THE NEW SCIENCE
OF
GIAMBATTISTA VICO

translated from the third edition (1744) by
THOMAS GODDARD BERGIN
and
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the translation now abridged and revised
and with a new introduction
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ABBREVIATIONS AND SIGNS

(References are to divisions or lines as numbered in Loeb Classical Library editions where such editions exist; otherwise to Teubner or other standard editions of the original texts.)

A. Aeneid of Vergil
   Annals of Tacitus
A.P. Art of Poetry (Ad Pisones) of Horace
   Poetics of Aristotle
C. Code of Justinian
C.D. City of God (Civitas Dei) of St. Augustine
D. Digest of Justinian
E. Nicomachean Ethics of Aristotle
G. Germany of Tacitus
H. History of Tacitus
I. Iliad of Homer
J. Institutes of Justinian
L. Law of War and Peace of Grotius
   Laws of Cicero
   Laws of Plato
M. Metaphysics of Aristotle
O. Odyssey of Homer
P. Politics of Aristotle
R. Republic of Plato
S. On the Sublime of Dionysius Longinus
   omitted phrase or clause
   omitted sentence or sentences
[ ] inserted by the translators (or, in a few cases, by Vico's editor, Nicolini)

Vico misremembers, misquotes, distorts, or misrepresents the sources to which he refers or on which he is presumably relying. (This sign might have been used with great frequency, but we have forborne. We content ourselves with a general caveat in this place and a reference to Nicolini's Commento storico for full particulars.)

Italicized square-bracketed numbers refer to the paragraphs of the text. Italicized square-bracketed combinations of a letter and a number refer to the paragraphs of the Introduction.
INTRODUCTION

PRINCIPI
DI
SCIENZA NUOVA
DI
GIAMBATTISTA VICO
D’INTORNO ALLA COMUNE NATURA
DELLLE NAZIONI . . . .

A1 Principles of New Science of Giambattista Vico concerning the Common Nature of the Nations . . . . So reads the title page of the third edition, which appeared in July 1744, six months after Vico's death. It is this edition that is here abridged and translated. The title of the first edition (1725) had contained an additional clause that was dropped in the second (1730) and third editions. That longer title ran: Principles of a New Science concerning the Nature of the Nations, by which are found the Principles of Another System of the Natural Law of the Gentes. A lost draft preceding that from which the first edition was printed seems to have borne the title New Science concerning the Principles of Humanity; and, in a letter accompanying a presentation copy of the first edition itself, Vico referred to it as his work on the principles of humanity.

A2 We propose to introduce both our translation and the science by explaining the title of the third edition. More exactly, we seek to make the title mean to the reader in advance what it might otherwise mean to him only after a careful study of the entire book. We shall begin with a general remark that
applies particularly to three of the terms of the title. After that, we shall consider the terms of the title one by one, in reverse order, beginning with the last and ending with the first. At convenient points, however, we shall digress to explain the phrase “Natural Law of the Gentes” in the title of the first edition [E1–8], and the phrase “principles of humanity” in the title of the lost draft [J1–5]. And at the end we shall try to explain why, though Vico’s new science is in fact a science of institutions, the term istituzione does not appear in the title, and occurs only once in the text [M1–10].

A3 Our general remark is that Vico was professor of Latin Eloquence at the University of Naples, and that in the years 1709–22 he had published four works in Latin before turning to Italian for the New Science. We should expect, therefore, that he would use Italian words of Latin origin with a lively sense of their etymological overtones. It only gradually becomes apparent to us, however, that, when he uses such words with emphasis, as when they are the key terms of a sentence or clause, it is usually the etymological meaning that is emphasized. This remark applies in particular to three terms in the title: principles [II–14], nature [CI–7], and nations [B1–9]. The etymological meaning of the first is “beginning”; of the second and third, “birth.” Thus, besides (or, as it often seems, instead of) their usual relatively abstract philosophical or scientific meanings, all three have a relatively concrete genetic meaning. It is the genetic meaning that is emphatic, and the technical meaning is either explicitly redefined genetically or, without redefinition, undergoes a displacement in that direction.

A4 The controlling methodological postulate of Vico’s new science is that doctrines or theories must begin where the matters they treat begin [314]. This is to assume that genesis, or becoming, is of the essence of that which the new science treats: that, at least for the new science, nascence and nature are the same. If we are not ready to grant this as a postulate for all science, we may perhaps grant it provisionally within the scope of Vico’s new science. Once we grant it, we are prepared to expect that “the common nature of nations” will turn out to be or to involve an ontogenetic pattern exhibited by each nation in its origin, development, maturity, decline, and fall [349, 393].

We proceed now to consider the terms of the title one by one, beginning with the last.

NATIONS

B1 A “nation” is etymologically a “birth,” or a “being born,” and hence a race, a kin or kind having a common origin or, more loosely, a common language and other institutions. (There is no reference to the modern national state as such, and no exclusive reference to political institutions.) In Vico’s usage, however, there are three differences of emphasis. In the first place, in his ideal or typical case, the important thing is not race or lineage but a system of institutions. In the second place, in his ideal or typical case, a nation is assumed to be isolated from other nations, not to insure purity of racial stock, but to insure that its system of institutions shall develop independently of every other, and that correspondences between one system and another shall not be ascribed to cultural diffusion. In the third place, a nation is identified not merely in cross section by a set of institutions shared by a group of people at a given time, but genetically by a system of institutions continually changing, whose changes are due not to external influences but to internal stresses, to a sort of internal logic in which, for example, the class struggle plays a principal role. There is not only an original and individual birth for each system but a continual birth of new institutions within it, a continual transformation of old institutions, and even a rebirth of the nation after death.

B2 Vico uses the term “nation” not only in this broad sense, for that which exhibits the entire ontogenetic pattern, but also in a narrower sense, for what is there only at maturity. In the latter case, he needs other terms for the earlier stages of social evolution. The most important of these is the Latin term gens (plural nominative gentes, plural genitive gentium), for which the Italian is gente (plural genti). In the technical sense, this term occurs only in the plural, and for Vico’s genti we use the
Latin plural gentes. This term also is used in a broader and in a narrower sense. In paragraph 982, for example, it occurs in the narrower sense: "On these boundaries were to be fixed the confines of families, then of gentes or houses, later of peoples, and finally of nations." In other passages, such as 531, Vico adopts and adapts the Latin distinction between major and minor gentes (gentes maiores, gentes minores) and identifies the former with the families and the latter with the peoples of gentile origin.

