox that the secularization of morals and religion was well underway. Prades submitted a thesis to the Sorbonne which extolled natural religion based on the philosophical principles of Locke and d'Alembert. The thesis was accepted, and immediately afterwards a wave of protest and shock arose against the young theologian. What made matters still worse, Prades was a contributor to the Encyclopédie. The identification of Prades with the philosophes convinced many Catholics of the anti-religious intentions of the rising intellectuals. As Palmer puts it: "The Prades affair was for many people the first revelation that the Encyclopédie was in the hands of religious unbelievers." The Journal's opposition to the movement began in earnest with the publication of the Encyclopédie.

How dangerous the journalists considered the writings of the philosophes

26 Palmer, p. 118. The records of the Assembly of the Clergy in 1748 also indicate a sudden awareness of the spread of irreligious ideas: "A frightful philosophy has spread like a deadly poison and has dried up the roots of faith in almost all men's hearts. This scandalous impiety, emboldened by the number and quality of its adherents, no longer remains within bounds. Works filled with blasphemies grow more numerous day by day, and defy the vigilance of the magistrates and the zeal of the pastors. Religion has never been more vigorously attacked." Collection des procès-verbaux des assemblées du clerge, 1748. Quoted from Cyril B. O'Keefe, S.J., "Conservative Opinion on the Spread of Deism in France, 1730-1750" Journal of Modern History, XXXIII (December, 1961), p. 399.
to be can be seen in the serious tone of the *Journal*’s reviews. After some initial raillery at Diderot’s expense, Berthier settled down to a sober and determined criticism of the ideas of the *Encyclopédie*, Montesquieu, Voltaire, Rousseau, Bayle, and others. The *Journal* only rarely engaged in personalities; its primary aim was to alert the public against the anti-traditional tendencies of the *philosophes*. There can be no doubt that its criticisms irked the *philosophes* greatly. Perhaps this irritation is an indication that the *Journal*’s opposition had some effect on the French public. At any rate, the suppression of the Jesuits in 1762 led Diderot to declare: “At last I am delivered of a great number of powerful enemies.”27
CHAPTER II

THE ENCYCLOPÉDIE

In October, 1750, Denis Diderot published his Prospectus to the Encyclopaedia. As the title page of the pamphlet indicates, Diderot wished to alert the reading public to the forthcoming volumes of the Encyclopédie. This was no ordinary advertisement however. The Prospectus did indeed inform the reader of the nature and scope of the proposed volumes, yet in such a way that the Encyclopédie appeared as no mere catalog of facts, but a monumental achievement, the culmination of man's quest for a systematic explanation of the universe. The superlatives Diderot employed no doubt seem exaggerated, but they were the expression of a man convinced that human knowledge had reached its highest achievements in the pages of the Encyclopédie.

According to Diderot, the originality of the Encyclopédie lay in its actual synthesis of all human knowledge. Up to the time of Leibniz, no one had conceived of, much less attempted such a unification. The previous attempts at synthesis only indicated that the task remained to be done. With the advances in knowledge in the century preceding the encyclopedists, the necessary breadth and depth were attained which made the difficult undertaking of unification and classification possible. The achievements of Descartes, Boyle,

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1Denis Diderot, Œuvres complètes, ed. Assezat and Tourneux (Paris, 1875-77), XIII, p. 130.
Huyghens, Newton, Leibniz, Locke, Bayle, Pascal, Corneille, Racine, Bourdaloue, and Bossuet were to find their most articulate expression and meaning in the folio volumes of the *Encyclopédie*. In short, the proposed work of Messrs. Diderot and d'Alembert was to be a miniature library which would encompass all the essentials of the arts and sciences, and which would thus highlight the intellectual accomplishments of the age.

Diderot then discusses the achievements and insufficiencies of previous efforts to classify human knowledge, in particular those of the Englishmen Chambers and Bacon. Chamber's *Cyclopaedia* merits high praise for its orderliness both in plan and execution. As Diderot put it: "il contribuerait plus, lui seul, au progrès de la vraie science, que la moitié des livres connus." But Chambers's work is contained in two folio volumes, and however great may be its value, it cannot possibly cover the various branches of human knowledge adequately in so short a space. In exposing the deficiencies of Chambers's encyclopedia, the *Prospectus* explicitly disavows any essential dependence on the Englishman's work. His encyclopedia has been consulted, but the *Encyclopédie* is in no sense based on it.

The accolades extended to Francis Bacon's *De Dignitate et Augmento Scientiarum* are of special interest because of the persistent claim of the *Journal de Trévoux* that the *Prospectus* based its division of human knowledge on Bacon's division. Diderot cites Bacon three times in the *Prospectus*, the first in connection with the *Encyclopédie* 's "tree [i.e., division] of human

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knowledge": "Si nous en sommes sortis avec succès, nous en aurons principalement obligation au chancelier Bacon, qui jetait le plan d'un dictionnaire universel des sciences et des arts en un temps où il n'y avait, pour ainsi dire, ni sciences ni arts. Ce génie extraordinaire, dans l'impossibilité de faire l'histoire de ce qu'on savait, faisait celle de ce qu'il fallait apprendre." Does Diderot mean here that Bacon's work served as the actual basis for the Encyclopédie's "tree," or simply that the Englishman's division greatly inspired the encyclopedists? The answer is not evident from a reading of the text, and it is this ambiguity which gave rise to a discussion in the Journal of the encyclopedists' originality in their division of human knowledge. To say, as does Diderot, that the successful delineation of the various arts and sciences is due "principalement" to Bacon is in one sense to say very little. Unless it is clear what this debt to Bacon is, the compliments paid to him are not particularly meaningful.

The second reference to Bacon need not detain us, as it has no bearing on the relation between Bacon's and Diderot's divisions of knowledge. However, the third and final reference to Bacon is very important, for it is the most explicit acknowledgement of dependence on Bacon's work to be found anywhere in the Prospectus, or for that matter, in the extensive introductory sections of the first volume of the Encyclopédie. Speaking of the great difficulties involved in determining what category a profession like architecture should fall under, Diderot says this: "nous l'avons [i.e., Bacon] imité dans

4 Ibid., 133-34.
5 Ibid., 146.
cette occasion et dans beaucoup d'autres, toutes les fois, en un mot, que l'histoire ne nous instruisant point de la naissance d'une science ou d'un art, elle nous laissait la liberté de nous en rapporter à des conjectures philosophiques.⁶ The paragraph containing this sentence was suppressed when the Prospectus was reprinted in the first volume of the Encyclopédie. This does not necessarily mean that the encyclopedists wished to retract their admission of dependence on Bacon, for in the introductory pages of their first volume the editors devoted one section to an explication of Bacon's division, and at the end reaffirmed that "nous avons fait dans le Prospectus d'avoir l'obligation principale de notre Arbre au Chancelier Bacon..."⁷ Yet whatever their intentions, it still remains a fact that nowhere in the pages devoted to Bacon's system in the Encyclopédie do we have such an explicit admission of dependence. Yet however explicit, even this third reference does not indicate how much of the philosophes' "tree" derives from Bacon, and how much is based upon the actual history of science and art.⁸

Whether or not Diderot and his collaborators sufficiently acknowledged their indebtedness to Bacon is a point of no small importance, but the significance of the Prospectus does not rest on it alone. In fact, the division of

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⁶Ibid., 157.
⁷Ibid., 164.
⁸Between the appearance of the Prospectus and the publication of the first volume of the Encyclopédie in July, 1751, the controversy arose between Diderot and the Journal over the originality of the encyclopedist's division of knowledge. Whether there is any connection between this controversy and the subsequent omission of the passage in the text of the first volume cannot be definitively proved, but to me at least it seems likely.
knowledge is only of secondary moment. What the Prospectus really set out to do was stir up interest in the Encyclopédie. This may seem too obvious to be worth mentioning, but in the light of the comments of the Journal de Trévoux, we must be consciously aware that Diderot did not intend the Prospectus to be an essay which was, so to speak, a thing-in-itself, a self-justifying literary work. On the contrary, the Prospectus only has meaning in so far as it is related to the volumes of the Encyclopédie. Any analysis which fails to grasp the relational nature of the Prospectus has failed to meet it on its own terms. And such a meeting is essential to any valid criticism.

The comments of the Journal on the Prospectus and the violent response of Diderot to his Jesuit critics emphasized the differing viewpoints of both author and critics. The January, 1751, issue of the Journal in its "Nouvelles Litteraires" section announced the coming publication of the Encyclopédie, and alerted its readers to the next issue of the Journal which would carry an article "qui fera la comparaison de l'Ouvrage du Chancelier [Bacon], avec le Prospectus de l'Encyclopédie, surtout avec l'arbre des connoissances humaines."9 In the following issue of the Journal,10 Father Berthier emphasized the dependence of the philosophe's division on Bacon's. According to Berthier, the Prospectus did little more than re-state Bacon's two hundred year old division, and therefore it should not be considered so very revolutionary after all. However much M. Diderot has waxed eloquent on the virtues of the new Encyclopédie and its systematic breakdown of human knowledge, no one should think that "un


seul ouvrage... puisse être le serpent qui détruire toutes nos Bibliothèques.11 Later Berthier said this: "Nous voulons dire que, s'il était possible de transcrire ici toutes les divisions de l'Encyclopédie et toutes celles du Chancelier Bacon, on verrait que le système de ce Savant Anglais a été suivi de point en point et mot à mot par nos Auteurs; toutefois avec une exception... que Bacon avait des idées plus vastes que les Écrivains de l'Encyclopédie."12 If the Encyclopédie is revolutionary, it is not in the realm of ideas. Its novelty lies in its grand synthesis of the arts and sciences, in its function as a reference book for all branches of human knowledge, in its place as a milestone in lexicography, but nothing more.13 Yet this is definitely not the impression the Prospectus wishes to convey. Indeed, the Encyclopédie is a reference book, but what a reference! One which will develop the true principles of things, which will serve to multiply the number of true scholars, distinguished artists, and informed laymen.14 The Journal article, on the contrary, minimized the importance of such a synthesis by simply paying little or no attention to the claims of the Prospectus in this regard. Father Berthier was more interested in establishing the dependence of the philosophe's division on Bacon's. In this he is quite successful, but only by emphasizing one aspect of the essay which does not constitute its fundamental significance. This is not to say that the Journal

11 Ibid., 304.
12 Ibid., 317.
13 Ibid., 305.
14 Diderot, Œuvres, XIII, p. 145.
deliberately misrepresented Diderot's work, but only that its failure to represent it in its totality tended to create the impression that in scope and purpose the new Encyclopédie was not really so very new after all.

Diderot's reaction to the review of the Prospectus was immediate and vigorous. He wrote to Father Bertheil and criticized the Journal for failing to give sufficient praise to the efforts of the encyclopedists and for unwillingness to acknowledge the originality of the division of human knowledge in the Prospectus. As Diderot put it: "la branche philosophique... ne se trouve presque rien dans le chancelier Bacon." This overstatement was followed by a complaint to Bertheil that he might at least have mentioned in his article that the Prospectus acknowledged its indebtedness to Bacon. The Jesuit would have the reader believe that the encyclopedists were intent on deceiving the public as to the originality of their undertaking. And Diderot resents any such implication.

But what irritated Diderot most was the matter of fact attitude of the Journal towards the coming volumes of the Encyclopédie. The Prospectus proudly announced the publication of a new detailed encyclopedia of all knowledge, and

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15 Ibid., 165-67.
16 Ibid., 166. In the section "Système General de la Connaissance Humaine suivant le Chancelier Bacon" of volume one of the Encyclopédie, Diderot subsequently modified his claims to originality, and rightly so, for on this matter the Journal was correct.
17 The Journal did not mention the Prospectus's references to Bacon. Diderot does have a point here. Nevertheless the ambiguity surrounding these references still remains. As we noted previously, Bacon's name was mentioned only three times. Taken singly or collectively, these references do not sufficiently acknowledge the heavy debt the philosophe owed to the English statesman.
in response the Journal simply picked away at the originality of Diderot's "tree." The philosophe could offer only a meagre and inadequate defense of his division of knowledge, but the roots of his annoyance go much deeper than this. It rested on the inability or unwillingness of the journalists to acknowledge the spirit of discovery and sense of expectancy which permeated the Prospectus. The studied reserve of the Jesuits indicates that they understood the magnitude and intent of the Encyclopédie only too well. Their casting doubts on the originality of Diderot's division of knowledge was an attempt to minimize the overall effect that such a work would most surely have in French intellectual circles.

The battle between journalist and philosophe now began in earnest. The Jesuits were not long in answering Diderot's letter. The February, 1751, issue replied directly to the embittered editor of the Encyclopédie. In rejecting Diderot's assertion that the part of his division dealing with philosophy owed nothing to Bacon, Father Berthier further stated that the first article on the Prospectus did not injure anyone. The Journal had no intention of depreciating M. Diderot's work; it only wished to clarify a point which was not immediately evident on reading the pamphlet. However, Diderot has taken offense, and if he wishes to throw down the gauntlet, the Journal will do all it can to meet the challenge: "M. Diderot prétend, pour l'Encyclopédie, un article sur les Journaux, et il se propose d'y donner des eloges à nos Prédécesseurs, à nos Collègues même, d'y parler aussi de nous qui écrivons ceci [Berthier]. En reconnaissance, nous lui promettons une place distinguée dans ces Mémoires, qui

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ont l'avantage, vù luer petit volume et une ancienne habitude de plus de 50 ans, d'aller partout." The general tone of the whole reply to Diderot was defensive and polemic. It manifested the "en garde" mentality which characterized the Journal's debate with the encyclopedists.

