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Douglas R. Holmes: Integral Europe

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Chapter One

INNER LANDSCAPES

DURING THE LATE 1980s, in what was a prelude to this inquiry, I studied a social milieu in the Friuli region of northeast Italy whose inhabitants had pursued a beguiling engagement with the symbolic and the material imperatives of modernity. Friuli is the terrain of Carlo Ginzburg's famous studies of sixteenth century agrarian cults and inquisitorial prosecutions as well as the battlefields of Ernest Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms*. Over numerous generations these people, Friulani, had negotiated the intrigues of industrial wage work, traditional peasant farming, the bureaucratic apparatus of the nation-state, the material allures of consumerism, and the symbolic power of Roman Catholicism; many, particularly males, had engaged in long migrations traversing central Europe, Australia, and America in search of employment. To defy the alienation and anomie of industrial society, these Friulani pursued arduous strategies by which they perpetuated relatively autonomous domains of economic practice and cultural meaning. A commitment to a distinctive regional language, religious rites, folk beliefs, rustic tastes, and, above all, to the routines and intimacies of family life, allowed them to establish bastions of solidarity within which their ethnic identity was actively reaffirmed (Holmes 1989). Their commitment to traditional cultural forms was neither nostalgic nor residual; rather it formed the basis of a vigorous engagement with the modern world and it is this general response—this style of life—that I now refer to as “integralist” in form.

I observed ethnographically during twenty-two months of fieldwork how Friulani exercised a cultural awareness that allowed them to negotiate, if not overcome, the alienation of everyday existence while continuing to maintain manifold bases of solidarity. Though far from seamless, it was a consciousness and practice that offered them a dynamic framework within which domains of material existence, social life, and symbolic meaning were rendered coherent. Their integralist style of life was sustained by what was understood, at least by them, to be an inner cultural logic, and this logic was enacted as what John Borneman has elegantly termed a “praxis of belonging” (1992:339n). Integralism as I initially encountered it had four registers: as a framework of meaning, as a practice of everyday life, as an idiom of solidarity, and, above all, as a consciousness of belonging linked to a specific cultural milieu. I also

recognized that within these integralist practices were intriguing, though usually quiescent, struggles that under certain conditions could assume a volatile political character. Those who conjured this type of political insurgency drew on *adherents'* fidelity to specific cultural traditions and sought to recast these traditions within a distinctive historical critique and an exclusionary political economy. What seemed to catalyze this transformation was a broadly experienced rupture in the sense of belonging on the part of members of various communities and collectivities. I also discerned that integralist sensibilities had affinities with those predispositions found at the center of what Isaiah Berlin calls the "Counter-Enlightenment," the European intellectual tradition that imbues romanticism, fascism, and national socialism. Berlin's conception of the Counter-Enlightenment came to provide both the basic intellectual structure for my rendering of integralism and a theoretical armature for the study as a whole.¹

As I observed how integralist struggles were played out in people's daily lives in the rural districts of Friuli, I became increasingly interested in the potential of these dynamics to take wider political form. My encounters with the leaders of a small regionalist political movement, the Movimento Friuli, demonstrated that this was indeed happening and, notably, against the backdrop of European integration. These pivotal encounters began my gradual refocusing of the project to a full analysis of integral politics. My specific intention has been to link integralist aspirations—expressed in efforts to circumvent the alienating force of modernity by means of culturally based solidarities—to a broader political economy. More generally, I became convinced that the kind of struggles I had observed ethnographically in Friuli were emblematic of emerging political engagements taking shape across Europe. These new questions led me to relocate the study first to the bureaucratic and political precincts of the European Parliament, where I believed integralist aspirations were gaining halting expression in response to the project of European integration, and then to the urban wards of the East End of London, where I believed integralist politics were assuming a particularly fierce and incendiary articulation (Holmes 1999). At the core of this phase of the project are 140 interviews that I conducted with a broad spectrum of political leaders, technocrats, community organizers, and street fighters. My interlocutors ranged from a former prime minister of Belgium to neo-Nazis in inner London.² The first two parts of the text, "Europe" and "East End," reflect my research over twenty-four months in these remarkable locales. The third, "Atavism," concludes the text with an assessment of how integralism can emerge within dissonant theories of society and as revisionist narrations of history.