B3 The etymology of gens is the same as that of natio; that is, generation or begetting, genesis or birth. It has the same genetic emphasis [555f]. The importance of this term will appear when we come to "the natural law of the gentes" [E1].

B4 The adjective for the noun gens is "gentile." This adjective has two chief uses. One is a technical use in Roman law, where it denotes a degree of relationship for purposes of inheritance, as in Vico's recurring phrase "direct heirs, agnates, and gentiles" [110, 598, 985, 987, 988, 1023]. The other and much more frequent use is to emphasize the fact that the nations with whose nature the new science is concerned are the gentile nations. Such a nation as he contemplates is isolated in the first place from the Hebrew people, and only in the second place from other gentile nations [B1]. Vico, of course, never uses the redundant phrase "gentile gentes"; the term "gentes" has the emphatic meaning without the adjective. But we are to understand throughout that the families, gentes, peoples, and nations in question are gentile. All statements about the Hebrews are to be understood as asides or obiter dicta; they are no part of the science.

B5 The nations of which Vico speaks constitute a world, which he calls "the world of nations," il mondo delle nazioni; and the nature of the nations will be, or will be continuous with, the nature of this world. "World," mondo, has here the cosmic sense of the Greek kosmos and the Latin mundus, a beautiful order that has been created out of an ugly chaos [725]. The chaos in question was that of the confusion of human seeds by promiscuous intercourse [688] among the beasts into which the non-Hebraic descendants of Noah had degenerated; and the cosmos was, in the first place, that of the primitive institutions of religion, marriage, and burial, and especially that of marriage; and in the second place, the whole complex of social institutions that developed out of these primitive ones.

B6 The world of nations is a world constituted by all the gentile nations taken together, even at a time when they are as yet completely isolated from one another; a world not first created when these nations enter into relations of commerce, diplomacy, alliance, federation, and war and peace-by-treaty with one another, but a world then recognized as already there, though as undergoing further development in and through these relations [146].

B7 Over against the world of nations Vico sets the world of nature. The importance of this contrast will appear under the head of "Science" below [F3].

B8 Vico has other names for the world of nations. When he wants a phrase to balance "the natural world," as "world of nations" balances "world of nature," he uses most often the phrase "the civil world" [331]. That is, he uses the adjective corresponding to the noun "city" (as Aristotle uses "political" to correspond to polis, or city-state) rather than that corresponding to "nation." Still another name for the world of nations is "the world of men" [689, 690]. "Polity," "civility," and "humanity" are synonyms in Vico's language [I2, 783, 899].

B9 In a last name for the world of nations, Vico uses the term "city" in another way, for which Augustine's City of God is his precedent. He speaks of "this great city of the human race" [342] and even of "the great city of the nations, founded and governed by God" [1107]. It must be emphasized, however, that this is Augustinian's earthly city, or city of men, not his heavenly city, or city of God. The new science is a science of the former. It has nothing to do with the latter.

NATURE

C1 The genetic sense of "nature" is made quite explicit in paragraphs 147-148. We may apply what is there said to the particular case of nations somewhat as follows. The nature
(natura) of nations is nothing but their birth (nascimento) in certain times and in certain guises (guise, modes or modifications). Whenever the time and guise are thus and so, it is a nation and not something else that is born. The inseparable properties of nations must be due to the modification or guise with which nations are born. Of whatever has these properties, and is therefore a nation, we may be sure that the nature or birth (natura o nascimento) was thus and not otherwise.

C2 To illustrate, we may take what Vico supposes to be the very first step in the birth of a nation; namely, the birth of a religion, which coincides with the birth of Zeus or Jupiter or Jove, the first god of the gentile nations. In this case, the "certain time" was when the sky first thundered—a hundred years after the flood in Mesopotamia, two hundred elsewhere [192ff]. The certain guise was as follows. The descendants of Ham and Japheth and the non-Hebraic descendants of Shem, having wandered through the great forest of the earth for a century or two, had lost all human speech and institutions and had been reduced to bestiality, copulating at sight and inclination. These dumb beasts naturally took the thundering sky to be a great animated body, whose flashes and claps were commands, telling them what they had to do [377, 379]. The thunder surprised some of them in the act of copulation and frightened copulating pairs into nearby caves [387ff]. This was the beginning of matrimony and of settled life [504ff, 1098]. What might otherwise have been a random act, preceded by other such acts with other mates and succeeded by others with others, became a permanent lifelong companionship sanctified by the god of the thundering sky who had frightened them into the cave. The two institutions, religion and matrimony, have thus a common birth. Every other institution will have its nature, its time and guise of birth; and it is by the birth of all in due course that a nation is born and lives [13].

C3 It will be instructive to compare this genetic conception of the nature of nations with Aristotle's teleological conception of the nature of city-states, to which at first glance it seems diametrically opposed. "When several villages are united in a single complete community, large enough to be nearly or quite self-sufficing, the polis, or city-state, comes into existence, originating in the bare needs of life, and continuing in existence for the sake of a good life. And therefore, if the earlier forms of society are natural, so is the polis, for it is the end of them, and the nature of a thing is its end. For what each thing is when fully developed, we call its nature, whether we are speaking of a man, a horse, or a family. Besides, the final cause and end of a thing is the best, and to be self-sufficing is the end and the best. Hence it is self-evident that the polis is a natural institution, and that man is by nature a political or city-state animal." (Aristotle: Politics 1.2, Oxford translation slightly modified.)

C4 Vico seems at first to be saying that the nature of a thing is its beginning, and Aristotle that its nature is its end. On a closer look, however, the difference seems less radical. Both are genetic or developmental conceptions of nature. When Aristotle says that man is by nature a political animal, he means that he is an animal that becomes a man only in the polis. The question of the nature of man is a question of becoming; there is nothing more natural than becoming; and the becoming of the polis is as natural as that of man, because these are not two becomings but one.