Even in this early stage of the controversy we have an intimation of the fears underlying the Journal's attitude towards the Encyclopédie. Berthier expressed it thus: "M. Diderot est homme d'esprit, et il y a plaisir à recevoir de ses lettres, quand elles roulent simplement sur la Littérature. D'autres matières sont trop dangereuses; et il le sait bien." The "matières dangereuses" were, of course, religion and morals. And as it later developed, such instinctive concern was not unjustified.

Diderot penned a second letter to the editor, and confirmed Berthier's fear that the encyclopedists were hostile to the ancient faith. Speaking of his collaborators on the Encyclopédie, Diderot hurled this taunt at the Jesuit: "je ne doute point que messieurs de l'Encyclopédie que vous connaissiez ne soient fort bons chrétiens: il est bien difficile que cela soit autrement, quand on est de vos amis; et c'est pour cela que j'ambitionne d'être du nombre." The philosophe adds little to his previous argument in defense of the originality of his division of knowledge, and in fact even modifies his earlier statements about the novelty of the branche philosophique of his tree. Yet if he backtracks somewhat on this point, the overall tone

19. Ibid., 572-73.
20. Ibid., 571-72.
21. Diderot, Oeuvres, XIII, 170. The second letter was dated February 2, 1751.
of the letter is in no sense apologetic or conciliatory. Diderot's hostility to the journalist goes much deeper than his irritation at being indirectly accused of plagiarism.

Diderot's letter only incited the Journal to further substantiate its charges concerning the division of knowledge in the Prospectus. The March issue carried an article comparing the branche philosophique of Diderot's division with the parallel section in Bacon's De Dignitate et Augmento Scientiarum. The Journal presents a very strong case for saying that the Prospectus borrowed heavily from Bacon even in the section where the encyclopedist had claimed the most originality. This article all but silences the editors of the Encyclopédie on the question of their division of knowledge. Later, in the first volume, Diderot and d'Alembert inserted a section dealing with Bacon's division exclusively. It is evident that the philosophes were keenly aware of the charges directed against the originality of their division, but after the March issue of the Journal the question of originality ceased to be a topic for debate. The Jesuits had won their point convincingly. Diderot and his friends could now only protest that they had always fully recognized and acknowledged their indebtedness to Bacon. The March essay terminated the discussion of the Prospectus.22 It was not until the following October and the

22Arthur M. Wilson, in his recent biography of Diderot, accepts without much qualification Diderot's objections to the Journal's assertion that the Prospectus did not sufficiently acknowledge its dependence on Bacon (p. 125). As we have seen, this judgment of Wilson's must be modified. On page 188, Wilson notes that the Journal "had referred maliciously to Bacon's influence on the prospectus of the Encyclopédie." While the Journal's critique of the Prospectus was imperfect, the adjective to describe it is not "malicious." Wilson's remarks are indicative of the tendency of historians of the eighteenth century to accept Voltaire's and Diderot's judgments of the Journal as being more or less accurate. Arthur M. Wilson, Diderot: The Testing Years, 1713-1759 (New York, 1957).
first reviews of volume one that the Jesuits again took up the question of the
encyclopedists.

From October, 1751, to March, 1752, the Journal published six lengthy
articles analysing in detail the contents of the first volume of the Encyclo-
pedie. 23 Before studying these articles individually, it might be well to
describe briefly the general method employed by the Journal throughout its
discussion of the Encyclopédie. The Jesuits were intent on showing the de-
pendence of the philosophes' encyclopedia on other dictionaries and source
books. 24 While plagiarism was by no means the sin then that it is today, the
Journal articles nevertheless call into question the honesty of the encyclo-
pedists in boasting of the originality of their work. The method employed in
the analysis of the first volume was one geared to refute or at least soften
the claims of Diderot and his associates regarding the novelty of the Encyclo-
pédie.

As would be expected the Journal paid close attention to any remarks made
about religion and morals. Its critique concentrated on those parts of the
Encyclopédie which in any way attacked tradition, for it was tradition—poli-

23 As we noted above, the first volume was published in July, 1751.

24 The Journal cited numerous works from which the encyclopedists copied
without acknowledgement: Dictionnaire de Trévoux; Dictionnaire du Commerce;
Dictionnaire Historique by Louis Moréri; Dictionnaire de Mythologie by M.
l'Abbe de Claustre; Dictionnaire de Medicine by Robert James; Histoire des
Insects by M. de L'Abbe de Claustre; Dictionnaire de la Bible by M. D. Calmet; Traite de
la Société Civile by Father Buffier; Dissertations sur l'existence de Dieu
by M. Jacquelot; L'Antiquite Expliquée by Father Montfaucon; Principes du
raisonnement dans le Cours de Sciences by Father Buffier; Dictionnaire de
Chemie; Histoire Critique de la Philosophie by M. Delandes; Dictionnaire de
Peinture by l'Académie des Belles-Lettres; Dictionnaire de Marine by M. Aubin;
Chymie Medicinale by M. Malouin; Traité des Premières vérités by Father Buffier;
Histoire Naturelle by Buffon.
ical, cultural, and spiritual—which was the bulwark of the Christian faith.

Three months after the publication of the first volume, the Journal printed its first article reviewing the "Preliminary Discourse" which formed the nucleus of the introductory pages of the volume. The Journal outlines the "Discourse," and then takes issue with d'Alembert, its author, on his views concerning the status of philosophy and theology, and the inadequacies of tradition. For example, the philosophe asserted that nature alone makes a man eloquent, and not artificial rhetoric: "mais à l'égard de ces puérilités pédantesques qu'on a honorées du nom de Rhétorique, ou plutôt qui n'ont servi qu'à rendre ce nom ridicule, et qui sont à l'Art oratoire ce que la Scholasticque est à la vraie Philosophie, elles ne sont propres qu'à donner de l'éloquence l'idée la plus fausse et la plus barbare." The Journal's reply is quite interesting. Rather than demonstrate the insufficiencies of d'Alembert's thesis, it merely states that such a view goes against all those sage ancients who defended not only the excellence of rhetoric, but also the truth of scholastic philosophy. It is tradition then which condemns the encyclopedist's view as inadequate and superficial. The Journal does not attempt to prove d'Alembert wrong by justifying the tradition; it is content with reiterating it, and, in so doing, to dispose of d'Alembert's remarks.

The "Discourse Preliminaire" had some rather unkind words to say about the lack of progress in philosophy prior to the philosophes. D'Alembert lists

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26 D'Alembert as quoted ibid., 2262.
27 Ibid., 2276ff.
three reasons for this stagnation of thought. First, the philosopher became a slave to Aristotle; he ceased to think creatively, and was satisfied with merely transmitting the insights of the Greek philosopher rather than re-working and developing them. Secondly, philosophy fell prey to the systematizing penchant of the theologians. As d'Alembert put it, the theologians "cherchaient à ériger en Dogmes leurs opinions particulières et que c'étoit ces opinions mêmes, bien plus que les Dogmes, qu'ils vouloient mettre en sûreté."28 To these two assertions of the philosophe, the Journal answered that such charges were only unsubstantiated statements. D'Alembert offered no proof; his opinion is worthless.

The third reason proffered by the "Discours" was the watchdog attitude of the Church. Intellectual freedom could not coexist with papal authority, and for this reason the true spirit of inquiry was stifled. The Journal quotes d'Alembert on this point: "on condamna, en Italie, un célèbre Astronome, (Galilee) pour avoir soutenu le movement de la Terre; à peu près comme le Pape Zacharie avoit condamné quelques siècles auparavant un Evêque, pour n'avoir pas pensé comme S. Augustin sur les Antipodes, et pour avoir deviné leur existence six cents ans avant que Christophe Colomb les découvrit."29 The Jesuits in their rebuttal simply denied the validity of d'Alembert's interpretation of the incident with Pope Zachary, yet, strangely enough, no reference to the Galileo affair was made. Whatever the reason why the Jesuits shied away from a discussion of the Galileo controversy, their refusal to meet

28 Ibid., 2277.
29 Ibid., 2278–79.
d'Alembert on this point might well count as a victory for the philosophe. Certainly he had not been refuted.

The final pages of the article are devoted to a general conspectus of the first volume. The Journal comments on the excellence of many articles on grammar, music, geometry, chemistry, botany, and mechanics. However, the compliments are qualified by two suggestions to the editors, one of which was quite significant. First, the Journal noted that from time to time the Encyclopédie misspelled foreign words. The editors are then encouraged to be more precise in future volumes. This is a small matter, and its relative unimportance is a good indication of the detail the journalists went to in their analysis. The second suggestion was not small. The Journal remarks that the encyclopedists have often borrowed from the Dictionnaire de Trévoux and the Dictionnaire du Commerce, and as the Journal put it: "il seroit à propos de citer ces Sources..." A few passages of the Encyclopédie are cited and juxtaposed against selections from the Trévoux and Commerce dictionaries, the result being a word for word likeness between the older dictionaries and the Encyclopédie. The deliberate borrowing in these passages is obvious. As we noted above, the Journal continued in its later articles to substantiate the widespread practice of lifting whole sections out of other works and incorporating them into the text of the Encyclopédie.

The November issue continued the critique of volume one. The inclusion

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30 Ibid., 2287.
31 Ibid., 2288.
32 Ibid., 2290.
33 Ibid., November 1751, 2419-57.
in the Encyclopédie of a detailed exposition of Bacon's division pleased the Jesuits very much, for they saw in it a most conclusive admission of dependence upon the English scholar. But the journalists at this time acknowledged the fact that the Encyclopédie was something more than a division of knowledge: "Mais les facilités qu'a donné Bacon, n'influencent que sur l'Arbre, sur le Prospectus, non sur l'exécution du Dictionnaire; et ce Livre est toujours une entreprise très-haute, très-forte, telle en un mot qu'après l'édition de tout l'Ouvrage, les Auteurs pourront se approprier en toute justice les expressions de la belle Ode: Exegi monumentum aere perenni." 34 Had the Jesuits recognized earlier that the total effort of the encyclopedists went far beyond the elaboration of a division of knowledge, perhaps the bitterness engendered on both sides in the controversy over the Prospectus would have been much alleviated.

The Journal then questions whether the Encyclopédie has really lived up to expectations. 35 An article or word could be omitted from a dictionary, and this would only render such a work imperfect. When, however, the task is the compilation of an encyclopedia, the omission of an article is more than a blemish, "il rompt l'enchâinement, et nuit à la forme et au fond." 36 Does the Encyclopédie fulfill these demanding requirements? The answer is no. For example, the encyclopedists do not include the names of kings or savants or peoples who were the special object of Moreri's Dictionnaire historique. If

34 Ibid., 2423.
35 Ibid., 2424-25.
36 Ibid., 2424.
the editors were in earnest about giving the public a complete synthesis of human knowledge, the inclusion of such historical data as is contained in Moreri's work would alone have doubled the size of the first volume. And not only in the cataloging of kings and scholars does the Journal find the Encyclopédie wanting. One looks in vain through the first volume for genealogies of any kind. The lines of succession of popes as well as kings are omitted; nor have the histories of the rise and fall of empires been included. Where are the descriptions of cities and countries? Where the recounting of the lives of renowned philosophers and scholars? Nowhere do the encyclopedists treat of the lives of holy persons, founders of religious orders, or hereesiarchs, and the like:

Ainsi, par exemple, on a parmi les articles de ce premier Volume du Dictionnaire les Abrahamites, espèce de Moines Grecs; non Abraham, le Père des Croyants; on a l'Achillaide, Poème de Stace; non Achille qui on est le Héros; on a le vit Ambroise; non S. Ambroise qui passe pour en être l'Auteur: ... on a le nom d'Auguste, terme de dignité; non l'Empereur qui le premier fut honoré de ce titre; on a l'Augustin de Janseni, les Religieux Augustins, le caractère d'imprimerie appelle Saint Augustin, les Thesologiens qu'on appelle Augustiniens; on n'a point le Saint Doceteur Augustin. ... 37

The Journal exaggerates here somewhat, for the encyclopedists frequently included biographical sketches of famous persons as part of the account of the political movement, school, or religious order that these persons were connected with. Nevertheless, the Journal's criticism is for the most part correct. The philosophes overlooked important historical events, or personages which by anyone's standards were worthy of mention in the Encyclopédie.

The November article then goes on to congratulate the editors on the

The Journal notes also the similarities between many selections in the first volume and Moreri's dictionary. The encyclopedist copied verbatim the following entries: "Adonai," "Adrianistes," "Agnus-Dei," "Albanios," "Amautas," "Ambrosien," "Appienne (la voye)," "Archiascolyte." Moreover, other entries in the Encyclopédie, if not copied straight from Moreri's work, were strikingly similar to the Dictionnaire historique. Such articles would include "Agnonites" "Agoranome," "Agynniens," "Aleeran," "Anachis," "Anadyoméne," "Anagyrus," "Apollon," "Azazel." As regards excerpts from the Abbe de Claustre's Dictionnaire de Mythologie, the Journal had this to say: "Nous en avons compté plus de quarante et notre liste n'est pas complete."

There is a decided note of irritation with the encyclopedists in the Journal's remarks on the attention given to pagan gods, not merely the more important ones, but even second and third rate divinities. The disregard for Christian kings, scholars, and saints in the pages of the Encyclopédie, coupled with its attention to pagan lore, did not sit well with the Jesuits. The Journal's suspicions of the philosophes' anti-Christian bent were palpably confirmed in the entry "Aius-LOCUTIUS," a second echelon Roman god of the people.