FAST-CAPITALISM AND SOCIETY

This text is concerned with how integralist sensibilities have been translated into a broad-based politics by a cadre of committed partisans, most conspicuously by Jean-Marie Le Pen and his associates. These political leaders have shrewdly discerned ruptures in the experience of belonging that threaten various registers of European identity. They diagnosed a distinctive condition of alienation based preeminently on cultural rather than socioeconomic forms of estrangement. Two interwoven phenomena have played a crucial role in politicizing integralist fears and aspirations: first, the unfolding of advanced European political and economic integration that is manifest in the project to create a multiracial and multicultural European Union; and, second, the onslaught of what I term “fast-capitalism,” a corrosive “productive” regime that transforms the conceptual and the relational power of “society” by subverting fundamental moral claims, social distinctions, and material dispensations.

I have drawn on the theoretical work of two distinguished anthropologists, Paul Rabinow and Marilyn Strathern, in pursuing these issues. In a sense their contributions are reciprocal: Rabinow (1989) provides a compelling framework for critically evaluating the science, political economy, and metaphysics of solidarity at the heart of the European Union, whereas Strathern (1992) has been the first to theorize the very specific ways that fast-capitalism (though she does not use the term) radically “flattens” those preexisting frameworks of social meaning upon which our understanding of industrial democracies rest. The work of these two anthropologists opened what are the most important theoretical issues of this study. They allowed me to see the innovation at the heart of the integralist insurgency. Specifically, those political actors who embraced an integralist agenda recognized the changed nature and shifting discursive status of “society” in late-twentieth-century Europe. They labored zealously to impose on European politics a radical delineation of society in which “cultural” idioms as opposed to abstract interests serve as instruments for expressing meaning and for deriving power (Strathern 1992:171). Whether or not their political project succeeds electorally, the impact of integralist ideas is already acute and consequential insofar as they have succeeded in recasting society as a realm of political engagement.

The specific design of the research grew out of conversations with a third distinguished anthropologist, George Marcus, and his conceptualization of what has come to be called “multisited ethnography” (1999). Most important for this text, what Marcus has captured by interleaving

the “thick” and “thin” of ethnography is not so much a new “methodology” as an analytical approach that addresses the underlying conceptual problems posed by Rabinow and Strathern. What he has achieved and what is reflected at virtually every turn of this text is a means by which to engage ethnography with emerging resonances of society, with the contours of a nascent social.

What follows is a brief overview of the concepts that have guided the inquiry as well as a profile of the overall thematic structure of the text.

INTEGRALISM: POPULISM, EXPRESSIONISM, AND PLURALISM

Isaiah Berlin (1976) in his classic essay on “Herder and the Enlightenment” sets out “three cardinal ideas,” drawn from the work of Johann Gottfried Herder, which, I will argue, underpin integralist politics and give it form and content. Populism, expressionism, and pluralism both provide the basic conceptual structure of integralism and locate its roots in European intellectual history.

Berlin defines these three concepts with broad strokes: *populism* is simply “the belief in the value of belonging to a group or a culture” (1976:153). He draws from Herder’s distinctive orientation to the vicissitudes of human association, an orientation that envisions patterns of association crosscut by the possibility of loss and estrangement. The stranger, the exile, the alien, and the dispossessed haunt the margins of this populism. “[Herder’s] notion of what it is to belong to a family, a sect, a place, a period, a style is the foundation of his populism, and of all the later conscious programmes for self-integration or re-integration among men who felt scattered, exiled or alienated” (1976:196–97).³ Although Berlin acknowledges that Herderian populism embraces views of collectivity that are not necessarily political and ideas of solidarity that need not be forged through social struggle, he is clear that populism, by taking dispersed human practices and beliefs and by endowing them with a collective significance, creates singular political possibilities.

He also defines *expressionism* in expansive terms implicating all aspects of human creativity. Yet, it is a definition that orients analysis of society toward inner truths and inner ideals:

[H]uman activity in general, and art in particular, express the entire personality of the individual or the group, and are intelligible only to the degree to which they do so. Still more specifically, expressionism claims that all the works of men are above all voices speaking, are not objects detached from their makers, are part of a living process of communication between persons and not independently existing entities. . . . This is connected with the further notions that

every form of human self-expression is in some sense artistic, and that self-expression is part of the essence of human beings as such; which in turn entail such distinctions as those between integral and divided, or committed and uncommitted, lives. (1976:153)

Expressionism thus encompasses virtually the entire compendium of collective practices, the varied fabrications of culture, from rustic cuisine to high religion. Herder posits an inner logic and internally derived integrity to these creative enterprises and thus a unifying dynamic.