C5 There was a standing distinction between nature on the one hand and nomos (law, contract, convention, arbitrary institution) on the other. The Sophists had exaggerated the distinction, and they had put man on the side of nature and the polis on the side of arbitrary institution. Aristotle meant to reduce the distinction, or at least to put man and polis on the same side of it rather than on opposite sides.

C6 Now Vico here agrees with Aristotle. When he calls the world of nations the world of men, he means that what were beasts in the world of nature become men in the world of nations, and it is by the becoming of the world of nations that they become men. Or, as he puts it otherwise, in a sense they make the world of nations, and in the same sense they make themselves by making it [367, 520, 692].

C7 Vico distinguishes three successive ages in the nature or development of nations—that of gods, that of heroes, and
that of men; and he distinguishes three corresponding natures—divine, heroic, and human [916ff]. It is true that this is only one of three senses in which he uses the term "human." In one sense, all three natures are human; in a second sense, the second and third in contrast with the first; in a third sense, the third in contrast with the first and second. But this third sense is the strict or proper sense of the term. That is, Vico identifies the nature of man more particularly with what men become in the third of the three ages. For example, in paragraph 973 he speaks of the "rational humanity" of the age of men as "the true and proper nature of man." In 927 this is called "the intelligent nature, which is the proper nature of man," and in 326 and 924 it is called "human reason fully developed." It may be concluded, therefore, that Vico does not really disagree with Aristotle's identification of a thing's nature with what it is when fully developed [15].

**COMMON**

**D1** It is obvious that in the phrase "common nature of nations," "common" is used in a sense different from that in which things and women are "common" in the comunione infame, the infamous commonness, or promiscuity, of the bestial vagrants in the forest. In that sense, common is the opposite of certain [321] and the effect of an institution of matrimony is that men become "certain fathers of certain children by certain women" [1098].

**D2** (In the first edition of our translation, for the comunione or commonness of this primeval chaos we put "communism." This was perhaps misleading, by suggesting a system of some sort, whereas Vico's comunione denotes a complete absence of system, prior to all institutions. In the present revision, we have rendered it "promiscuity." This also may mislead, by suggesting a defect of individual character in the midst of a society in which that defect is not common. Alas, the revision of translations is at best a matter in large part of substituting ways of misleading the reader less for ways of misleading him more.)

**D3** But again, in the phrase here in question, "common" does not, at least in the first instance, mean public, at large,
to digress and consider the last phrase of the title of the first edition [A1]. In that edition the title was: Principles of a New Science concerning the Nature of Nations, by which are found the Principles of Another System of the Natural Law of the Gentes. By "another system," Vico meant a new system, different from those of the seventeenth-century natural-law theorists, Grotius, Selden, and Pufendorf [394]. The sense of the title is that it is the principles of the common nature of nations which disclose the principles of the new system of the natural law of the gentes.

E2 Though Vico dropped this clause from the titles of his second and third editions, it was not because this topic had been omitted in those editions but only because it had become less prominent. His new "system of the natural law of the gentes" is still one of the "principal aspects" of the new science in the third edition [G3, 394]. Indeed, in our abridgment, beginning as it does with paragraph 31, we meet this aspect immediately in a sentence which would fit the first edition perfectly: "This New Science studies the common nature of nations in the light of divine providence, discovers the origins of institutions, religious and secular, among the gentile nations, and thereby establishes a system of the natural law of the gentes, which proceeds with the greatest equality and constancy through the three ages which the Egyptians handed down to us as the three periods through which the world had passed up to their time" [31]. In a series of chapters in the first edition, Vico had distinguished a first, a second, and a third "natural law of the gentes," proper, respectively, to the three ages he proceeds to distinguish, divine, heroic, human.

E3 From distinctions that were familiar in late if not already in classical Roman law, we may reach Vico's "natural law of the gentes" by the following route. The most general distinction was that between public law and private law. Under private law, a further distinction was made between civil law and ius gentium. Though ius gentium is literally translated by Vico as il diritto delle genti, and though we translate his phrase literally as "the law of the gentes," it is probable that ius gentium was an idiomatic phrase like ubi gentium, "where in the world,"
and meant "law everywhere prevailing," or "universal law." In any case, it was not international public law in the sense of law governing relations between nations; nor was it even international private law in the sense of law applied by international tribunals to relations between citizens or corporations of different nations. It was simply that part of the private law of Rome, or of any state, which was also a part of the private law of every other; whereas the civil law of each state was that part of its law which was peculiar to itself. But, further, the ius gentium, by virtue of being common to all peoples with whom the Romans had dealings, seemed to be a natural and necessary expression or condition of human society. It obtained everywhere because it was dictated by a natural reason shared by all men and perhaps by other animals. It was ius gentium just because it was ius naturale, or natural law. It need not follow that ius gentium and natural law were identical or even coextensive. One might, however, use the phrase ius gentium naturale for so much of the ius gentium as was also ius naturale; or the phrase ius naturale gentium for so much of the ius naturale as was also ius gentium. Either or both of these phrases might be used without prejudice to the further question whether there was ius gentium that was not natural law, or natural law that was not ius gentium. In this way we reach Vico's phrase, ius naturale gentium, or il diritto naturale delle genti, which we render "the natural law of the gentes." It remains to explain what he meant by it, and why we so translate it.

E4 We must begin by reminding the reader of a constant source of confusion and misunderstanding in English translations from the legal literature of continental Europe. English uses the one word "law" in two very different senses for which European languages have distinct and contrasting terms: Latin ius and lex, Italian diritto and legge, French droit and loi, Spanish derecho and ley, German Recht and Gesetz. The second term of each pair properly denotes enacted law, law which has been made law by the authority of some lawmaking body, at some time and place; law, therefore, by will. The first term of each pair denotes the legal order, structure, or system, conceived as, ideally at least, a rational whole; law, therefore, by reason. The distinction is between what is law because it has been so decided, and what is law because it is in itself straight, right, or reasonable. Thus, only the first term, not the second, could be used in translating such English expressions as "principles of law" or "philosophy of law." Now there are three equally unsatisfactory ways in which we might have sought to avoid misunderstanding of Vico in this connection. We might have kept the terms diritto and legge without translation. We might have put them in parentheses after the ambiguous translation "law": law (diritto), law (legge). Or we might have used subscripts: law₁ for legge, law₂ for diritto. We shall illustrate by using all three devices in the following paragraph.