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38 Ibid., 2428. The philosophes claimed that the Journal's attack on the Encyclopédie was an ill-disguised effort to show that the Encyclopédie was but a copy of the Jesuit edited Dictionnaire de Trévoux. Perhaps the journalists were a little over-sensitive on this point, but it was still a fact that the philosophes made abundant use of the Trévoux dictionary.

39 Ibid., 2428-34.

40 Ibid., 2435.

41 Ibid., 2439.
The writer of this entry took the opportunity to voice some views on censorship and ecclesiastical authority. The Journal quoted the objectionable section of the article:

Les productions de l'Incrédulité ne sont à craindre que pour le Peuple et pour la Foi des simples. D'où l'on conclut qu'un moyen d'accorder le respect qui est dû à la croyance d'un Peuple et au culte national, avec la liberté de penser, et avec la tranquillité publique, ce serait de défendre tout écrit contre le Gouvernement et la Religion en Langue vulgaire; de laisser oublier ceux que écrivaient dans une Langue savante et d'en poursuivre les seuls Traducteurs.\textsuperscript{42}

To this the Journal responded vigorously. Such an unthinking approach to censorship should surprise every intelligent Christian. What the encyclopedist fails to realize is that with the advent of printing and the dissemination of reading matter, books contrary to religion are extremely dangerous. The reading public is now no longer a select aristocracy, but has expanded to include large segments of the population. It is manifestly absurd to let the intellectuals propagate their irreligious ideas free from the restrictions of civil and ecclesiastical authority.\textsuperscript{43}

What the Journal sees underneath this declaration for intellectual freedom is a diminution of the rights and extent of civil and ecclesiastical supervision: "Mais quelles bornes l'Auteur prétendroit-il donc donner à la puissance Écclesiastique et Civile?"\textsuperscript{44} An essential element of tradition was the authority of the Church. In proposing limits to ecclesiastical and civil

\textsuperscript{42}Ibid., 2441-42.  
\textsuperscript{43}Ibid., 2442.  
\textsuperscript{44}Ibid., 2443.
censorship, the philosophes were chipping away at one of the foundation stones of the old order. The Journal reproached the encyclopedists for extricating themselves from the "people" and for assuming that their superior knowledge did away with the need for obedience to spiritual authority:

Mais qu'entendons ici par le "Peuple" et par les "Simple"? Nos mystères étant si sublimes et si supérieurs à toutes les conceptions humaines, il faut que les dénominations de "Peuple" et de "Simple" s'étendent fort loin; il faut même qu'elles s'étendent à tout, puisqu'en matière de Christianisme, la docilité du "Peuple" et la soumission des "Simple" sont des qualités générales que conviennent à tous, à chacun, dans tous les temps et dans toutes les circonstances.  

Tradition demanded compliance. It could tolerate no esoteric clique of literati, no group of intellectuals beyond the control of authority. In all times, in all places, and for all people, the only appropriate response to religious authority was docility and submission. Christianity demanded it. The insistence on obedience and irritation at the suggestion of a distinction between the common people and the intellectuals was characteristic of the journalists' defense of orthodoxy. Where, the Journal asked, have the slanders against religion originated during the last half century? From the peasants, from the workers, from the artisans? By no means. The trouble started and has remained within intellectual circles, with the philosophes. No one, least of all the philosophes, is justified in rejecting the authority of the Church.

At this point the Journal stops and reflects upon its critique of the first volume: "Jusqu'ici nous n'avons envisagé l'Encyclopédie que comme en général, et sans suivre l'ordre alphabétique. . . ."  

Perhaps it would have

45 Ibid., 2443-44.
46 Ibid., 2448.
been more accurate to say that up to this point the journalists had set out the general lines they would follow in their more detailed examinations of the first volume. The final pages of the November article begin this systematic examination. Naturally enough it begins with the letter "A." The Journal quotes from the *Encyclopédie*: "les Espagnols et les Italiens sont ceux qui sont le plus d'usage de la Lettre A, avec cette différence que les premiers [the Spanish], remplis de fâche et d'ostentation, ont continuellement dans la bouche des "a" emphatiques." The Jesuits took this opportunity to reproach the encyclopédistes for their lack of charity and knowledge of Spanish. The Spanish "a" is "très-legers" and "très-doux." The Journal next considers the entry "Ab," the Hebrew word for father. So beautiful is this entry that the Jesuit believes it worthy to be transcribed by the reader. Moreover, it is so much like the entry in Moreri's *Dictionnaire* that if we transcribe the *Encyclopédie* article, we must certainly copy Moreri's also. On this high note the November article ends.

The next few essays in the Journal help us better understand the mentality of the journalists and the care they took to substantiate their attack on the originality of the *Encyclopédie*. The December, 1751, article begins its analysis by setting down a necessary condition for an adequate evaluation of the *Encyclopédie*: an accurate judgment can be had only after a careful reading of the individual entries and a comparison of these entries with "une multitude

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47 Ibid., 2451.
48 Ibid., 2454.
49 Ibid., 2454.
d'autres livres tant anciens que modernes."50 The December and January articles are attempts to satisfy this condition.

From Robert James's Medical Dictionary, the Journal notes that the encyclopedists have copied the following articles without acknowledgement:


If the encyclopedists on occasion acknowledge their sources, why can they not do it all the time? In the entry "Aberration en Astronomie," M. d'Alembert does not hesitate to recognize his dependence upon Monnier's Institutions Astronomiques: "Ainsi voilà encore, parmi les Auteurs de l'Encyclopédie, un Écrivain très habilé, qui indique les sources où il a puisé."52 Among the sources which the encyclopedists have drawn on extensively stands the Dictionnaire de Trévoux: "On trouve dans l'Encyclopédie d'autres Articles..."

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50 Ibid., December 1751, p. 2593.

lesquels sont tellement copiés du Dictionnaire de Trévoux qu'il nous est impossible de dissimuler une pratique si singulière et si surprenante. Voyez le mot Armoiries; il occupe près d'une colonne en folio et c'est absolument la copie d'une des colonnes du Trévoux."

The encyclopedists should have realized that no one plagiarizes the works of an opponent without laying oneself open to the severest strictures.

The Journal went on to cite passages taken from Calmet's Dictionnaire de la Bible and from the Dictionnaire de Chomel with little or no comment. The Jesuits merely wished to let the facts speak for themselves. This objectivity did not prevent them though from interjecting a bit of subjective feeling into their narrative. In concluding the December article, the Journal attempted to lay down some general norms or principles as guides in evaluating the plethora of dictionaries and encyclopedias then being published, the Encyclopédie included. The principles come down to two: first, examine the internal structure of the work, its purpose and goal, etc; secondly, study the use such a work makes of its sources. The Journal admits that this task of evaluation has not been easy with the Encyclopédie because of its great size. Yet if the analysis has proceeded only with labor, the critical judgment of the work has been lightened in many ways, for "l'Encyclopédie nous dédommagera par un bon nombre d'Articles travaillés sur des plans originaux et primitifs." This is simply a not too subtle way of condemning the philosophes of plagiarism. With

53 Ibid., 2613.
54 Ibid., 2615ff.
55 Ibid., 2621.
these comments the December article ends.

The January issue continued the detailed analysis of the sources of the Encyclopédie. In method and conclusion, this article is quite similar to its December counterpart. When these two articles, along with the previous criticisms of the journalists, are taken together, their effect is devastating. The careful attention to sources and the revelation of wholesale cribbing minimized the claim of the Encyclopédie to be a new synthesis of human knowledge. One may wish to criticize the Jesuits for their lack of sympathy and hostile tone, but their reviews of the first volume cannot be shrugged off lightly. For the greater part they were honest and accurate, even though not always very inspired.

The final two articles on volume one continued the analysis of sources, but in addition they also took issue with the philosophes on one or other point, some very interesting and important. The Journal quotes the following passage from the entry "l'Amour des Sciences et des Lettres": "La plupart des hommes honorent les Lettres comme la Religion et la Vertu, c'est à dire comme une chose qu'ils ne peuvent ni connoître, ni pratiquer, ni amier." The Journal marvels that the encyclopedist could even think of comparing men's respect for belles-lettres with their esteem for religion and virtue. There is

56 Ibid., January 1752, 146-90.
57 Mention should be made of the various works cited in the January article as unacknowledged sources of the Encyclopédie: Dictionnaire de Trévoux; Dictionnaire de Peinture; Dictionnaire de Marine; Dictionnaire de Mythologie; Chimie Medicinale; Traite des Premières verites; Traite de la Société Civile.
58 Journal, February, 1752, 311-12.
an infinite difference between human science and divine truth, and men know this difference: "En quel sens légitime ou meme supportable, peut-on dire que la plupart des hommes ne peuvent ni connoître, ni pratiquer, ni amier la Religion et la Vertu?"59 Is not man put on this earth precisely for the purpose of knowing, practicing, and loving religion and virtue? Under the hypothesis of the encyclopedist, men have no more responsibility towards acquiring virtue than they do towards science or the arts. If such a theory were seriously adhered to, "quels reproches mériteront donc les gens sans Religion et sans mœurs?"60 The encyclopedist in uttering such nonsense has sided with the forces of license and immorality.

In March, 1752, the Journal begins its discussion with an examination of the entry "Aristotéliâme," and in particular the subsection "Philosophes récents Aristotéliaco-Scholastiques." The Jesuits quote the Encyclopédie as saying that "Sot [Duns Scotus] faisait consister son mérite à contredire en tout S. Thomas, qu'on ne trouve chez lui que de vaines subtilités. . . ."61 After this remark against the Doctor Subtilis, the philosophes criticizes Scotus's Franciscan followers for imbibing and teaching his foolish philosophy, a "Métaphysique que tout homme de bon sens rejette." The Journal answers with a confession of amazement: "tout ceci est de trop." The profound ignorance, not to mention gross unhaveritableness, of the encyclopedist is unbelievable. The article has cavalierly disregarded all semblance of honesty, gravity, and accuracy. The

59Ibid., 312-13.
60Ibid., 313.
61Ibid., March, 1752, 441-42.
truth is that Scotus was far from being an imbecile and the Order of St. Francis has and still produces outstanding thinkers, writers, and servants of the Church. These petty calumies against them only point up the narrow-mindedness of their detractor. The philosophe must have penned these falsities in one of those moments "ôù l'on pense peu, ômd même l'on ne pense point du tout."62

The essay then turns to the entry "L'Athée," and a discussion of the bases and tenability of a theory of atheism. The comments of the Journal are especially interesting, for on the crucial question of God's existence the attitude and viewpoint of the Jesuits is clearly seen:

L'Auteur de ce grand morceau [i.e., the entry "L'Athée"] reconnaît qu'il ne peut y avoir d'Athée convaincu de son système; mais il soutient que la persuasion peut convenir à l'Athée; il, fait plus encore, et il avance cette proposition: L'Athée... se persuade ce qui n'est point: mais rien n'empêche qu'il ne le croye aussi fermement, en vertu de ses sophismes, que le Théiste croit l'existence de Dieu in vertu des démonstrations qu'il en a.63

The Journal rejects such a view outright on the grounds that sophisms can never take the place of proven demonstrations. Moreover, the existence of God is "le mieux démontré qu'il y ait dans toute l'étendue des Sciences."64 A sincere theoretical atheism is untenable for the existence of God is for all purposes self-evident. There is nothing problematic about God's existence, and those who wish to make it so ought to be rejected, proscribed, and condemned.65

In battling against irreligion and indifference, the Journal wished to endow

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62 Ibid., 443.
63 Ibid., 451-52.
64 Ibid., 452.
65 Ibid., 453.
the demonstrations of God's existence with an objectivity and certitude which precluded any risk element or possibility of doubt. If God's existence were so coldly certain, one could only be an unbeliever out of ill-will, not from any sincere intellectual difficulties: "L'Athée est environné de tant de lumières, qui lui montrent l'existence de Dieu, qu'il ne peut se déterminer à nier cette existence sans être animé d'un motif de haine contre la Divinité . . . ."66 A limited viewpoint always tends to make sweeping black-and-white judgments about the motivation of the opposition. Nowhere are the Journal's limitations more apparent than here.

From this short treatment of atheism the journalist turned to a discussion of the entry "Autorité politique."67 The Encyclopédie stated flatly that nature does not sanction any one man to command and rule his fellows. All authority is derived either from force and violence, or from a contract between the ruler and subjects freely entered into by both parties.68 In reply, the Journal quoted a lengthy passage from the writings of J.-G. Le Franc de Pompignan, bishop of Le Puy and staunch defender of the Ancien Régime. The heart of the bishop's argument is this:

Les Rois, dans le language des Libres Saints, sont des dieux visibles sur la terre. Ce n'est ni la superstition ni une servile flatterie qui a dicté ce language. L'Ecriture, en parlant ainsi des Rois, a considéré la source de la Royauté, et le caractère qu'elle imprime aux Souverains. . . . La Religion Chrétienne, loin d'adopter cette séditieuse doctrine [i.e., a theory of limited monarchy or

66Ibid., 454.
67Ibid., 456-65.
68As quoted Ibid., 458.
The "fondements inébranlables" were none other than the positive divine laws expressed in the Bible. Monarchy derived its authority and validity not from the consent of the governed, but from the expressed will of God. What is of special interest is the fact that the bishop's statement was given without any additional comment. It would seem then that Le Franc de Pompignan voiced the sentiments of the journalists in this matter. If this is true, the conclusion follows that the Jesuits identified the cause of religion with the maintenance of the old political order to a degree not often attributed to the liberals of the Catholic cause.70

The March article ends with some general observations on volume one, observations which summarize the Journal's previous criticisms. The Encyclopédie has handled many matters quite well, but it has not sufficiently acknowledged its heavy dependence upon other authors. Moreover, in many places the rights of religion have not been respected. The Journal avows that its primary purpose has been to strengthen the cause of orthodoxy by safeguarding it from the criticisms of the unbeliever which, if left unchallenged, would most surely undermine men's acceptance of revealed truth and Christian morality.71

This concludes the Journal's systematic analysis of the first volume. In

69Ibid., 464-65.