Pluralism is for Berlin “the belief not merely in the multiplicity, but in the incommensurability, of the values of different cultures and societies, and in addition, in the incompatibility of equally valid ideals, together with the implied revolutionary corollary that the classical notions of an ideal man and of an ideal society are intrinsically incoherent and meaningless” (1976:153). Significantly, Berlin’s rendering of pluralism can yield tolerance of difference among discrete groups with their own enduring traditions and territorial attachments. However, when cast against a “cosmopolitan” agenda based on universal values and “rootless” styles of life, it is a “pluralism” that can provoke fierce intolerance. In its embrace of “incommensurability,” it creates a potentially invidious doctrine of difference, which holds that cultural distinctions must be preserved among an enduring plurality of groups and provides, thereby, a discriminatory rationale for practices of inclusion and exclusion.

Berlin also derives from Herder one more concept, already alluded to, that has relevance for this study, the concept of alienation. Herder’s portrayal of alienation as the outcome of uprooting, of a deracination, had enormous influence on subsequent scholarship, most notably in the theoretical writings of Marx and Engels. Berlin notes that it “is not simply a lament for the material and moral miseries of exile, but is based on the view that to cut men off from the ‘living center’—from the texture to which they naturally belong—or to force them to sit by the rivers of some remote Babylon . . . [is] to degrade, dehumanize, [and] destroy them” (1976:197). This view of alienation emphasizes cultural estrangement over and above socioeconomic oppression. Crucially for this text, estrangement can also be figurative: it can be instilled by the “emptiness of cosmopolitanism” without entailing any physical dislocation (198–99).

These ideas delineated by Berlin are not in themselves political assumptions; as I demonstrate in this text, they are postulates about the essence of human nature and the character of cultural affinity and difference that can potentially imbue fervent political yearnings and foreshadow a distinctive political economy. Berlin further notes: “Each of these three [populism, expressionism, pluralism] . . . is relatively novel; all are

incompatible with the central moral, historical, and aesthetic doctrines of the Enlightenment” (1976:153). In other words, they form the basis of a distinctive intellectual and cultural movement in European history, again, what Berlin refers to as the “Counter-Enlightenment,” which assumed its most sophisticated manifestation within the artistic triumphs of romanticism and most malevolent expression in the politics of fascism.⁴ Fundamentally, the three postulates formulated by Berlin and the fourth that I added represent an alternative theory of society, an alternative project of human collectivity.

Thus, integralism, as I develop it in this text, is a protean phenomenon that draws directly on the sensibilities of the Counter-Enlightenment for its intellectual and moral substance. Its general trajectory is toward “an organic approach to life and politics,” and, to the extent that integralism relies on enigmatic “inner truths” for its legitimacy, it can defy rational appraisal and frustrate external scrutiny (Mosse 1978:150). Indeed, as one of the most formidable contemporary practitioners of integralist politics avows darkly, “there are other reasons for our fate than Reason” (Le Pen 1997).⁵

The term “integral” itself has an historical pedigree that links it with various movements associated directly with the lineages of the Counter-Enlightenment. Specifically, it has a broad association with various French right-wing intellectual movements. There is the “integral nationalism” of Charles Maurras, “integral experience” of Henri Bergson, the “integral humanism” of Jacques Maritain, and, more recently, the “integral Catholicism” of Monseigneur Marcel Lefebvre. In general, “integralists” are seen as staunchly traditionalist or fundamentalist in their outlook. They themselves tend to view their integralism as a defense of some form of “sacred” patrimony. There are also more generic political designations of integralism, as in “integral nationalism,” to refer to formations of ultranationalism that intersected, most notably in Germany, with Nazism (Alter 1994:26–38), and in “integral socialism,” an effort to fuse “a primitive idealistic socialism and Marxist realism” (Sternhell 1996:72). Thus, the term is generally used to designate a range of idiosyncratic “fundamentalisms,” most often, though by no means exclusively, of a right-wing provenance. Alberto Melucci emphasizes this “fundamentalist” and “totalizing” character of integralist agendas, as he encountered them on the left and the right, within the Italian Communist Party and the Roman Catholic Church respectively, and links this experience of prejudice as expressed in integralist agendas to his own scholarly interest in social movements:

Under the influence of integralism, people become intolerant. They search for the master key which unlocks every door of reality, and consequently they become incapable of distinguishing among the different levels of reality. They

long for unity. They turn their back on complexity. They become incapable of recognizing differences, and in personal and political terms they become bigoted and judgmental. My original encounter with totalizing attitudes of this kind has stimulated a long-lasting interest in the conditions under which integralism flourishes. And to this day I remain sensitive to its intellectual and political dangers, which my work on collective action attempts to highlight and to counteract. (1989:181)

What I seek to accomplish by recontextualizing integralism explicitly within the tradition of the Counter-Enlightenment is to demonstrate how the concept can encompass far more than mere fundamentalism. This juxtaposition reveals that integralism has a complex conceptual and moral structure with deep roots and a distinctive genealogy in European intellectual history, a history that Eric Wolf has noted intersects with that of anthropology:

At the root of this [Counter-Enlightenment] reaction lay the protests of people—self-referentially enclosed in the understanding of localized communities—against the leveling and destruction of their accustomed arrangements. Together these varied conservative responses to change ignited the first flickering of the relativistic paradigm that later unfolded into the key anthropological concept of “culture.” (1999:26–27)⁶

I have suggested thus far that integralism can serve as a framework to examine how mundane forms of collective practice can be linked to sublime political yearning, how varied and contradictory political ambitions can be synthesized within an overarching integralist agenda, and how integralism can draw on a specific European intellectual tradition for its form and substance. A fourth element to this preliminary portrayal draws together the first three within an oppositional configuration—opposition to the subversive capacity of what I term “fast-capitalism.”

I have taken the idea of fast-capitalism from Ben Agger’s nettlesome text *Fast Capitalism: A Critical Theory of Significance* (1989). Though he steadfastly refuses to define fast-capitalism in any extended fashion, Agger frames it as a phenomenon that promotes a wide-ranging “degradation of significance.” In the following section I have set out a preliminary depiction of this regime assessing its dissonant impact on society and its potential to inflame an integralist political imaginary.

INVIDIOUS HANDS

I use the term fast-capitalism to refer not just to the pacing of a technologically advanced and fully globalized economic regime, but rather to designate a phenomenon that can unleash profound change that

circumvents classic domains of political decision making and social control. Speed is a crucial aspect of this regime.⁷ However, its velocity is sustained not by sheer technological dynamism, but by a chain of profoundly corrosive ethical, moral, and social maneuvers; this is the monumental process that Max Weber refers to as the “disenchantment of the world.”

Its most overt and cataclysmic impact has been the sequelae of financial crises that have insinuated themselves with breathtaking rapidity during the 1990s within a range of economies, including those of Mexico, Brazil, Britain, Indonesia, South Korea, and Russia. Literally overnight, principally through the operation of exchange rates, the economic structures and policies of these nation-states have been overruled with, in some cases, calamitous consequence for their citizenry. Astonishingly, within the course of a few hours, not just the legitimacy of a particular regime but the fundamental sovereignty of a nation-state can be usurped by international financial markets, the agents of fast-capitalism. This deeply subversive potential is the focus of this study. By that I mean this analysis is not concerned with fast-capitalism as a system of production or exchange, but rather as an austere cultural phenomenon that degrades moral claims, subverts social consenses, and challenges various forms of political authority. In other words, the analysis focuses on the operation of fast-capitalism upon and within society and the integralist politics that can take shape in opposition to what Joseph Schumpeter described famously as this “gale of creative destruction.”⁸

The ethos of fast-capitalism—by which the abstract principles of market exchange are rendered as overriding ethical imperatives—supersedes other socially derived moral frameworks and political programs. Ulrich Beck and Anthony Giddens characterize this general process as “reflexive modernization.” The consequence of this type of modernization means “that high-speed industrial dynamism is sliding into a new society without the primeval explosion of a revolution, bypassing political debates and decisions in parliaments and governments” (Beck, Giddens, and Lash 1994:2). Centrally, fast-capitalism obscures its own transformative dynamic by disrupting the social “distinctions,” particularly those based on “class,” that engendered the rich critical “perspectivism” vital to the modern European project of society (Rabinow 1989):

The nineteenth-century concept of social class, we might say, also came to embody the permanent representation of different viewpoints. . . . In the late twentieth century, however, there has been a further and curious flattening effect. Class no longer divides different privileges. For anything that looks like privilege is nowadays worthy of attack, including the “privileges” of those on state benefit. . . . To put it in extreme terms, there is no permanent representa-

tion of different viewpoints any longer, because such viewpoints are no longer locked in class dialogue. Class dialogue has collapsed. (Strathern 1992:140–42)

Although fast-capitalism at the close of the twentieth century is generating and destroying wealth on a truly staggering scale, its character, for the purposes of this study, is defined by the way it impoverishes preexisting frameworks of social meaning.