E5 Vico deliberately sharpens the distinction between diritto and legge by starting with the distinction between custom (consuetudine) and law (legge) and then putting "the natural law of the gentes" under the former rather than under the latter. He lays down as an axiom Dio's dictum that "custom is like a king and law₁ like a tyrant; which we must understand as referring to reasonable custom and to law₁ not animated by natural reason." He says this axiom decides the dispute "whether law₁ resides in nature or in the opinion of men," or, what comes to the same thing, "whether man is naturally sociable." "In the first place, the natural law (diritto) of the gentes was instituted by custom (which Dio says commands us by pleasure like a king) and not by law (legge) (which Dio says commands us by force like a tyrant). For it began in human customs springing from the common nature of nations (which is the adequate subject of our Science) and it preserves human society. Moreover, there is nothing more natural (for there is nothing more pleasant) than observing natural customs (naturali costumi). For all these reasons, human nature, in which such customs have had their origin, is sociable" [308f].

E6 The reader will have perceived that this passage sheds some further light on the meaning of "nature" and "natural." Besides the genetic meaning, there is the closely related mean-
ing of spontaneity, of absence of reflection or deliberation. By contrast with the *ius gentium* as natural, the civil law will be that part of the law of a nation which, being peculiar to it, must have been deliberately adopted. There is an interesting passage in which Vico, rejecting the diffusion theory of culture and asserting the multiple-independent-origin theory [F5], argues that if "the natural law of the gentes" had spread by diffusion, it would in all places but that of its origin have had the character of imposed or of deliberately adopted law, and therefore of civil, not natural, law; which is contradictory. "... the natural law of the gentes ... has been thought to have come out of one first nation and to have been received from it by the others. ... If that had been the case, it would have been a civil law communicated to other peoples by human provision, and not a law which divine providence instituted naturally in all nations along with human customs themselves. On the contrary, as it will be one of our constant labors throughout this book to demonstrate, the natural law of the gentes had separate origins among the several peoples, each in ignorance of the others, and it was only subsequently, as a result of wars, embassies, alliances and commerce, that it came to be recognized as common to the entire human race" [146].

E7 Vico does not stop with the paradox that, on the diffusion theory, the natural law of the gentes would have existed by human foresight, provision, or providence. In rejecting that theory, he sets up over against it the theory of divine providence [F5-6]. But this is put forward not merely as an alternative theory adopted by Vico but as an idea associated from the beginning with the very idea of law. In Latin etymology, it was not uncommon in Vico's time to connect the term *ius* with the name *Iouis* or *Jovis*, Jove or Jupiter. Since a theory must begin where what it treats began [314], Vico's theory of "the natural law of nations" begins where law began, and that began not only in an act of divine providence but in a rudimentary form of the belief in divine providence [398].

E8 It remains to explain our not continuing, as we did in the first edition of our translation, to use the familiar phrase "law of nations" for *ius gentium* and il *diritto delle genti*. One reason is that Vico himself twice uses the phrase *diritto delle nazioni* and we wished to reserve "law of nations" for rendering those two passages [998, 1023]. A more important reason is that the phrase "law of nations" has become associated with international law, and we wished to avoid that confusion.

Lastly, in the complete phrase "natural law of nations," there would be greater risk of the term "natural law" arousing associations with the ideally just, the perfectly rational law which Vico calls "the natural law of the philosophers" [313, 1084].

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F1 The initial distinction here is that between *coscienza*, consciousness or conscience, and *scienza*, knowledge or science. *Coscienza* has for its object il *certo*, the certain; that is, particular facts, events, customs, laws, institutions, as careful observation and the sifting of evidence determine them to be; and *scienza* has for its object il *vero*, the true; that is, universal and eternal principles [137]. (Otherwise put, *scienza* is of the common [321].) The pursuit of *coscienza* of the certain is philology or history; the pursuit of *scienza* of the true or the common is philosophy. Thus far, *scienza* in the narrow sense. But it is in a wider sense that the term *scienza* is used in the title of Vico's work, and in that wider sense it embraces both philology and philosophy. "Philosophy contemplates reason, whence comes knowledge of the true; philology observes that of which human choice is author, whence comes consciousness of the certain. This axiom by its second part includes among the philologians all the grammarians, historians, critics, who have occupied themselves with the study of the languages and deeds of peoples: deeds at home, as in their customs and laws, and deeds abroad, as in their wars, peace, alliances, travels, and commerce. This same axiom shows how the philosophers failed by half in not giving certainty to their reasoning by appeal to the authority of the philologians, and likewise how the latter failed by half in not taking care to give their authority the sanction of truth by appeal to the reasoning of the

*There is one passage, however, in which Vico extends the phrase "natural law of the gentes" to include international law [632]. And in the first edition of the New Science he envisaged a "united nations of the world."
philosophers. If they had done this they would have been more useful to their commonwealths and they would have anticipated us in conceiving this Science" [138-140].

F2 So far we have satisfied the requirement that science should be knowledge of the universal and eternal [163]. But there was a requirement of equally long standing that science should be knowledge by causes, and the new science is even more emphatic in its claim to meet this requirement [345, 358, 630]. Not only so, but, along this line, Vico had developed a theory of knowledge according to which we can know, or have scienza of, only what we ourselves make or do. Thus, we can have scienza in mathematics, because we are there deducing the consequences of our own definitions, axioms, and postulates; and we can have scienza in physics to the extent of our capacity for experiment. But mathematics and physics fall short of perfect scienza. Mathematics falls short because its objects are fictions. Physics falls short because the scope of our experiments can never encompass nature as a whole.