70Palmer, p. 22. Professor Palmer considers the Jesuits to have been among the leaders of the liberal element within French orthodoxy.

71Journal, March, 1752, p. 469.
November, 1753, Berthier announced the publication of volume three, but apart from this article, the Journal only touched on the Encyclopédie in scattered references.\textsuperscript{72} The posture of the Journal de Trévoux in its controversy with the encyclopedists is an exceedingly plain and blunt manifestation of orthodox conservatism. At all costs certain truths had to be defended. Intellectual freedom automatically challenged ecclesiastical authority. Monarchy was of divine origin. The existence of God was self-evident; only a simpleton or a sinner could doubt it. Censorship applied to all without distinction regardless of a man's education or background. The necessity of preserving a way of life was dominant in the Encyclopédie controversy. Innovation and change, because they upset the traditional view, were not favorably received by the defenders of the Ancien Régime. The Jesuits identified the old order—the status quo—with the maintenance of the Christian way of life. Their conservatism, if not unintelligent, was quite strong. It was a conservatism wholly contained within the limits of ecclesiastical and political authoritarianism.

\textsuperscript{72}Pappas, 190-95.
CHAPTER III

MONTESQUIEU

Montesquieu stands at the half-way point in the movement of ideas in the eighteenth century. Endowed with a keen awareness of the shortcomings of the contemporary social and political structure, he nevertheless refused to associate himself with the more extremist views of the philosophes. His ideal was moderation, for he believed that "mankind generally find their account better in mediums than in extremes."\(^1\) His sympathies were for a monarchy tempered by elements of democracy and aristocracy; he saw nothing intrinsically wrong in selling public offices and titles.\(^2\) His adherence to the traditional faith, if not rigidly orthodox, was nonetheless sincere, as his death-bed confession indicates.\(^3\) The credibility of this confession was subsequently rejected by Voltaire,\(^4\) but there is still evidence that the principle of moderation was operative in his religious beliefs as well as in his social and


\(^2\) Ibid., V, 19.

\(^3\) When questioned about whether he had ever ceased to believe, Montesquieu answered that "certain clouds, certain doubts had come to him, as could happen to all men, but he had never had in his mind anything irrevocable or fixed against the articles of faith." Pappas, p. 76.

\(^4\) Ibid., 77.
political philosophy.\(^5\)

Montesquieu also forms the bridge between the *Journal*’s policy of conciliation with the *philosophes* and its firm opposition to their anti-religious tendencies. Prior to 1748, Montesquieu was on friendly terms with the Fathers of the *Journal*, especially Father Castel. When in 1725 Castel learned that Montesquieu was beginning to write his *Considerations*, the Jesuit urged the *philosophe* to publish a chapter in the *Journal*. Montesquieu declined because, as John Pappas thinks, he did not wish to identify himself too closely with the Jesuits.\(^6\) If Montesquieu could not be induced to submit an article for publication, he still retained the friendship of the journalists throughout the 1730’s and 1740’s. When Berthier took control in 1745, this policy was not altered. The review of the second edition of the *Considerations*, published in 1748, was quite flattering to the *philosophes*: "Ce livre, déjà bien connu, méritera, pour chacune des éditions, l’accueil qu’on fait toujours aux bons ouvrages. L’auteur trouve le moyen d’y réunir le ton philosophique avec les richesses de l’histoire, les profondeurs de la politique, et les agréments du style."\(^7\)

The appearance of the *Esprit des lois* marked the change in attitude towards

\(^5\)Montesquieu’s predelection for monarchy and his belief that "the Catholic Religion is most agreeable to a Monarchy," (XXIV, 5) plus his attacks on Bayle’s hostility to religion generally and Christianity in particular (XXIV, 2 & 6) would seem to indicate that he accepted Catholicism.

\(^6\)Pappas, 65-66.

\(^7\)*Journal*, September, 1748, p. 1876. The full title of Montesquieu’s work was *Considerations sur la grandeur et la decadence des Romains*. 
Montesquieu. Berthier acknowledged the literary and scientific excellence of the work, but with a qualification: "En général, je puis vous assurer que L'Esprit des Lois part d'une plume très légere, et très exercée à écrire; que l'erudition y est répandue sans affectation et sans pedanterie; que l'auteur a une connaissance singulière de l'histoire ancienne et moderne; de la jurisprudence des Grecs et des Romains, des Asiatiques et des Européens. Mais je ne vous dissimulerai pas non plus qu'il est souvent aussi faible de preuves que fertile en conjectures et en paradoxes."\(^8\) The criticisms leveled at Montesquieu center around his assertions that the laws of a given country are determined by the geography and climate of the particular locale. The Journal attacked this theory on the grounds that, if admitted, one could justify suicide or polygamy or false religious beliefs because of special climatic conditions.\(^9\) It is this relativism in the Esprit des lois which the Journal modestly, yet vigorously, attempted to refute. Still, with all its many critical comments, the magazine did not lose sight of Montesquieu's excellent qualities as a writer. The conclusion of the April, 1749, article exemplifies this quite well. Addressing the reader, the journalist says: "Je puis vous assurer au contraire, que j'applaudis de grand cœur aux talents de cet écrivain et que je ne refuserais pas d'entendre ses raisons, s'il en avait de

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\(^8\) Ibid., April, 1749, p. 719.

9Montesquieu believes that the climate in England is responsible for the number of suicides there (XIV, 12). As regards the type of religion suitable for a given people, it depends upon the type of government: "the Catholic religion is most agreeable to a Monarchy and the Protestant to a Republic." (XXIV, 5) Doctrines like these were unacceptable to the journalists.
bonnes a produire pour sa defense." 10

While Montesquieu early in 1750 published a Defense de l'Esprit des lois, the author's attention was directed at stylistic questions, and no mention was made of the criticisms of the Journal de Trévoux. Father Castel, Montesquieu's longtime friend who was soon to be removed from the staff of the periodical, interpreted this omission by Montesquieu as a sign of good will that the philosophe did not wish to dispute with the Jesuits. Castel urged this opinion among his fellow Jesuits with some success. At any rate, Berthier did not publish any more direct criticisms of Montesquieu's work for the next eight years. He remained silent on the matter most probably out of respect for Castel and a wish not to drive the philosophe further to the left. His silence, however, did not signify any change in attitude, as the Journal articles on Montesquieu in 1757 and 1758 merely elaborated on the criticism already formulated in 1749. 11

Montesquieu's death in 1755 and Castel's two years later permitted Berthier to express his mind without offending either of the two men. He planned an extended critique of Montesquieu's works, including especially the Esprit des lois. His convictions on the incompatibility of Montesquieu's relativism with true Christian morality and religion were no doubt strengthened by his experiences with Diderot and the Encyclopédie. The growing anti-religious sentiments of the philosophes and their attacks on traditional morality convinced the Jesuit that Montesquieu's position had to be refuted.

10 Ibid., 740-41.
11 For the period 1749-1757, I am especially indebted to John N. Pappas, pp. 68-77.
The basic line of argumentation in Berthier's articles consists in a rejection of Montesquieu's theory of law and a re-affirmation of the natural law philosophy of Catholic tradition. To grasp the meaning of the Journal's criticism, it will be necessary to outline briefly Montesquieu's philosophy of law along with the scholastic theory, noting especially the place that positive or human law has in both systems. Montesquieu's position is based on the premise that all beings are governed by invariable laws: "Laws, in their most general signification, are the necessary relations arising from the nature of things. In this sense all beings have their laws." Each being and circumstance has its own proper laws. Moreover, the laws governing these beings or circumstances are essentially independent of the laws governing other beings and other circumstances. This independence and autonomy applies also to the various types of law as well, i.e., to religious, natural, civil law, etc. The section headings of Book XXVI, all of which constitute statements of Montesquieu's position, bring this last point out clearly: "That the Order of succession or Inheritance depends on the Principles of political or civil Law, and not on those of the Law of Nature; That we ought not to decide by the Precepts of Religion what belongs only to the Law of Nature; That things which ought to be regulated by the Principles of civil Law can seldom be regulated by those of Religion; That human Courts of Justice should not be regulated by the Maxims of

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12 *Esprit des lois*, I, 1.

13 *Ibid.*. The general argument implies that the laws for each being are derived solely from a consideration of the essential structure or form of the being, and not from an analysis of a being's *finis* as in scholastic ethics.
those Tribunals which relate to the other Life."  

On this position then, positive human law is not derived from any universally applicable principles of natural law, but from "the particular cases in which human reason is applied." That is, the application of human reason to a given situation is the uniquely determining factor of political and civil laws:

... the political and civil laws of each nation ought to be only the particular cases in which human reason is applied. They should be adapted in such a manner to the people for whom they are framed that it should be a great chance if those of one nation suit another.

Several corollaries follow from Montesquieu's general notion of law. First, there is an objective standard in that for each being or situation there are definite, invariant laws. In this sense, Montesquieu is not a relativist. However, and this is the second and most important point, the objective standard is wholly dependent upon the type of being and particular circumstances surrounding and influencing this being. Therefore, in a given instance, there is an objective norm, but this norm is relative to the particular instance.

If the above exposition is substantially correct, then its conflict with traditional natural law philosophy is clear. Without going into a prolonged exposition of the scholastic theory, we should note that one of its very basic theses is the assertion that all human laws derive their force and validity from their relation to the natural law which is nothing less than the applica-

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14 Ibid., XXVI, 6, 7, 9, 11.
15 Ibid., 1, 3.
16 Ibid.
tion of the eternal law of God to human creatures. The scholastic theory is relational, not relative. It affirms a fundamental law to which all other types of law must conform if they are to be valid. The criticisms of the Journal de Trévoux rest for the most part on this scholastic theory. Berthier's objections to Montesquieu's works constitute a reaffirmation of natural law philosophy in the face of what the Jesuit considered the growing secularism of the times.

The publication of a multi-volumed refutation of the anti-religious writings of the philosophes, among which were the Lettres Persannes and the Esprit des lois, occasioned a series of articles in the Journal dealing primarily with Montesquieu's works. The first article appeared in January, 1757. In his Lettres Persannes, Montesquieu argued that a plurality of religions within a state contributed to the general welfare in that it promoted toleration. A spirit of strict observance will prevail among the various sects, for each will

17 The masters of the Catholic tradition are explicit on this point. I cite only three: St. Thomas, and two Jesuits, Suarez and Bellarmine.

St. Thomas: Unde omnis lex humanitas posita intantum habet de ratione legis, inquantum a lege naturae derivatur. Si vero in aliquo, a leges naturalis diisordet, jam non erit lex sed legis corrupicio. (S.T. I-II, 95, 3)

Suarez: Denique, quia illi qui has potestate utuntur in humana communitate Dei ministri sunt; ergo potestatem Deo acceptam administrant: est ergo Deus auctor non solum prascipuis sed etiam proprii hujus potestatis. (De Legibus, III, iii, 4)

Bellarmine: ... political power considered in general, not descending in particular to Monarchy, Aristocracy, or Democracy, comes directly from God alone; for this follows of necessity from the nature of man, since that nature comes from Him Who made it; besides, this power derives from the natural law, since it does not depend upon the consent of men; for, willing or unwilling, they must be ruled over by some one, unless they wish the human race to perish, which is against a primary instinct of nature. (De Laicis, Ch. VI)
strive to outdo the others in virtue and piety. Not only did Montesquieu hold that intolerance was opposed to the good of the state, but also that it was contrary to the true intentions of God, for intolerance was "un esprit de vertige qu'on doit regarder comme l'éclipse de la raison humaine."\textsuperscript{18} The \textit{Journal} responded that the strength of a nation consisted in the union of its citizens. Differences in religious belief, far from promoting union and harmony, were great obstacles to it. And besides: "dans l'Eglise Catholique l'intolérance coule nécessairement de l'autorité infaillible, dont cette Eglise est dépositaire; que l'intolérance enflamme d'autant plus le zèle pour la conversion des Payens et des Hérétiques, qu'elle porte sur un dogme trés- clairement révélé, sur l'unité de l'Eglise, hors de laquelle point de salut . . . ."\textsuperscript{19}

The \textit{Journal} then asks whether or not the civil authorities are not obliged to suppress false religions, "de lui enlever les moyens de fortifier et d'étendre la contagion."\textsuperscript{20} The answer of course is yes, and the justification for their position, although not directly stated, rests upon their interpretation of natural law philosophy. If one grants that there is one true religion, then right reason demands that this religion be fostered and no other. The civil authority cannot grant equal status to both truth and falsehood without grievously violating natural law precepts. For this reason the \textit{Journal} rejects Montesquieu's encomium of tolerance.\textsuperscript{21} It concludes with these words:

\textsuperscript{19} Ibid., 84.
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., 86.
\textsuperscript{21} I do not wish to imply that adherence to natural law precepts neces-
"On n'a point encore vu de secte véritablement Chrétienne queait autorisé
le tolérantisme: ce n'est pas du titre de Chrétien, mais du titre de Philosop-
hy, que les partisans de la tolérance affectent d'être jaloux."22

In June, 1757, Berthier continued his critique. Here the Journal dealt
directly with Montesquieu's theory of law: "loin de comparer la nature et le
but de toute législation humaine avec législation divine... M. de Montesquieu
s'attache uniquement aux climats, aux moeurs, aux coutumes, aux intentions des
peuples particuliers: le centre auquel il rappelle toute législation particu-
lière, n'est jamais que le bonheur particulier que se proposent les sociétés
différentes."23 Berthier concludes that the notions of justice and injustice
must, in Montesquieu's philosophy, be arbitrary and flexible. He has reduced
morality to an "affaire de climat." The sun ought to inspire the lawmaker; it
need not and should not determine him.24

The journalist then summarizes his objections to the Éprit des lois under
three main headings. First, contrary to the philosophes, "c'est uniquement de
la sagesse et de la sainteté de Dieu que dérivent les Lois de la nature."25
This goes squarely against Montesquieu's assertion that the laws of nature are

narily entails special deference to the Catholic religion. The point here is
simply that this is how the Journal interpreted these precepts. For a modern
statement of natural law philosophy and its application in a pluralistic
society, see John Courtney Murray, S.J., We Hold These Truths, (New York, 1961).