How this has happened is hardly a mystery; it is the direct result of overt political decision making. The aggressive programs of liberalization and structural reform—initiated by the weakening and collapse of the Bretton Woods agreements and then advanced in the 1980s under the guise of Reaganism and Thatcherism—have accelerated the flows of goods, services, labor, and capital on a worldwide scale. As Karl Polanyi (1957) pointed out many years ago, far from being natural or inevitable, “the market is an instituted process.” Within the European Union the three hundred or so legislative provisions that resulted from the Single European Act (1986), in concert with the “convergence criteria” for monetary union established under the provisions of the Maastricht Treaty (1992), are the means by which a “borderless” European capitalism is given ever increasing speed and freedom of operation among its member states.⁹ Though it is the outcome of very clear programs of technocratic reform, once given life this regime has elusive and far-reaching consequences, which are difficult to predict, let alone control politically.

Zygmunt Bauman (1997a) has focused on perhaps the single most important instance of this type of flattening and devaluation of social meaning, a type that can engender an epochal transformation of political economy. He shows that it is precisely in the definition of the “new poor” that the austerities and destructive force of fast-capitalism gain clarity:

The prospect of solidarity with the poor and desolate may be further, and decisively, undermined by the fact that, for the first time in human history, the poor, so to speak, have lost their social use. They are not the vehicle of personal repentance and salvation; they are not the hewers of wood and drawers of water, who feed and defend; they are not the “reserve army of labour,” nor the flesh and bones of military power either; and most certainly they are not the consumers who will provide the effective “market clearing” demand and start-up recovery. The new poor are fully and truly useless and redundant, and thus become burdensome “others” who have outstayed their welcome. (Bauman 1997a:5)

As fast-capitalism nullifies the instrumental relationships binding the poor and disadvantaged to a wider social nexus, an all encompassing conception of society is increasingly difficult, if not impossible, to sustain.

Rendering the new poor socially and morally “useless” demolishes the fulcrum on which classic formulations of social justice have historically been conceived. The apotheosis of a stark individualistic ethic, which promotes a disregard bordering on contempt for the disadvantaged, coincides with the creation of new ill-defined realms of alienation. Its consequence is the virtual expulsion of the “new poor” from the public sphere; the lives of these people only attain social recognition as the problem of the “underclass” who live an increasingly marginal and semilegal existence. Of course, it is not just the poor who are subject to this transmutation, who find their social claims undercut and social security compromised. Social mediation offered by class and status is broadly under threat, while conventional forms of protest and resistance are muted. As Baroness Thatcher has astringently averred, “society” itself appears increasingly implausible under the onslaught of this dissonant regime.

Strathern remarks on the radical implication of this disavowal of society, “What is breathtaking is that the leader of an elected political party [Margaret Thatcher] should have chosen the collectivist idiom to discard. What vanishes is the idea of society as *either* a natural *or* an artificial consociation. What also vanishes, then, are the grounds of class dialogue (the naturalness or artificiality of social divisions) that has dominated political debate and reform for the last two centuries” (Strathern 1992:144). She goes on to assess the consequences of this progression for political legitimacy and the resulting impoverished status of personhood within a degraded public sphere:

A government that does not identify with “society” not only out-radicalises the radicals, but consumes its mandate to govern. To bypass the idea of social legitimation, to interpret the electoral mandate as no more than the outcome of individual acts of choice, like so many multidimensional pathways, contributes to a kind of greenhouse effect. All that requires is maintaining our present levels of consumption. And all that requires is continuing to assimilate our own precepts—in this case for public figures to make explicit already held values concerning the propriety of individual choice. The self-gratification of the individual as consumer is then bounced back to the consumer in the form of publicly sanctioned individualism (“privatisation”). The exercise of individual choice becomes the only visible form of public behaviour. . . . [T]he result is to extract the person from its embedding in social relationships. (Strathern 1992:168–69)

Thus, the basic issue that links the first and second parts of the text is how we understand the broad-based transformations of society instilled by the operation of fast-capitalism. This issue is examined through the lens of an integralist politics, whose agile proponents decry these invidious transformations while exploiting the resulting disorder for their own unsettling political ends. Indeed, these integralists assert a highly contentious

theory of society—an illiberal, antimaterialist, authoritarian socialism—by which they propose to thwart the advance of fast-capitalism and its wide-ranging social repercussions.