F3 Scienza of the world of nature, in the strict sense, is therefore reserved for God, who made it. But scienza of the world of nations, the civil world, the world of human institutions, is possible for men, because men have made it, and its principles or causes "are therefore to be found within the modifications of our own human mind" [331]. Moreover, such scienza would have the advantage over physics of being complete, and the advantage over mathematics of being real. For, "as geometry, when it constructs the world of quantity out of its elements, or contemplates that world, is creating it for itself, just so does our Science [create for itself the world of nations], but with a reality greater by just so much as the institutions having to do with human affairs are more real than points, lines, surfaces, and figures are" [349].

F4 There are, however, two obvious objections to be met. (1) According to the Hebrew-Christian view of history, the basic institutions, both sacred and secular, were established by God or Christ. (2) The meaning of history, in that same view, is to be found in a single series of unique acts. In what sense, then, is scienza of the world of nations (1) knowledge of what men themselves have made, and in what sense is it (2) knowledge of universals?

F5 These objections are met (a) by excluding the Hebrew-Christian tradition and its institutions from the range within which the new science claims full competence, (b) by conceiving the world of the gentile nations as having indefinitely numerous independent origins [F6], such that in each nation the same "ideal eternal history" is exemplified, and (c) by distinguishing two kinds of providence: (1) the direct and transcendent providence of unique and special acts, which was a privilege of the chosen people, and (2) the immanent providence operating according to uniform laws and using means as natural and easy as human customs themselves, which was all the gentiles had [313]. Of these two kinds of providence, the former is incompatible with full human agency in the making of institutions, and so also is any combination of the former with the latter, but the latter by itself is not.

F6 It is not quite sufficient, however, to say that Vico held, in the case of gentile nations, a theory of providence that enabled him to answer the question how a science of the common nature of these nations is possible. The theory of providence is not merely a presupposition of the science but an integral part or "principal aspect" of it. As a presupposition, divine providence is an article of faith, under which the afore-said distinction is required in order that Vico may be free to take the first steps toward constructing his science. As a part or aspect of that science, his "rational civil theology of divine providence" [385] may best be understood as a hypothesis to account for what Wundt later called "the heterogeneity of ends"; that is, for the uniform ways in which, while consciously pursuing their particular ends, men have unconsciously served wider ends [342, 344, 1108]. (This may be compared also with Mandeville's earlier "private vices, public benefits," with Adam Smith's "invisible hand," and with Hegel's "cunning of reason." Vico may have had Mandeville in mind when he said that the "public virtue" of the heroic Romans was nothing but a good use which providence made of their "grievous, ugly and cruel private vices" [38].)
Though the Hebrew-Christian tradition is formally excluded from the range within which Vico's science claims full competence, and though Vico notes many decisive differences between the Hebrews and the gentiles [126, 165ff, 301, 313, 329, 350, 369ff, 401, 948], he nevertheless draws many parallels between Hebrew and gentile history and institutions [165, 423, 433, 527, 530, 533, 557, 715]. Moreover, the distinction loses importance, if it does not quite disappear, in the second cycle of ages in Christian Europe.

This will perhaps suffice to indicate in what sense Vico's work claimed to be science, and how, on his premises, a science of its scope and nature was possible.

NEW

G1 Though Vico wrote and published in the eighteenth century, he was a child of the seventeenth, "the century of genius." He was born in 1668 and he attained in 1699 the professorship of rhetoric which he held until his retirement. Now the seventeenth century is marked, above all others, by the frequency with which, in the titles of scientific and pseudo-scientific works, such words as "new" and "unheard of" appear. It was more honorable to create a new science singlehanded than to continue or extend or even to revolutionize an old one. Vico lived in Naples, which was then near the fringe or frontier of the learned world in which this fever and pride of novelty was epidemic. Naples had, however, in the Academy of the Investigators, an active cell in which the new sciences and the new philosophies of the century were cultivated, and in which some contributions to them were made. It was almost certainly by this Academy that the ambition to found a new science was aroused and sustained in Vico. But the novelties of the seventeenth century had been chiefly in mathematics, in the physical and biological sciences, and in medicine. Vico's ambition was to create a science of human society, a science that should do for "the world of nations" what men like Galileo and Newton had done for "the world of nature" [B5–7, F2–3]. Now Vico does not claim that his is the first attempt at such a science; he claims only that it is the first successful attempt. The only predecessors to whom he refers are the natural-law theorists [394] and Hobbes.

G2 Hobbes had indeed made a claim similar to Vico's when he boasted that "civil philosophy" was no older than his own De cive (1642). In Vico's eyes, Hobbes had attempted something much closer to his own new science than in fact Hobbes had intended; namely, the study of "man in the whole society of the human race"—"l'uomo in tutta la società del gener umano" [179]. But Hobbes failed, and the reason for his failure was that he thought it possible to derive human society from human deliberation, counsel, and provision, and did not see that gentile society could have arisen only by divine providence.

G3 Vico had himself begun by attempting only "a new system of the natural law of the gentes" to take the place of that of the natural-law theorists. He first conceived the new science in connection with this attempt. Only gradually did the new science itself come to seem important in its own right, and not merely as a foundation on which to build the new system. The new system then dropped into place as merely one of the "principal aspects" of the new science [E2]. Thus, Vico does not ascribe to the natural-law theorists an intent as close to his own as he thinks Hobbes's was. But the natural-law theorists failed, he says, in what they did attempt; and they failed "by beginning in the middle; that is, with the latest times of the civilized nations (and thus of men enlightened by fully developed natural reason) from which the philosophers emerged and rose to meditation of a perfect idea of justice" [394]. That is, what they give us is "the natural law of the philosophers," the ideally just law, and not "the natural law of the gentes," which was a law of force [1084].