23 Ibid., June, 1757, p. 1486.
24 Ibid., 1489-90.
25 Ibid., 1492.
derived uniquely from the constitution of our being. The Journal here is once again basing its judgment on the principles of scholastic natural law.

The second basic objection centers around Montesquieu's notion of political virtue: "Selon M. de M., il n'y a que les Républiques où la vertu soit l'âme du Gouvernement. Quoi! dans tout Gouvernement, le goût de la vertu n'est-il pas nécessaire pour inspirer l'amour de devoir?" Montesquieu speaks of virtue in Book III, and it is rather clear that he does not mean to imply that virtue is not present in monarchical government, but merely that "in a monarchy... there is less need of virtue than in a popular government, where the person entrusted with the execution of the laws is sensible of his being subject to their direction." By virtue, he means political or public moral virtue. He explicitly states that he is not referring to private moral virtue or supernatural virtue. Now with these qualifications, the Journal's criticism overstates the case against Montesquieu. It would have been more correct to have criticized the philosophes for not emphasizing enough the role of virtue in a monarchy. But to imply that he deemed virtue superfluous in a monarchy is a misrepresentation of his position. This overemphasis can be explained on the score of the Jesuits' zeal for morality.

The Journal stated the third objection to Montesquieu as follows: "L'Esprit des Lois réduit toutes les Religions au même niveau dans l'ordre

26 Ibid., 1491.
27 Ibid., 1495.
28 Esprit des lois. III, 3.
29 Ibid., III, 5, footnote.
civil et politique; leur vérité et leur fausseté deviennent indifférentes."\textsuperscript{30} From Berthier's point of view this was a very serious criticism. The Journal believed that if Montesquieu's theory were accepted, there would be little justification of the Church's claim to be the true religion for all men. Rather, the Catholic faith would be valid and true only in those places where it accorded with the climate and political structure.\textsuperscript{31} Unless the supremacy of the faith were recognized in theory, the Church's missionary effort would be radically unintelligible. As the Journal put it: "En multipliant de pareilles observations, l'Espirit des Lois fournit à tous les Gouvernements privés de la vraie Religion des titres pour l'exclusion de leurs États."\textsuperscript{32} These comments concluded the June article.

Not until a year later did Berthier again take up the Esprit des lois. In July, 1758, the Journal reviewed a book of one M. Pecquet entitled Analyse raisonnée de l'Espirit des Lois du President de Montesquieu. Berthier could not escape the fact that Montesquieu's work was immensely popular, even though it was then ten years since its first publication:

Dès qu'il parut, un grand public l'encensa avec si peu de réserve, que les particuliers n'osèrent presque pas le censurer. Dans la suite, les Censeurs ont été un peu moins timides. Cependant la plupart d'entre eux n'ont manifesté leurs critiques qu'en combinant d'éloges l'Auteur; ils n'ont attaqué l'Espirit des Lois qu'en témoignant la plus haute admiration pour M. le President de Montesquieu. Ainsi une partie de l'enthousiasme qu'avait fait naître l'Espirit des Lois, dans sa primeur, a subsiste parmi nous et subsiste encore.\textsuperscript{33}

\textsuperscript{30} Journal, June, 1757, 1498.
\textsuperscript{31} Ibid., 1499.
\textsuperscript{32} Ibid., 1502.
Again the *Journal* attacks Montesquieu for underplaying the role of virtue in a monarchical form of government. No new content is added to the journalist's previous criticisms on this point. What really disturbs the Jesuit is the benign interpretation M. Pecquet gives to Montesquieu's explanation of the relation between law and religion. Pecquet's defense of his interpretation was quoted by the *Journal*: "Je le répète, dit-il, je ne pense point m'être éloigné dans tout ce Paragraphe-ci de l'Esprit même de M. de Montesquieu; je pense que c'est ainsi qu'il voudroit être lu et entendu, s'il étoit encore à portée de rendre compte de ses sentiments." To this Berthier answers that Pecquet's own convictions should have obviated any softening of his criticism. That Pecquet did not come out vigorously against the *philosophe* disturbed the *Journal* very much.

Berthier is more favorable to the critic when he remarks that Montesquieu "c'est de n'être pas toujours d'accord avec lui."

This pitfall of inconsistency, the *Journal* notes, is the inevitable stumbling block for all those writers who do not have the requisite courage to push their premises to their logical conclusion. These remarks were meant to apply not only to Montesquieu, but also to his critics. The half-hearted refutations of the *Esprit des lois* seem to have been as much a cause for irritation to the journalists as the original work itself.

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*34* Ibid., 1702.  
*35* Ibid., 1702.  
*36* Ibid., 1703.  
*37* Ibid., 1704.
In October of the same year, 1758, Berthier returned to the *Esprit des lois* and the insufficiencies of Montesquieu's principles of government. If men and nations are creatures of climate, then no firm foundation for government is possible: "Dans l'*Esprit des lois*, pour gouverner les hommes, on n'a que des rennes que se plient au gré des caprices, des passions, des goûts de nations et de climat: ce sont des liens qui n'ont aucun terme immobile d'union et de force non plus qu'aucun terme fixe et solide de tendances et de direction." The theory expounded in the *Esprit des lois* is sterile. It can neither ground a political structure, or correct the vices and errors of any existing government.

With the October article, Berthier ended the discussion of Montesquieu's works. For as long as the *Journal* remained under Jesuit control, the subject of Montesquieu and the *Esprit* was never raised again. After the suppression of the Jesuits in France in 1762, Berthier undertook a critique of Rousseau's *Contrat social*, in which he contrasted some of Rousseau's ideas with Montesquieu's. The journalist's comments do not show any change from the attitudes and opinions expressed in the *Journal*. Speaking of the form of government suitable for a country, he says this:

> La liberté personnelle, et dont jouit chaque individu de la nature humaine, ne dépend point du climat: c'est la puissance de se déterminer, de choisir le bien ou le mal, de s'attacher à un bien plutôt qu'à un autre. Tout cela est dans la nature de l'homme, et non dans les qualités du climat. La liberté civile, qui consiste à vivre sous un gouvernement conforme à la raison et aux lois, n'est point non plus un fruit du climat. Il y a partout, indépendamment des degrés de la sphère, des gouvernements bons et mauvais, c'est-à-dire, des administrations dures ou modérées, sages ou passionnées, injustes ou équitables; et ces choses ne sont pas commandées par le plus

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38 Ibid., October, 1758, p. 2532.
The Jesuits' refutation of Montesquieu amounted to a reiteration of traditional natural law philosophy, no more and no less. Their enunciation of this philosophy was often unfortunate, for they seemed to give the law an objective, independent existence apart from any human reason. The tendency to objectify the law and endow it with a naive kind of certitude accounts for the lack of solid argument in the attack on Montesquieu. The philosophe's cultural relativism was not disposed of merely by saying that such a theory was wrong. Nor was it enough to juxtapose an older theory of law against his and then say that he was in error because he departed from the older doctrine. The discussion demanded an intelligent explanation of the scholastic ethic, along with a reasoned refutation of the *Esprit des lois*. But this was just what Berthier and the journalists never produced.

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39 *Observations sur un livre intitulé le Contrat social*, p. 176. Quoted from Pappas, p. 83.
CHAPTER IV

ROUSSEAU

Jean Jacques Rousseau was in many ways unique among the philosophes of the mid-eighteenth century. The attitude of the Journal de Trévoux respects this uniqueness. Its reviews were sympathetic in tone, and seldom turned into an apologetic onslaught against the philosophe. The journalists could overlook many of Rousseau's excesses, for on one point they were in complete agreement: they both were deeply troubled over the decay of morals. This mutual concern tempered the Journal's criticisms of Rousseau. In fact, the Jesuits used him to point up the moral indifference of other leaders of the philosophes movement.

In February, 1751, Father Berthier published a review of Rousseau's Discours sur les Sciences et les Arts. The Discours attempted to answer the question whether "le retablissement des Arts a contribué à épurer les mœurs."²

¹It is interesting to note that Rousseau was not alone among the philosophes in his attention to morality. Carl Becker writes of Denis Diderot: "From all of Diderot's writings there emerges an anxious concern for morality. He tells us that to have written some great constructive work on that subject was what he would 'recall with the greatest satisfaction' in his last moments; but, he says, 'I have not even dared to write the first line: I say to myself, if I do not come out of the attempt victorious, I become the apostle of wickedness; I will have betrayed the cause of virtue... I do not feel myself equal to this sublime work; I have uselessly consecrated my whole life to it.'" Carl L. Becker, The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth-Century Philosophers (New Haven, 1960), p. 80.

²Journal, February, 1751, p. 504. This question was proposed at the Academy of Dijon in 1749. Rousseau's essay won a prize at the Academy in 1750.
The Journal's attitude is one of interest and attention: "Ecoutez l'Orateur qui entreprend de nous instruire; soyons dociles à sa voix, s'il nous dit la vérité; osons tempérer ses décisions, si elles présentent quelque chose de trop général ou de trop peu ménagé." The Jesuits' preoccupation with upholding morality caused them to bypass one of the very basic themes in Rousseau's work: man in the state of nature surpasses the man of culture in human dignity and virtue. The Journal directed its attention more to Rousseau's analysis of the luxury and excess of French society: "quels essai de crimes s'y fait apercevoir sous le voile de notre fausse politesse, et sous le masque de notre urbanité perfide!" While noting that the philosophes often confused science and the arts with the faults of those engaged in these disciplines, the Journal recognized that Rousseau's exaggerations arose out of love for morality and virtue. Such love could not help but win the journalists: "On ne peut qu'..."


3 Ibid., 511.

4 "We cannot reflect on the morality of mankind without contemplating with pleasure the picture of the simplicity which prevailed in the earliest times. This image may be justly compared to a beautiful coast, adorned only by the hands of nature; towards which our eyes are constantly turned, and which we see receding with regret. While men were innocent and virtuous and loved to have the gods for witnesses of their actions, they dwelt together in the same huts; but when they became vicious, they grew tired of such inconvenient onlookers, and banished them to magnificent temples. Finally, they expelled their deities even from these, in order to dwell there themselves; or at least the temples of the gods were no longer more magnificent than the palaces of the citizens. This was the height of degeneracy; nor could vice ever be carried to greater lengths than when it was seen, supported, as it were, at the doors of the great, on columns of marble, and graven on Corinthian capitals." The Social Contract and Discourses, p. 145.

5 Ibid., 512.
applaudir à ces témoignages de zèle; et c'est l'éloge que mérite l'Auteur dans le détail de son discours; sans compter la gloire Littéraire que est due à son bel esprit et à sa puissante elocution." If the Jesuits could not agree with Jean Jacques on all points, the general tendency of his essay was judged to be good.

Why the Journal failed to emphasize and criticize Rousseau's state of nature theme is not difficult to explain. In February, 1751, the heat of the Encyclopédie controversy was still in the future. Not till after the quarrel with Diderot did the Jesuits fully realize the gap separating themselves from the philosophes. The Journal's review of Rousseau's Discours indicates the constant preoccupation of the journalists with morals and virtue even before the open break with the philosophes. The review also shows that a spirit of moderation and sympathy governed their early dealings with the new intellectuals.

Ten months later Berthier returned to Rousseau's attack on the arts and sciences. The review is not polemical, but it does take a stand against the

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6 Ibid., 520.

7 Later in its review of the Discours sur l'Origine de l'Inégalité, the Journal attacked Rousseau's primitivism. Any theory which rejected or severely questioned culture and civilization would be unacceptable to the Catholic whose Church is an historical and cultural institution. Moreover, Rousseau's primitivism seemed to overlook the dogma of original sin. The state of nature thesis, taken in its entirety, is incompatible with Catholic Christianity.