FASCISM AND RACISM

Why not call integralist politics by a more conventional term like right-wing nationalism or fascism? There are, I believe, clear empirical, ethical, and theoretical reasons for this alternative usage. From observations and conversations with those partisans who articulate this kind of agenda—I interviewed the founders and/or leaders of nine of these political movements—to view them as either “right” or “left” wing is not simply misleading, but wrong. Drawing on populism, expressionism, and pluralism they create political orientations that defy easy placement along a single axis. In an emendation of George Valois’s famous pronouncement on fascism, as “neither right or left,” I argue in the following chapters that “integralism” creates a space in which an entangled politics arises that is *both* right and left. Indeed, it is precisely the unsettling potential of this kind of politics to join, fuse, merge, and synthesize what might appear to be incompatible elements that is at the heart of its distinctive power.

Integralism is often cloaked in the rhetoric of “nation,” but it diverges from what are understood to be more conventional formulations of “nationalism.” First, integralist nationalism is not oriented toward the progressive state-building, the *risorgimento*, of the nineteenth century or, for that matter, the postcolonial nationalism of the second half of the twentieth century (Anderson 1991; Gellner 1997; Greenfeld 1992). Indeed, as suggested earlier, it often materializes as a disparaging assessment of the secular nation-state. Second, when integralist agendas are scrutinized, it becomes clear that they encompass far more than fidelity to the idea of nation; rather, they draw authority from a wide range of collective practices that implicate family, town and country, language groups, religious communities, occupational statuses, social classes, and so on. The nationalism that imbues integralism consequently has a very specific intellectual character drawn from the proclivities of the Counter-Enlightenment and defined historically through an explicit repudiation of the principles of the French Revolution (Alter 1994:1–38; Berlin 1979:6–24; Herf 1986; Meinecke 1970).

Fascism poses a related set of challenges. Integralist groups often draw aggressively on the most forceful and unsavory elements of the fascist legacy, without themselves being or becoming “fascist,” much as socialist groups have historically drawn on Marx’s ideas without becoming Marxist. What this demands analytically is the scrutiny of various

integralist agendas in terms of their specific affinities with “fascism” without necessarily or definitively classifying them as such. To designate a cultural practice or political movement as “integralist” has, therefore, pragmatic value, insofar as it can circumvent disabling disputes over whether or not a phenomenon is, in fact, “fascist.”¹⁰ That said, there is no doubt that fascism is a form of integralism, as we will see in the second part of the text.¹¹ To negotiate this interface between integralism and fascism, I draw on the scholarship of Roger Eatwell, Roger Griffin, George Mosse, Stanley Payne, and, most important, Zeev Sternhell.

Thus, integralism, as I portray it in the following chapters, can veer toward a radical intellectual tradition that took form initially in France at the close of the nineteenth century, ostensibly as a broad-based, anti-materialist revision of Marxism.¹² Sternhell describes the characteristics of this Counter-Enlightenment movement that ultimately gave birth to fascism in the 1920s:

This political culture, communal, anti-individualistic, and antirationalistic, represented at first a rejection of the heritage of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution, and later the creation of a comprehensive alternative, an intellectual, moral, and political framework that alone could ensure the perpetuity of a human collectivity in which all strata and all classes of society would be perfectly integrated. Fascism wished to rectify the most disastrous consequences of modernization of the European continent and to provide a solution to the atomization of society, its fragmentation into antagonistic groups, and the alienation of the individual in a free market economy. Fascism rebelled against the dehumanization that modernization had introduced into human relationships, but it was also very eager to retain the benefits of progress and never advocated a return to a hypothetical golden age. Fascism rebelled against modernity inasmuch as modernity was identified with the rationalism, optimism, and humanism of the eighteenth century, but it was not a reactionary or an antirevolutionary movement. . . . Fascism presented itself as a revolution of another kind, a revolution that sought to destroy the existing [bourgeois] political order and to uproot its theoretical and moral foundations but that at the same time wished to preserve all the achievements of modern technology. It was to take place within the framework of the industrial society, fully exploiting that power that was in it. (1994:6–7)