G4 If Vico errs, it is in ascribing to his predecessors intentions nearer his own than they in fact were. And if we look further, within or beyond the range of the authors he cites, we shall find not even a remote approach to what he has done. In the end, therefore, if we concede that what he has done is science, we must also concede that it is new science.
GIAMBATTISTA VICO'S

H1 The science concerning the common nature of nations not only is new but is Vico's. It is not a work of collaboration, not a synthesis of results previously attained by others and waiting only to be brought together, organized, and given the form of a science. It is a science in which not even the first steps could be taken until a certain discovery was made. Vico had himself made that discovery, and it was only when he was in possession of it that he was able to proceed to construct the science. "To discover the way in which this first human thinking arose in the gentile world, we encountered exasperating difficulties which have cost us the research of a good twenty years. [We had] to descend from these human and refined natures of ours to those quite wild and savage natures, which we cannot at all imagine and can comprehend only with great effort" [338]. "We find that the principle of these origins both of languages and of letters lies in the fact that the early gentile peoples, by a demonstrated necessity of nature, were poets who spoke in poetic characters. This discovery, which is the master key of this Science, has cost us the persistent research of almost all our literary life, because with our civilized natures we [moderns] cannot at all imagine and can only understand by great toil the poetic nature of these first men" [34].

H2 It was because the natural-law theorists and Hobbes had not made this discovery and were not in possession of this key that they could not so much as make a beginning of the new science, whatever intimations of it may be found in their works.

PRINCIPLES

11 We have already noted the systematic ambiguity and the genetic emphasis which the term "principles" shares with the terms "nature" and "nations" [A3]. We must now notice that the term "principles" occurs not only in the title of the work as a whole but also in the title of Book One, Dello stabilimento de' principi, "Of the Establishment of the Principles," and in that of Section III of Book One, De' principi, "Of the Principles."

12 Let us begin with the innermost box of the nest and work outward. The principles of Section III of Book One are the primary institutions of religion, marriage, and burial [330–337]. These are principles in the sense that they are the necessary and sufficient generative conditions of the gens, the minimal society that can outlive its members and thus make possible an evolution of culture. "Now since this world of nations has been made by men, let us see in what institutions all men have perpetually agreed and still agree. For these institutions will be able to give us the universal and eternal principles (such as every science must have) on which all nations were founded and on which they still preserve themselves" [332]. Farther on, in Section IV: "In reasoning of the origins of institutions, religious and secular, in the gentile world, we reach those first beginnings beyond which it is vain curiosity to demand others earlier; and this is the defining character of principles. We explain the particular guises of their birth, that is to say their nature, the explanation of which is the distinguishing mark of science. And finally these origins are confirmed by the eternal properties the institutions preserve, which could not be what they are if the institutions had not come into being just as they did, in those particular times, places, and guises, which is to say with those particular natures" [346].

13 What Vico has done is to trace the origin of gentile society and thereby of gentile humanity to the origins of these three institutions, and to show how the rest of culture is involved in or derives from them. For a summary statement of the way in which everything grows out of religion, for example, the reader is referred to paragraph 629. But Vico gives little attention to the transformations of these institutions in the later stages of social evolution.

14 In the title of Book One itself, "Of the Establishment of the Principles," it may appear that the same term, if it applies to all four sections, must mean the principles of the science itself. These would then be: (1) the chronological table and the annotations upon it, in which the essential philosophical materials are put in order; (2) the elements in the Euclidian sense, that is to say the axioms, definitions, and
postulates; (3) the principles in the narrow sense above indicated; (4) the method. That is, out of these materials, by means of these elements, starting from these principles, and using this method, Vico proposes in the subsequent books to construct (a) the world of nations and (b) the science of that world.

15 But it may be that even here the principles are at least primarily those of Section III. This would appear from the last paragraph of Section IV, where Vico says: "From all that has been set forth in general concerning the establishment of the principles of this Science, we conclude that, since its principles are (1) divine providence, (2) marriage and therewith moderation of the passions, and (3) burial and therewith immortality of human souls . . ." [360].

16 It is worth noting, perhaps, that two of these institutions, religion and marriage, along with two others not here included, asylums and the first agrarian law, are later referred to as causes and "as it were, four elements of this civil world" [630].

17 In the title of the work as a whole, we might expect that the term "principles" should mean not merely the principles as such but the science and the world of nations as constructed from those principles; much in the way that by Euclid's Elements we understand not merely the elements in the strict sense—that is, the definitions, axioms, and postulates—but the system of geometry constructed from those elements.

18 But just as Euclid's Elements as a system is susceptible of indefinite further development without addition to or change in the definitions, axioms, or postulates, so Vico's new science is susceptible of indefinite further development without change in its principles, whether in the narrower or in the wider sense. By beginning his title "Principles of New Science," that is, Vico disclaims any pretension to completeness. Of the seven principal aspects of the science [385-399], none is completed within Vico's work. This is particularly evident in the case of the third, "a history of human ideas," or intellectual history. Of one passage coming under this head [1040ff], Vico says that it may serve as "a particle of the history of philosophy narrated philosophically" [1043].

19 Vico speaks several times of a Mental Dictionary of which he had given a specimen in the first edition of the New Science, of which he gives another example in this edition [473-482], and of which he says he makes continual use. But the Dictionary itself remains a project barely begun.

10 Vico prophesies that scholars of the German language will make marvelous discoveries if they apply themselves to seeking its origins in the light of his principles [153, 471].

11 Though the new science is thus confessedly incomplete in execution, it does claim to be perfect in idea or conception. In making this claim (which he does only indirectly), Vico quotes from a famous passage in Seneca's Natural Questions, near the end of his chapter on comets. In ancient times there were various theories about the "planets," or "wanderers," that reduced their movements to law, but no such law had been discovered for comets. Seneca takes the view that their movements are lawful like those of the planets, but that we so far lack sufficient observations for determining their orbits. When a future age shall have accumulated sufficient data, we may expect that their orbits too will be plotted. Speaking of the world of nature at large, Seneca adds: "Many discoveries are reserved for the ages still to be, when our memory shall have perished. The world is a poor affair if it do not contain matter for investigation for the whole world in every age" [1096].