8 In Chapter III we saw how favorably disposed the Journal de Trévoux was to Montesquieu prior to the Esprit des lois. John N. Pappas gives a detailed account of the Jesuits' conciliation policy towards Voltaire, pp. 85-104.
philosopher's thesis that culture and virtue are necessarily at variance with one another. Using the ideas of a certain Father Porée regarding the legitimate theater, the Journal states its own position:

Nous aimerions mieux pour toute cette controverse, la pensée d'un Orateur Académique et Chrétien [Father Porée] qui se proposoit à lui-même cette question, si le Théâtre étoit ou pouvoit être une école de vertu; et il répondoit que par lui-même le Théâtre pouvoit être une école de vertu, mais que par notre faute il étoit une école de vice. Cette façon de penser et de parler, appliquée aux Sciences en général, pouvoit résoudre la question; on diroit que par elles-mêmes les Sciences peuvent contribuer à épur er les moeurs, qu'elles y contribuent même quelquefois; mais qu'il arrive souvent par notre faute qu'elles servent à nous corrompre. 9

The Journal calls attention to the sweeping statements on science and the arts. Rousseau only considers the evil effects that have resulted from their improper use, and completely overlooks "les fruits utiles que les sages en reti rent." 10

In the same article the Journal criticizes Rousseau's separation of science and morality as excessive. While there is much truth in what the philosopher says, the practice of the Church exposes the inadequacies of his thesis: "Voilà un excellent morceau, et il s'y trouve de grandes vérités; cependant toujours un peu trop de ce ton général, exclusif, absolu qui touche une des extrémités; car pourquoi les Ministres de l'Eglise n'useroient-ils pas quelquefois des connaissances profanes?" 11 The Journal indicates here that Rousseau's thesis is incompatible with Catholic tradition, but it does not pursue the point any further. It is clear that the Jesuits were still impressed

9 Journal, December, 1751, 2545-46.
10 Ibid., 2548.
11 Ibid., 2555-56.
with Rousseau's obvious sincerity and his concern for morality. The full impact of the philosophe movement was not yet felt. Five or six years later the Journal's treatment of the state of nature thesis would be quite different. 12

In the following month, January, 1752, the Journal once again turned to Rousseau's thesis on the arts and sciences. 13 The article merely cites some contradictions in the letter to M. Grimm, and calls attention to the instability of Rousseau's position. For example:

Le même Auteur [Rousseau] ... se porte pour avoir dit, que la Nature a voulu nous préserver de la Science, comme une mere arranche une arme dangereuse des mains de son enfant: et [ailleurs] ... il reconnaît pour son sentiment, que la Science convient à quelques grands, génies. Sur quoi l'on demande, s'il convient à ces grands génies d'agir contre la volonté toute, maternelle de la Nature; de reprendre l'arme qu'elle a prétendu leur arracher des mains? 14

By juxtaposing such contradictory statements, the journalists fixed upon their

12 The reviews of Rousseau's *Discours sur les Sciences et les Arts* occurred simultaneously with the Journal's controversy with Diderot and the Encyclopédie. The favorable review of the *Discours* in February, 1751, coincided with the Journal's critique of Diderot's *Prospectus*. In December, 1751, when the Encyclopédie controversy was almost a year old, the Jesuits were less enthusiastic and more critical of Rousseau. The experience with the encyclopedists no doubt was responsible for this change in attitude. The Jesuits knew that Rousseau was a contributor to the new enterprise (Journal, January, 1752, p. 161). However, the moderate tone of the reviews of Rousseau's essay on the arts and sciences is far removed from the more extreme positions advanced in the Encyclopédie controversy. Not till 1757 did the Journal attack Rousseau with the same vigor it expended on Diderot in 1751 and 1752.

13 The article was a review of the *Lettre de J.J.R. de Genève* written by a certain M. Gautier. The Journal assumes that Gautier represents Rousseau's views. This assumption is doubtful. But the article does give us information about the Jesuits' attitude to Rousseau.

14 *Journal*, January, 1752, 141-42.
reader an image of a sincere, upright, imprudent enthusiast. Rousseau means well. He even has a brilliant command of language. But his zeal for virtue has run ahead of his good sense. The best that can be said of his position is that it is only an hypothesis, not a proven fact: "nous aimons mieux cet endroit de la Lettre, où N. Rousseau dit que sa pensée est une conjecture qu'il ne prétend pas garantir." With these remarks, the Jesuits concluded the discussion of the ideas contained in the Discours sur les Sciences et les Arts.

Two years after the publication of the Discours sur l'Origine de l'Inégalité Parmi les hommes in 1755, the Journal reviewed the sixth volume of the Abbe Gauchat's Lettres Critiques, ou Analyse et réfutation de divers écrits modernes contre la religion. The Abbe's strong attack on Rousseau's state of nature thesis provided Berthier with an opportunity to express his views of the philosophe's radical departure from tradition:

Toute cette doctrine dont nous n'avons saisi que le tronc séparé de ses membres les plus difformes, est un tissu de paradoxes inconcevables. Qu'on en dépouille la surface de ces ornements étrangers qui imposent, de ce style figuré qui séduit, de ces traits ingénieux qui éblouissent, alors l'attention la plus légère suffira pour rejeter un système que l'Histoire dément, que la Physique reprouve et que la Raison déteste.

The Journal's rejection of Rousseau's doctrine stems from its adherence to the natural law philosophy of Catholic tradition. The basic tenets of this philo-

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15 Ibid., 145.

16 Robert Palmer numbers Gauchat among the most able apologists of the period, p. 21.

17 Journal, September, 1757, p. 2185.
8ophy should be familiar from the previous discussion of Montesquieu's *Esprit des lois*. The traditional theory held that there exist certain universal, immutable principles according to which men's actions could be judged morally good or bad. The emphasis in the scholastic notion of law was upon right reason. Natural law was nothing more or less than the dictates of right reason derived from and applied to man's existential situation.

In contrast to this predominantly rationalistic conception of human nature and natural law, Rousseau's depreciation of the intellect put him in direct opposition to the traditional view of man: "I venture to declare that a state of reflection is a state contrary to nature, and that a thinking man is a depraved animal." In the treatise on inequality, Rousseau considered man and his natural condition not from any historical viewpoint, but from the standpoint of the essential structure of man himself: "The investigations we may enter into ... must not be considered as historical truths, but only as mere conditional and hypothetical reasonings, rather calculated to explain the nature of things, than to ascertain their actual origin ... ." Natural man for Rousseau was governed largely by instinct and passion. The domination of the intellect was a product of culture and civilization. This view was inimical to the traditionalist who defined nature in terms of man's higher faculties. Furthermore, Rousseau's state of nature seemed to overlook the dogma of original sin and the consequent defects inherent in human nature. For reasons such as these the Jesuits vigorously opposed the philosophe's treatise.

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19 Ibid., 175-76.
The Journal opened its attack by asking how the philosophe accomplished the facile transit from the realm of his fictitious mental constructs to the real order:

Mais qu'on laisse libre à M. Rousseau la voie, qu'il s'est ouverte pour passer de cet état fictice à l'état actuel, bientôt en retrogradant il reviendra de l'état qui existe à l'état qui a existé: il se flattera d'avoir joint le présent au passé, de n'être jamais sorti de l'état réel, et de n'avoir fait qu'en reconnaître les changements successifs: ... cette série qui n'étoit d'abord qu'un système idéal, deviendra une vérité certaine: l'état réel naîtra de l'état imaginaire; l'un prouvera l'autre, et d'une possibilité dont on paroit se contenter, on le fera nécessairement passer à une existence dont on n'ose pas encore faire en sa faveur la demande.20

Rousseau continues his fantasies by stating that man grasps his true nature by doing away with or mitigating intelligence. But in thinking less, how is a man supposed to arrive at greater self-knowledge? Such a position dissolves into irreconcilable contradictions. 21

The critique then turns to Rousseau's understanding of natural law. The philosophe has reversed the actual scheme of things. The law ought not be a creature of the actions of men; rather, men ought to be judged by the law. What is absolute in the existential order is not the whims of fallible men, but the immutable principles of nature.22 On this point of immutability the Jesuits

20 Journal, September, 1757, p. 2178-79.
21 Ibid., 2186.
22 Ibid., 2186-87. Such talk seems to imply that the law is an absolute set of norms floating out in space somewhere to which man must conform or else. It gives the impression that the law has an ontological status apart from the dictates of reason. Such an implication ought to have made Thomas and Suarez turn over in their graves. John Pappas notes that the Jesuits were influenced by Voltaire's mechanistic conception of natural law, p. 151. Perhaps this accounts for their unfortunate language.
were quite strong. Rousseau's whole effort has been to reduce the natural law to an arbitrary convention:

C'est une conséquence de ce système, que la Loi naturelle devienne également fictice et caduque: dépouillée de ces principes de ces caractères qui constituent l'invariabilité absolue de son essence, il faut qu'elle tombe dans la classe des conventions arbitraires, et qu'elle n'en soit qu'un recueil dont la fabrique est, pour M. Rousseau l'époque de la corruption humaine.23

Along with Rousseau's supposed relativism, his reduction of human nature to a complex of passions and instincts was bitterly criticized by the Jesuits:

Avant cette Loi, l'innocence de l'homme lui paroit admirable et la simplicité de ses moeurs céleste et majestueuse: l'instinct organique en étoit le principe certain et invariable: loin de l'éclairer, de le diriger, la Loi naturelle [i.e., Rousseau's conception of the natural law] n'a fait que l'égarer et le dépraver: sous cette Loi, les passions ont appris à raisonner: en voulant les contredire, l'intelligence humaine s'est évaporée en délires etc.24

M. Rousseau's doctrine is based on a myth, the myth of the noble savage. One look at the cruel and interminable wars among the American Indians should have cured him of his ridiculous theorizing. Unfortunately, neither the facts of history, nor the dictates of reason have made much of an impression on him. An examination of the Discours sur l'Origine de l'Inégalité only reveals a number of strange suppositions and dangerous conclusions scarcely in accord with common sense and prudence: "Il rompt tous les noeuds de la société, de l'humanité, de la Religion; il invite tous les hommes a se disperser dans les forêts, à y chercher une indépendance misanthropique, à s'y confondre avec les animaux, à se mettre sous leur discipline. ..."25

23 Ibid., 2188-89.
24 Ibid., 2189.
25 Ibid., 2191-92.
The Journal's commitment to Christian tradition prevented it from looking on organized religion and intelligence as mere accidental, cultural accretions. The Jesuits were not at all inclined to run to the woods with Jean Jacques.

Two years later the journalists took up Rousseau's *Lettre a d'Alembert sur les Spectacles*. The vigorous criticisms of the treatise on inequality were sharply contrasted by the very favorable reception of the essay on the theater. The Journal's previous denunciations of immorality in stage plays were in substantial agreement with Rousseau. Both Jesuits and *philosophe* held extreme positions not merely on the actual abuses then current in dramatic productions, but more directly on the legitimacy of the theater as an art form.

The Jesuits stated flatly the motives of the antagonists in the controversy over the theater. The field is neatly divided up into the "good" and the "bad": "Les Partisans et les adversaires des Spectacles ont des principes trop différents pour s'accorder jamais. Les premières ont pour eux la coûte, la faveur du public, l'amour du plaisir, et beaucoup de raisonnements spécieux. Les seconds s'appuient de la raison, de la Religion, de l'intérêt.

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26. The *Lettre* was the occasion of an open split between the encyclopedists and Rousseau. While the *Journal* never referred to this internal dissension among the *philosophes*, it was more than likely that Rousseau's repudiation of his former associates influenced the Jesuits in their review of the *Lettre*. There appear to have been several reasons for the break. Harald Hoffding, in his sympathetic study of Rousseau, sees the cause for the rift in basic differences of character and outlook. More concretely, the encyclopedists' ridicule of a love affair of Rousseau's was the occasion whereby "the break with his former friends became positive." Harald Hoffding, *Rousseau and His Philosophy*, trans. Wm. Richards and Leo Saidla (New Haven, 1930), p. 56. D'Alembert proposed the introduction of stage plays into Geneva, and Rousseau balked at this. The *Lettre* was both a defense of the mores of Geneva, as well as an attack on the immorality of an art form.
If religion is left out of the discussion, the partisans of the theater will be able to cover over the evil of their art. But if the teachings of the Gospel are brought into the argument, then the immorality of stage productions becomes evident: "l'Evangile condamne tout sans modification, ni restriction quelconque; et la preuve de fait, mais preuve invincible en ce genre, c'est que les Mondains qui se convertissent sincèrement, cessent aussitôt de fréquenter les Spectacles." 28

While the Journal scarcely mentions Rousseau in the course of the article, its basic agreement with the philosophe is clearly seen in the extreme position taken on the propriety of the drama as an art form. As with Rousseau, the Jesuits rejected not only the abuses of the theater, but the theater itself. 29 To bolster up their rejection, they cited a decree of Pope Clement XIII forbidding the attendance of ecclesiastics at public theatricals. Such a decree, the Journal declared, manifests the care and zeal of the pontiff. However, the fact that the Pope felt such a decree necessary scarcely does honor to the ecclesiastical order. 30

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28 Ibid., 860.

29 "... la vie Chrétienne exclut pour toujours le Théâtre et toutes ses circonstances; on a le bon esprit de voir qu'il est impossible d'allier deux choses tout-à-fait disparates et contradictoires." Ibid., 861. Earlier the Journal's position was not so radical (see above, p. 72; and Journal, December, 1751, p. 2545). The shift in position indicates that the philosophe controversy was turning the journalists towards the camp of the reactionaries. Their position on the theater in 1759 is quite different from their stand in 1746 or even 1751.