Sternhell further notes, “fascism was only an extreme manifestation of a much broader and more comprehensive phenomenon” and “fascism was an integral part of the history of European culture” (1994:3). It is this broader phenomenon, deeply rooted in European cultural fears and aspirations that I seek to capture with the notion of integralism.¹³ By depicting the broad field of European integralism I have tried to show how this kind of politics can, but need not, follow a trajectory toward fascism. Indeed, as I argue in subsequent chapters, the degree to which integralist

agendas can influence and shape mainstream political discourse can render them a far more significant peril than any overt “fascist” or “neofascist” movement.

To deal with the specific issues of racism and anti-Semitism I have drawn on the vigorous contemporary scholarship of Gérard Noiriel, Verena Stolcke, Ann Laura Stoler, Pierre-André Taguieff, and Michel Wieviorka. By foregrounding the notion of integralism, however, my approach takes two unusual turns.

First, and most important, I have tried to treat the racism and anti-Semitism expressed by my informants, at least in part, on *their* terms. That is to say, I have sought to let them define the nature of human racial and cultural difference from the perspective of their own political positions. In some instances this yielded overt bigotry, in other cases, far more ambiguous, though no less troubling, testimony. In “giving voice” to what are obviously offensive and, at times, despicable political positions, I have by no means relinquished my responsibility to scrutinize them critically. My main concern, however, is to explore how critical perspectives can be formulated to understand the overarching integralist politics that frame these potentially malevolent representations of human difference.

Second, I have approached the question of racism and anti-Semitism from the standpoint of fundamental shifts and realignments of the concept of society itself. Gérard Noiriel’s work is relevant here because he sees Emile Durkheim’s endeavor to define “society” as an overt effort to thwart specifically a French integralist construal of the social order espoused most notably by Maurice Barrès. This confrontation provoked Durkheim’s classic distinction between “organic” and “mechanical” solidarity:

The Division of Labor in Society should be seen as the most radical critique ever written of rootedness in the land (*enracinement*). For Durkheim, the topics most often emphasized by his adversaries—the family, “ethnic group,” local environment, worship of ancestors, and heredity—belonged to the past, to the era of “mechanical solidarity,” when individuals were subordinated to groups and therefore deprived of true freedom. The modern world, he argued, had witnessed the triumph of organic solidarity. Progress in transportation and greater human mobility had gradually eroded the social function of attachment to the land. Values and knowledge were no longer transmitted directly by the family or through genealogy, from one generation to another, but *indirectly*, the past having become crystallized in the present through the materiality of monuments, of rules of law, and so on; hence the role of institutions (above all schools) in transmitting to “untamed” children (that is, children deprived of heredity) the culture of the society in which they were born. (Noiriel 1996:15)

Thus, one of the most influential modernist theories of society took form through a radical engagement with one of the most formidable integralist traditions rooted in the dark inner landscapes surveyed by Barrès and

later Charles Maurras. The legacy of Durkheim's theory—predicated on the triumph of “organic” solidarity—gained moral force as a central element in the project of social justice; it achieved organizational expression in the European labor movement; as a social democratic agenda it implanted welfarism at the heart of the project of the nation-state; and as a technocratic practice it shaped the political economy of the European Union (Rabinow 1989). The unforeseen retreat of this wide ranging societal agenda has opened the way for a tortuous resurgence of integralist politics and its tainted discrimination of human difference. Thus the formulation and the propagation of malevolent distinctions are examined in this text as linked intimately to a broader political struggle over fundamental definitions of society.

In sum, integralism can provide an analytical perspective from which various atavistic political formations are rendered as disconcertingly familiar rather than as alien phenomena. As I sought during the early phases of the research to distance myself from my informants' darkest demiurges, I found my analysis increasingly truncated and disabled. I also noted that it was precisely the impulse to denounce them as “racists” and “fascists” that has been shrewdly exploited by the leaders of these movements with what are potentially grave consequences. Integralism furnished an alternative stance; it allowed me to explore the precarious proximity of the ideas that infuse these cultural agendas to conventional political values, and hence to reveal their true danger and our abiding vulnerability to them.