112 We are tempted to say that whereas Seneca was obviously speaking of the world of nature, Vico means by "this world" the world of nations, and means merely that this world, as well as the world of nature, will yield fresh discoveries to the researches of all future ages. But Vico's memory has given a twist to Seneca's second sentence, changing nisi in illo quod quaret to nisi id, quod quaret, so that the meaning is not "unless it holds something for all the world to seek," but "unless it holds what all the world seeks." It appears, therefore, that "this world" is the new science itself; or, if not that, the world of nations as constructed in and by the new science; or the model world of the "ideal history of the eternal laws which are instanced by the deeds of all nations." [1096]. And
what Vico means is that the model world of his science is a poor affair unless whatever future ages discover in the actual history of nations and then look for in his model is found to be covered by "the ideal history" of the model; that is, is seen to be an instance of one or more of the "eternal laws." It is this capacity of a science to accommodate future observations and the results of future experiments that is the mark of a science that is "perfect in its idea."

113 This raises the question what degree of conformity with empirical fact Vico considered necessary to confirm the principles of his science. The answer to this question is clear from the third chapter of Book Five [1088ff], the chapter which concludes with the misquotation from Seneca. Vico admits that the nations which do not quite conform to his ideal eternal history are more numerous than those that do. In the ancient world of nations, only Rome approximates it at all closely; in the modern, only certain European nations. The deviations and deformations require special explanations. For example, in the new world across the Atlantic, "the American Indians would now be following this course of human institutions if they had not been discovered by the Europeans" [1095]. But the general explanation provided by the model suffices for the typical or exemplary nations.

114 But even in the title of the work as a whole, the term "principles" retains the genetic meaning, at least as an overtone; both in the sense that Vico's work presents only the beginnings of the new science and in the sense that the part it presents is focused on the beginnings of the world of nations. Vico has dealt in some detail with the most difficult part of the science, the origins of the institutions which constitute that world; he has dealt only briefly with the beginnings of the second cycle in Europe; beyond that there are only scattered indications. So there is plenty for further workers to do, even within the first two cycles. There is matter for the researches of all ages to come, in Seneca's sense. But whatever those ages find, the new science will be found to have contained in principle.

PRINCIPLES OF HUMANITY

J1 Preceding the draft from which the first edition of the New Science was printed in 1725, there was a quite different draft, since lost, which seems to have borne the title New Science concerning the Principles of Humanity. In a letter accompanying a presentation copy of the first edition itself, Vico referred to it as his work on the "principles of humanity." And within the work itself in its third edition, the phrase "principles of humanity" occurs now and then [123, 163, 338].

J2 We may safely take it that the phrase "principles of humanity" is at least roughly equivalent to the phrase "common nature of nations." But this means that the term "humanity" is at least roughly equivalent to the terms "civility" and "polity" [B8]. And it means further that the term "humanity," like the terms "nature," "nation," and "principle," has a genetic sense. The principles of humanity are the principles by which creatures who are not men become men [C6]. The principles by which the kosmos or world of nations is generated out of the chaos of the infamous bestial commonness or promiscuity of things and women are the same principles by which the men-beasts of the bestial wandering in the great forest of the earth settle down and humanize themselves [B5].

J3 It is not any and every sort of bestiality out of which humanity can be generated, and in order to obtain as his raw material beasts that have it in them to become men, Vico, as a good Catholic, starts from the universal flood and allows two centuries for the descendants of Ham and Japheth and the non-Hebraic descendants of Shem to lapse into a bestiality suitable for his purpose [C2].

J4 Vico shares with the Marxists and existentialists the negative view that there is no human essence to be found in individuals as such, and with the Marxists the positive view that the essence of humanity is the ensemble of social relations, or the developing system of institutions.

J5 We have already remarked [C7], in connection with the three ages—gods, heroes, men—that there is a weak sense
the sort. Since they founded humanity by creating institutions, they were poets in the Greek sense of makers or creators. To be good at making anything is doubtless in some sense to know how to make it, and the "know-how" is doubtless a sort of knowledge or wisdom. But what sense, and what sort? It was the discovery of the nature of this poetic or creative wisdom, the wisdom of the poets or makers of human institutions, that was the master key of the new science; a discovery which had cost Vico the research of a good twenty years [338]. "In such fashion the first men of the gentile nations, children of nascent mankind, created things according to their own ideas. But this creation was infinitely different from that of God. For God, in his purest intelligence, knows things, and, by knowing them, creates them; but they, in their robust ignorance, did it by virtue of a wholly corporeal imagination. And because it was quite corporeal, they did it with marvelous sublimity; a sublimity such and so great that it excessively perturbed the very persons who by imagining did the creating, for which they were called 'poets,' which is Greek for 'creators' " [376].

Vico went so far as to discern in this poetic wisdom the crude beginnings of the arts and sciences: a poetic or creative metaphysics, out of which there developed in one direction logic, morals, economics, and politics, all poetic; and in

"To illustrate, the branch of logic called topics, as developed by Aristotle and later authors, was the theory of the art of employing common "places" (topoi) for the purpose of inventing probable arguments concerning matters of fact, and eventually of discovering the most probable; for instance, the most probable explanation of a given fact or class of facts, such as thunder. What Vico does in this case is to trace the art back to what he calls the "sensory topics" [495] of primitive men. It was by a topos, or common "place" (startling sounds are likely in the first "place" to be utterances of some being or other), that primitive men passed from the thundering sky to Jupiter Tonans, Jove the Thunderer; but this was a "sensory" topos in that the passage had the immediacy of feeling rather than the discursiveness of deliberate inference. To be hearing thunder was to be listening to Jove. Only by a much later criticism could observed fact and invented explanation be distinguished, and only then could the topos itself be identified and formulated, and rules for its use drawn up."
of its insights, or repeat its content in different forms; and Book Five does for the second cycle of ages what Book Two has done for the first cycle.