30 Ibid., 868-69.
The denunciation of the theater plainly shows the direction of the Journal's thought as the philosophe movement gained in momentum, and as all efforts to put down the new intellectuals failed. We must remember that the Journal's concern with the immorality of the theater directly pertains to the philosophe controversy as a whole, and not merely to one essay of Rousseau. A number of the philosophes were playwrights, notably Voltaire. Most of them were eager supporters of the drama. Thus the Journal's condemnation of the theater hit at the leaders of the "libertines" and "free-thinkers." In previous discussions of the theater the Journal made it clear that the immorality of the stage was a direct outcome of its close union with the philosophes. The Jesuits believed that the philosophes used this medium to spread their injurious ideas, ideas opposed to reason, religion, and the common good. In reviewing the Lettre contre Spectacles of M. Desprez de Boissy in 1756, the Journal had something to say about the enlightened patrons of the arts, and their love of virtue and morality:

On peut être bon patriote sans cesser d'être Philosophe, pourvu qu'on prenne ce dernier mot dans son véritable sens: car vous savez, Monsieur, combien on en abuse aujourd'hui. Ce ne sera plus un nom honorable, s'il continue d'être usurpé par ces incrédules qui s'efforcent d'ébranler tous les fondements du raisonnement humain, dans l'espérance de pouvoir contester avec plus de succès les preuves de la Religion.31

The journalists were well disposed to accept Rousseau's exaggerations. A few

31 Journal, April, 1756, Vol. I, p. 849. In the opening remarks of the article on Rousseau's Lettre, the Journal refers to its critique of Deprez de Boissy's book and notes that its author "n'a jamais été ni à la Comédie, ni à l'Opéra: c'est ce qui lui donne quelque autorité pour prêcher ou censurer les partisans du Théâtre." Journal, April, 1759, Vol. I, p. 855. In other words, the more ignorant one was of the theater, the better equipped he was to condemn it.
months after reviewing the philosopher's essay, the Jesuits again attacked the dramatists, this time by quoting from and commenting upon a tirade against the theater by M. Grasset, a former devotee of the drama who had seen the error of his ways. As the Journal put it: "la Religion aghée de lui [Grasset] des- suiller à la lumière de l'Evangile, que le Sanctuaire et le Théâtre sont des objects inali- liables." 32

The severe attitude of the Jesuits towards the drama did not grow out of Rousseau's Lettres. The philosopher's essay did, however, give the journalists a further opportunity to express their ideas on the subject. The Journal's overzealous commitment to traditional morality is nowhere better exemplified than in the discussion of the theater.

Rousseau published his Le Nouvelle Héloïse in 1761. The book was immediately received with great enthusiasm, but for some reason the Journal never reviewed it. When an abridgement of the work appeared, Berthier inserted several pages of comment in the "Nouvelles Litteraires" section of the May, 1762, issue. The Journal's remarks sum up well the attitude of the Jesuits towards the philosophe. While recognizing "les bons principes dont l'ouvrage abonde," the reviewer also calls attention to the "mauvais [principes] dont il n'est pas exempt." 33 M. Formey, the editor of the abridgement, has failed to expurgate the evils from the original text. This is most unfortunate because the blemishes diminish "toutes les maximes sages, sublimes, héroïques qu'il contient." 34 The mixed reaction to the Nouvelle Héloïse is a miniature of the

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33 Ibid., May, 1762, 1321-22.
34 Ibid., 1322.
Journal's overall attitude towards Rousseau during the 1750's.

Except for the Discours sur l'Origine de l'Inégalité, Rousseau never felt the harsh criticism that Montesquieu and the encyclopedists met with. As we have seen, this leniency did not mean that the journalists were inconsistent in their dealings with the philosophes. Rousseau is praised to the extent that he departs from the ideas of the philosophers; he is criticized in so far as he remains at one with them. The Journal's treatment of Rousseau brings out clearly the mentality of the Jesuit writers and their profound consciousness and commitment to the philosophical and theological positions of Catholic orthodoxy. Rousseau's concern for virtue leads him to lash out at the arts and sciences. Morality is of utmost importance for the maintenance of tradition. Therefore, the Journal praises the philosophe. But Rousseau wished to throw out the arts and sciences altogether, not merely correct their abuses. Because Catholic Christianity is intimately bound up with culture and cultural forms, the Journal rejected such extremism. Rousseau discarded the orthodox notion of natural law and opted for a view of man with the passions and instincts predominating. The Journal attacked the philosophe for his bold departure from reason and the facts of history, one of these facts being the Christian philosophical tradition. Rousseau condemned the theater. The Jesuits sided with him because of their mutual concern for morality.

Clearly, in their dealings with Rousseau the journalists were motivated by but one thing: the defense of orthodoxy in all its many facets.
CHAPTER V

BAYLE

Pierre Bayle's writings and ideas had been widely disseminated for over half a century. They were neither new to the Jesuits nor to the philosophes. The publication in 1755 of the first two volumes of an Analyse raisonné de Bayle, ou Abrégé méthodique de ses ouvrages, particulièrement de son Dictionnaire historique et critique by F. M. de Marsy and J. B. R. Robinet was the occasion for a series of articles in the Journal dealing with Bayle's Pyrrhonianistic philosophy. Why the Journal decided to express its objections to Bayle in such detail is not entirely clear. Perhaps the Jesuits feared that a rebirth of interest in Bayle would only widen the gap between philosophie and believer. Certainly Bayle's ideas were not in accord with Catholic tradition. His fideism led to a separation of reason and faith incompatible with the teaching of the Church:

One must necessarily choose between philosophy and the Gospel.
If you wish to believe only that which is evident and in conformity with the common notions, take philosophy and leave Christianity.
If you wish to believe the incomprehensible mysteries of religion, take Christianity and leave philosophy. For one cannot possess evidence and incomprehensibility together. 2

1 The abridgement filled eight volumes in all. The first four were edited by Marsy, the last four, which were published after the suppression of the French Jesuits, were edited by Robinet.

2 Pierre Bayle, Dictionnaire historique et critique, Éclaircissement III,
This either/or was not acceptable to the orthodox. Moreover, many of the Jesuits' antagonists during the period just before the suppression were profoundly influenced by Bayle's thought, as for example, Denis Diderot. If then the Journal did not directly explicate its reasons for attacking Bayle, it was not because reasons were lacking.

In April, 1755, the Journal reviewed the first volumes of the abridgment. The article gives some general observations and impressions of Bayle's thought. For example, the journalist notes his disrespect for the saints of Christian tradition:

Mais c'est sur-tout contre les plus saints Personnages que sa malignité s'exerce: s'il ne peut flétrir leurs moeurs, il en ternit l'éclat; s'il ne peut effacer l'image qu'on conserve de leur piété, il jette sur elles des couleurs qui la rendent suspecte ou ridicule. Pour les diffamer ou du moins pour les décrediter, il puisse, dans les sources les plus viles et les plus méprisables, les calomnies les plus noires et les anecdotes les moins autorisée.

The comparisons Bayle makes between the Spanish conquistadors and the early apostles, between the Church's missionary effort and expansionist tyrannies, between the conversion of the American Indians and the violent seizures of political power, are all condemned as vicious and false. Little wonder that Catholic theologians have small regard for Bayle's philosophy and hold its devotees suspect: "Mais le titre de Philosophe est souvent très suspect:


5 Ibid., 1089.

6 Ibid., 1093-94.
l'incrédulité et le libertinage affectent de se l'approprier; il semble qu'étant sans moeurs et sans Religion, ou n'en est que plus Philosophe; pour se piquer de l'être, il ne faut ni esprit ni savoir, il suffit de penser librement, et même de ne point penser." Bayle's treatment of revealed religion and his rejection of the rational proofs for God's existence, are further evidence of the philosophe's incompatibility with sound Christian teaching.

In May, 1755, Berthier continued the discussion of the abridgement of Bayle. In this article the Journal attacked the philosophe on four counts: first, the inaccuracies contained in his exposition of the various philosophic systems and religions; secondly, his treatment of several Fathers of the Church; thirdly, the falsity and impiety of his doctrine of pyrrhonism; and fourthly, his explanation of Manicheism. The objections are all supported with concrete instances in Bayle's works. With the explication of these points, the Journal concluded its critique of the first two volumes of the abridgement.

A little over two years passed before the Jesuits again took up Bayle's philosophy. Its criticism began this way:

. . . lors même que Bayle prodigue plus ouvertement sa protection à l'erreur, il affecte presque toujours de rendre quelque hommage à la vérité; mais ce tribut n'est guères qu'un hommage (ad cautelam) froid, léger et passager: loin de gêner la licence du Philosophe, il élargit plutôt la voie où l'engage son attrait polemique, et son

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7 Ibid., 1099.
8 Ibid., 1107-8.
9 Ibid., May, 1755, 1157-1190. We shall return later to the journalist's explanation of Manicheism.
10 Ibid., September, 1757, 2176-2208.
Neither the profundity of his thought nor the firmness of his skepticism accounts for his popularity. Rather, it is by the charm of a libertine pen and the proliferation of scandalous sophisms that he has won his adherents. The Journal defended the role of reason in the acceptance of the faith. If the human mind cannot penetrate to a thorough understanding of the mysteries of revealed truth, it can nevertheless know these mysteries to be true by way of affirmation. Reason can give its "stamp of approval" to these truths by submission to the teachings of Christ and His Church.

In January, 1758, Berthier continued his objections to Bayle. The question raised in this essay was the proof of God's existence. The position of the modern skeptic is indeed a strange one: "Dès lors cette question devient étrangère et indifférente à tout le genre humain: le seul parti à prendre est celui du doute modeste, où le Pyrrhonisme réduit toute la sagesse de l'homme sans préjugés, du Philosophe par excellence." The skeptics affirm that their doubts are based on the honest and humble recognition of the poverty and incapacity of human intelligence. The Journal notes that the humility of the philosophes is a mysterious thing. It does not render them timid or mute in matters of morals and religion. In the discussion of God's existence, the Jesuits indict not only Bayle, but a large portion of the philosophes movement.

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11 Ibid., 2200.
12 Ibid., 2205.
13 Ibid., 2204-5.
as well. Berthier was exceedingly aware of the profound influence of Bayle on the encyclopedists and other intellectuals of the same stamp. These direct attacks by the journalists are far removed from the conciliatory policy of the middle and late 1740's.

In April of the same year, the *Journal* reviewed a critical study of Bayle's treatment of the problem of evil. From the start the apologetic manner of the article is evident: "L'origine du mal a toujours été une espèce de lieu commun, d'où les Philosophes impies ont tiré leurs arguments les plus spécieux contre la Religion." Bayle fits into the category of "Philosophes impies" with his subtle argumentation and manner "pleine d'artifices et de malignité."

With its attitude so clearly stated, the *Journal* reaffirms its commitment to the Christian resolution of the problem. Indeed, Christianity offers the only satisfying answer. The traditionalist is faced merely with difficulties which can be resolved, whereas Bayle and his troop are subject to the wildest absurdities.

Bayle's argument, as presented in the *Journal*, was not new in any way, but it did very effectively re-state the old difficulties of resolving the existence of an infinite, good God with the empirical fact of evil and limitation in the world. The *philosophe* presented his reader with a recital of the miseries of human existence: its prisons and hospitals, beggars, crimes of

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15 Ibid., April, 1753, Vol. II, 1094-1135. The title of the book reviewed was *De l'Origine du Mal, ou examen des principales difficultés de Bayle sur cette matière* by M. le Vicomte d'Ales.

16 Ibid., 1097.

17 Ibid., 1101-2.
individuals and of nations; in short, all the misfortunes that have continually beset mankind in all times and places. An infinitely good and holy creator should not only have made man without any actual evil, but even without any inclination towards evil. How then explain the fact of evil and the existence of the Christian God? The Journal answers by summarizing M. le Vicomte d'Alès's response to Bayle. First of all, "Le monde est-il donc un champ où il ne germe aucune vertu, où il ne croit aucun bien?" The world is not all bad. History does tell us of men whose heroism and virtue were outstanding. Bayle's description of human miseries is, to say the least, slightly overdrawn.

Secondly, "Nous ne sommes pas plus portés au mal entant que mal, dans l'ordre moral que dans l'ordre physique; mais dans l'un et l'autre ordre le mal se cache souvent sous l'apparence du bien, et nous ne sommes pas toujours assez en garde contre ces sortes d'illusions." Good as both these statements are in themselves, they hardly touch on the problem Bayle has raised. For the difficulty is not that there exists some good, but that there exist some things that are not all good. Later the Journal recognized that the problem dis-

18 Ibid., 1102-3.
19 Ibid., 1103.
20 Ibid., 1103-4.
21 The Journal seems to have missed the point of the difficulty. The scholastic theory does not try to give a complete here and now understanding of the fact of evil in the world. It merely attempts to show that the existence of evil does not vitiate against the existence of an infinite, good God. It affirms both God and evil as real without attempting the impossible task of explaining how these two realities work together. For the Christian, the resolution of the problem is ultimately had, not in a philosophical proposition, but through the revelation of God in Christ. On the question of evil, see St. Thomas's *Contra Gentiles*, I, 39, 71, and 95; III, 4-15, and 71.
solves into mystery, but if this admission is taken in the light of what was just said above, it sounds very much like an affirmation of bewilderment and confusion. At any rate, Bayle's position was certainly not refuted.

The same article then goes on to discuss another aspect of the problem of evil, the question of human liberty and Divine foreknowledge: "Dieu, dit-on, pouvait prévenir le péché; mais l'homme aussi ne pouvait-il pas l'éviter? Dieu est-il plus obligé de le prévenir que l'homme de l'éviter?" The Journal's answer to this difficulty too does not really meet the problem: "Dieu nous fournit les secours les plus relatifs à nos besoins, et les motifs les plus puissants; mais notre faiblesse rejette ces secours, notre corruption ne veut pas défier à ces motifs; et nous plaignons, nous accusons Dieu, nous nous excusons aux dépens de sa Providence!" The question again is not whether men are given sufficient grace to avoid sin, but why God permits sin and evil. All sufficiencies aside, sin and evil are facts, and one does not explain these facts by appealing to any amount of grace. The Journal concludes its review with these words: "Ainsi les principes qu'employe M. le Vicomte d'Alès, pour lever les difficultés que l'origine du mal a fait naître contre la Providence, sont des vérités si simples et si évidentes. ..." Supposedly, M. le Vicomte's Christian metaphysics has triumphed over the anti-Christian philosophers, and has dispelled the darkness surrounding questions of fundamental importance. It is quite disconcerting to see Bayle and his followers branded

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22 Ibid., 1122.
23 Ibid.
24 Ibid., 1132-33.
as impious and malignant, and then have these epitaphs supported by a refutation of Bayle which, to say the least, was terribly wanting. The Journal failed completely to justify its acrid denunciation of Bayle’s treatment of the problem of evil.

Earlier, in 1755, Berthier had discussed Bayle’s Pyrrhonistic philosophy. According to the journalist, Bayle had inserted his doctrine throughout his Dictionnaire, and when the philosophes offered arguments against his own position they were too often feeble and insufficient, even ridiculous. Furthermore, Bayle tried to soften the effect of his skepticism by telling his reader that only a few could be taken in by the argumentation of the skeptic. For as Bayle put it: “Le grace de Dieu, dans les Fidèles; la force de l’éducation, dans les autres hommes, et si vous voulez même, l’ignorance et le penchant naturel à décider, sont un bouclier impénétrable aux traits des Sceptiques.”

The Journal notes a tone of contempt in these remarks of Bayle, and then tries to show how pernicious a Pyrrhonian philosophy would be for the faithful. Suppose some one, following Bayle’s philosophy, were to have doubts against faith. He could not satisfy these doubts by any rational arguments. Rather, he would become ready prey to the “influence des vices dont il a prétendu se dégager, c’est-à-dire de l’ignorance, des préjugés, de la présomption.” For the absolute fideist, once faith is doubted, it is in immediate danger of being lost completely. Bayle’s principles offer no rational means whereby these doubts could be cleared up. Thus, his affirmation that religious belief unsup-

25 Ibid., June, 1755, p. 1490-91.
26 Ibid., 1493.
ported by reason is an excellent bulwark against skepticism, cannot be accepted by anyone who wishes to persevere in his faith. Perseverance demands that religion be reasonable, and Bayle's philosophy vitiates against any such possibility. The Journal then quotes Bayle as saying that a skeptical philosophy is the least incompatible of all philosophies with Christianity. The Pyrrhonian knows the futility of rational discussion, and consequently, he more than others senses the need for faith and dependence on God. To this the Journal responds: "Langage néanmoins totalement dénué de sens et de logique." 27 If the skeptic doubts everything, what prevents him from doubting the faith?

Berthier now moves into a long discussion of the Manicheism in Bayle's treatment of the problem of evil. What is interesting here is that the Journal gives a fuller explanation of its own position. After stating that the existence of evil in the world is better handled by positing an infinitely good God, 28 the Journal goes on to formulate three reasons why God could and should have made a world in which there was the possibility of sin. 29 First, God could, without demeaning Himself, create a world in which He foresaw the offenses of rational creatures. God's goodness merely obliges Him to see that man be given the requisite means to avoid evil. He need not positively prevent him from sinning. Secondly, if one were to say that God's perfections necessitated Him to prevent man from using his freedom for evil purposes, then one would at the same time be saying that God was unable to give man the power

27 Ibid., 1502.
28 Ibid., 1519.
29 Ibid., 1521-24.
to avoid evil. This supposition destroys both the omnipotence of God and the freedom of the human will. Thirdly, were God to prevent every abuse of man's freedom, He would be deprived of the glory of being served faithfully and generously in the face of temptations and dangers.

No one should expect from the Journal the exactitude of a theological or philosophical treatise. Still, one might hope to find a better treatment of the problem of evil and sin. To say that God is not obliged to prevent sin, or that if He were obliged to do so He would not be God, is simply to beg the question. Such assertions presuppose the existence of an infinite, good God which is the very point at issue. Furthermore, the statement that God would be deprived of a certain glory were man not free to sin, comes dangerously close to a heretical-sounding doctrine of external glory expounded by the Jesuit theologian, Leonard Lessius. In spite of the lengthy sections in the Journal devoted to Bayle's doctrine on evil, no adequate response to the philosophes's difficulties was formulated by the Jesuits. Perhaps the journalists, in spite of their zeal to preserve the Catholic tradition, had lost sight of the traditional resolution of the problem of evil. Ironic as this may seem, their response to Bayle indicates that their knowledge of the tradition in one of its important aspects was quite imperfect.

30 Leonard Lessius, De Perfectionibus Moribusque Divinis, Bk. 14, c.3, n.56. Lessius was an ardent worker for the Church and a great theologian. However, his doctrine on external glory has been criticized for its inexactitude and heretical overtones. If creation added a perfection to God which He did not already possess, then God would be imperfect and finite. Lessius's manner of speaking gives the impression that external glory adds just such a perfection. The Journal's expression seems to mirror Lessius's inexactitude. Philip Donnelly, S.J. discusses the point in his article, "The Ultimate Purpose of Creation According to St. Thomas", Theological Studies II (February, 1941).
In May, 1759, Berthier published a study of Pyrrhonian philosophy, especially in connection with the question of historical certitude. The Journal put the case for the historical skeptics in this way: "Qu'est-ce encore que l'objection tirée des fables de l'Egypte et de la Chine? Parce qu'on a écrit des fausses es sur les origines de ces peuples, les Pyrrhoniens, en fait d'histoire, concluent que tout est faux dans les Antiquités du Monde; que le récit de Mousse ne mérite aucune considération, etc." Berthier emphasized the marked difference between the Chinese fables and the accounts of the Old Testament. The latter possesses a sincerity and gravity which commands assent. Moreover, the historical reality of Moses and other Jewish figures has been proved countless times in the past.

On miracles and prophesies, the journalist states that the possibility of such phenomena is shown by their actuality. The Old Testament actually predicted the coming of Christ; the miracles of the New Testament and Christian tradition are historical facts. The evidence for miracles and prophesies is so overwhelming that the Journal cannot understand how or why they could be sincerely doubted. What motives could the skeptics have for rejecting the justification and actuality of miracles which rest "dans un petit nombre de

31 Bayle raised the question forcefully in his Dictionnaire. The problem is crucial for the Catholic in that historical skepticism, with its accompanying disbelief in miracles, undermines the credibility of Scripture and Tradition. Throughout the 1750's the Journal printed many articles dealing with the factual content of Scripture, the reality of miracles, prophesies, etc.

32 Ibid., May, 1759, 1162-63.

33 Ibid., 1173.
notions claires, distinctes, incontestables?"34 The answer seems clear: "S'ils nient ces notions, on en conclut ou qu'ils n'ont pas les premiers principes du raisonnement, ou qu'ils traitent ces matières sans bonne foi, sans désir de connoître la vérité."35 In other words, the skeptic is either stupid or vicious; there is no third alternative. The Journal elsewhere accused the non-Christian philosophes of bad faith.36 Such statements indicate how far the Jesuits had come in the ten years since the publication of the Esprit des lois.

The articles on Bayle emphasize, more so even than the critiques of the Encyclopédie, Rousseau, or Montesquieu, the limitations of the Journal's defense of tradition. As time went on, the journalists were satisfied with refuting the philosophes by simply pointing out that their doctrines accorded ill with the truths of Christian faith and philosophy. Little effort was expended in a positive justification of the tradition. The Journal too frequently reiterated the past; it failed to reinterpret it meaningfully for the world of 1750 or 1760.

34 Ibid., 1175.
35 Ibid.
36 Ibid., September, 1759, 2218-43: especially p. 2222ff.
CONCLUSION

"It is not a history to be approached lightly nor a judgment to be passed lightly. But when we have finally made a balance sheet for this point in our destiny, there is little that we are really left to fall back on but the Faith."¹ Francois Mauriac spoke these words before the fourteenth annual study week of French Catholic intellectuals in Paris just last year. They express my own feelings at the end of this study of the *Journal de Trévoux*. The handful of writers for the periodical have an importance far out of proportion to the depth or popularity of their views. The journalists, most of whom are nameless or forgotten, represented a tradition. They stood for a religious faith in the supernatural, a faith with roots in history. Their defense of the tradition was at once a great tribute to their own personal commitment, and a narrowing of the tradition to their all too real limitations. In the writers of Trévoux, one comes face to face with the mysterious paradox of being a man and being a Christian. For myself, committed as I am to the same tradition, Mauriac's words are quite compelling: "there is little that we are really left to fall back on but the Faith."

The Christian tradition is a dialectic of conservation and expansion. The truths of the faith must be preserved, but so too the Gospel must be preached. At various moments in history one or other aspect of the dialectic has been

emphasized, sometimes overemphasized, because of the nature of the times. In
eighteenth century France the dialectic was all but lost. The forces of con-
servation so dominated the orthodox mind that it was psychologically incapable
of meeting the challenge of secular liberalism.

At the very beginning of the public dissemination of the philosophes' ideas the Journal moderately criticized, and in not a few instances praised the
work of the philosophes. The chapters on Montesquieu and Rousseau bring this out quite clearly. It would seem then that there was a real possibility of
achieving a meaningful dialog with the new intellectuals. Such, however, did
not happen, nor could it have happened. Moderation was possible in 1749 and
1750 only because the philosophes had not yet fully expressed their break with
Christianity and the old social and political order. The publication of the
Encyclopédie and the quick change from moderation to hostility shows how remote
were the possibilities for any "inter-faith" communication. If we regard the
Jesuit journalists as the liberals of the Catholic cause, we must remember that
it was a liberalism only with reference to the extremists of the right, as for
example the Jansenistic Catholics. In the eighteenth century, orthodoxy, even
the liberal variety, was intimately united with longstanding political and
social institutions. Dialog with the philosophes was impossible.

The Jesuits' emphasis on only one aspect of tradition led them to adopt
positions which were narrow, sometimes naive. The problem of ecclesiastical
authority and intellectual freedom was never adequately discussed, much less
settled. The journalists were content to reassert the censorship powers of the
civil and religious authorities without clearly indicating the scope and limi-
tation of such censorship. Early in the philosophes controversy the question of
intelectual freedom was raised, only to be rebuffed by the journalists on the score that such questions undermined the tradition. The basic aspects of the problem were never enumerated, but were covered over by a vigorous affirmation of ecclesiastical power.

In philosophical matters, the position of the Journal was often disappointing. In the chapters on Montesquieu and Rousseau we noted how the Jesuits tended to objectify the natural law and endow it with an impossible kind of certitude. The law became so obvious that anyone who questioned it was by that fact suspected of immorality. The growth of cultural relativism and skepticism called for a thorough, intelligent presentation of the scholastic theory. But such was never forthcoming. We discussed at length the Journal's treatment of the existence of God and the problem of evil in the chapters on Bayle and the Encyclopédie. I doubt whether the journalists could today pass an examination for an undergraduate course in natural theology. Their treatment of evil was out of focus. The Jesuits talked all around Bayle's difficulties without ever coming to grips with any of them. Still they felt justified in accusing the philosophe of impiety and stupidity. In the same way, God posed no problem for the journalists. His existence was such an evident fact that they scarcely thought it apt matter for discussion.

The Journal's acceptance of Le Franc de Pompignan's identification of monarchical government with divine positive law points up still further the extreme conservatism of their adherence to tradition. The Encyclopédie article "Autorité politique" advocated a kind of limited monarchy or democratic government. In reply, the Jesuits quoted Le Franc to the effect that Scripture showed that kings derived their power from God and not from the consent of the
governed. Their acceptance of this position made it impossible for them to sympathize with those who sought radical changes in the political and social order.

Perhaps no better example of the Journal's extremism can be found than in the discussions of the theater in the chapter on Rousseau. The overzealous denunciations of the drama made no distinction between the abuses in current stage plays and the propriety of the drama as an art form. The lack of discrimination in such a view is obvious. The journalists' concern for morality dominated their thinking to such an extent that they ceased on this one point at least to give even the appearance of being reasonable.

In recounting these excesses, I cannot help thinking that the orthodox are too frequently orthodoxy's worst enemies. It is the temptation of every Christian to reduce his faith to a self-evident, obvious certitude—to a certitude which, strictly speaking, no human can possess. Should an individual or group give in to this temptation, there inevitably result phenomena such as the Journal's reaction to the philosophes. Yet while I cannot condone the extremism of the journalists, I am unable to judge them too harshly; for it is through their faults and the faults of others like them that the tradition is purified. The process of purification is slow, but nonetheless real. In one sense, this process is what Christianity is all about.

In an allocution to a group of pilgrim students of the University of Paris on Easter Sunday, 1949, Pius XII spoke for the spirit of purification:

In your studies and scientific research rest assured that no contradiction is possible between the certain truths of faith and established scientific facts. Nature, no less than revelation, proceeds from God, and God cannot contradict Himself. Do not be dismayed even if you hear the contrary affirmed insistently, even though research may have to wait for centuries to find the solution
of the apparent opposition between science and faith.²

Had such faith been operative in the eighteenth century, perhaps the history of
the French Enlightenment would have been quite different.

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The thesis submitted by Francis P. Chamberlain, S.J. has been read and approved by three members of the Department of History.

The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated, and that the thesis is now given final approval with reference to content, form, and mechanical accuracy.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

January 16, 1963  
Date

Signature of Adviser