Presumably the new science, a creation of the eighteenth century, itself belongs to that "New World of the Sciences" which Bacon envisaged. But it is a science which faces in the opposite direction. Though created in the second-cycle age of men, its creation has been made possible by a return to the poetic wisdom by which the world of nations was first created. In devoting half the book to poetic wisdom, Vico exhibits scientific and philosophic wisdom seeking to know itself by recovering its own origins in vulgar or poetic or creative wisdom. In doing this, it becomes itself creative, or re-creative. Doubtless all science is in some sense constructive, but the new science is so in a special way. For in this science, philosophic or scientific wisdom comprehends, though with the greatest difficulty [338], that vulgar or creative wisdom which is the origin and presupposition of all science and all philosophy. The new science, like all science, must begin where its subject matter begins. But its subject matter is institution-building wisdom, and that began with the first beginnings of institutions (when men first "began to think humanly" [338]). Geometry need not begin where surveying began, nor mechanics where machine-building began, nor chemistry where cooking, smelting, and dyeing began. Perhaps botany must begin where plants began, but it need not inquire when, where, and how botanizing began. But the new science must inquire when, where, and how it itself began. It is Vico's in one sense [H1–2], and in another sense it is simply the coming to self-consciousness of the institution-building wisdom which is as old as the building of institutions. The sciences are themselves institutions, and the same vulgar wisdom that created families, commonwealths, and laws, created also a poetic metaphysics, logic, morals, economics, politics, physics, etc., so that the new science re-creates itself by re-creating the first science, that of augury or divination, out of which all the others grew [365, 391, 661, 734]. Thus wisdom comes full circle in the new science.
The primary meaning of this term will be apparent if we compare the titles of Books Four and Five: _Del corso che fanno le nazioni_, “Of the Course That the Nations Run”; and _Del ricorso delle cose umane nel risurgere che fanno le nazioni_, “Of the Recourse of Human Institutions That the Nations Take in Rising Again” (or “Of the Recourse of Human Institutions in the Resurrection of Nations”). That Vico means the two titles to be taken together and to interpret each other appears from paragraph 393: “Wherever, emerging from savage, fierce, and bestial times, men begin to domesticate themselves by religion, they begin, proceed, and end by those stages which are investigated here in Book Two, to be encountered again in Book Four, where we shall treat of the course the nations run, and in Book Five, where we shall treat of the recourse of human institutions.”

Course and recourse, as in the flow and ebb of the tides, may mean traversing the same stages in opposite directions; or recourse may mean simple recurrence, a coming back or around of some particular event or state of affairs; but the strongest and most literal meaning is a retraversing of the same stages in the same order. This is the meaning of the term in the title of Book Five and in the titles of its first two chapters.

But the term “recourse” has a further meaning. A _ricorso_ does not, like the recurrence of a cosmic cycle, merely repeat the _corso_. It is a historical, not a purely natural, process, and it has the legal sense of a retrial or appeal. Since the historical _corso_ has not received justice, it must, as it were, appeal to a higher court for a rehearing of its case. The highest court of justice, however, is providential history as a whole; and it requires an age of disintegration and oversophistication, of “the barbarism of reflection,” in order to return to the creative barbarism of sense and thus begin anew. As in the famous verse which Hegel later adapted from Schiller’s poem _Resignation_, “the history of the world is the Last Judgment” — “_die Weltgeschichte ist das Weltgericht._”
whether law exists by nature, or whether man is naturally so-
ciable, which comes to the same thing [309]. 136 This same
axiom, together with VII and its corollary, proves that man
has free choice, however weak, to make virtues of his passions;
but that he is aided by God, naturally by divine providence
and supernaturally by divine grace [310].

ix 137 Men who do not know what is true of things take
care to hold fast to what is certain, so that, if they cannot
satisfy their intellects by knowledge (scienza), their wills at
least may rest on consciousness (coscienza) [F1].

x 138 Philosophy contemplates reason, whence comes
knowledge of the true; philology observes that of which human
choice is author, whence comes consciousness of the certain
[I63, 325]. 139 This axiom by its second part includes
among the philologians all the grammarians, historians, crit-
ics, who have occupied themselves with the study of the lan-
guages and deeds of peoples: both at home, as in their customs
and laws, and abroad, as in their wars, peaces, alliances,
travels, and commerce. 140 This same axiom shows how
the philosophers failed by half in not giving certainty to their
reasonings by appeal to the authority of the philologians, and
likewise how the latter failed by half in not taking care to give
their authority the sanction of truth by appeal to the reason-
ing of the philosophers. If they had done this they would have
been more useful to their commonwealths and they would have
anticipated us in conceiving this Science [F1].

xi 141 Human choice, by its nature most uncertain, is made
certain and determined by the common sense of men with
respect to human needs or utilities, which are the two sources
of the natural law of the gentes.

xii 142 Common sense is judgment without reflection,
shared by an entire class, an entire people, an entire nation, or
the entire human race [D4]. 143 This axiom, with the fol-
lowing definition, will provide a new art of criticism concern-
ing the founders of nations, who must have preceded by more
than a thousand years the writers with whom criticism has so
far been occupied [392].
Uniform ideas originating among entire peoples unknown to each other must have a common ground of truth [D4]. This axiom is a great principle which establishes the common sense of the human race as the criterion taught to the nations by divine providence to define what is certain in the natural law of the gentes [321f]. And the nations reach this certainty by recognizing the underlying agreements which, despite variations of detail, obtain among them all in respect of this law. Thence issues the mental dictionary [162] for assigning origins to all the diverse articulated languages. It is by means of this dictionary that the ideal eternal history [245] is conceived, which gives us the histories in time of all nations. . . . This same axiom does away with all the ideas hitherto held concerning the natural law of the gentes, which has been thought to have come out of one first nation and to have been received from it by the others. This error was encouraged by the bad example of the Egyptians and Greeks in vainly boasting that they had spread civilization throughout the world. It was this error that gave rise to the fiction that the Law of the Twelve Tables came to Rome from Greece [284f]. If that had been the case, it would have been a civil law communicated to other peoples by human provision, and not a law which divine providence instituted naturally in all nations along with human customs themselves. On the contrary, as it will be one of our constant labors throughout this book to demonstrate, the natural law of the gentes had separate origins among the several peoples, each in ignorance of the others, and it was only subsequently, as a result of wars, embassies, alliances, and commerce, that it came to be recognized as common to the entire human race [B6, E6, 550].

The nature of institutions is nothing but their coming into being (nascimento) at certain times and in certain guises. Whenever the time and guise are thus and so, such and not otherwise are the institutions that come into being.

The inseparable properties of institutions must be due to the modification or guise with which they are born. By these properties we may therefore verify that the nature
gods and of heroes. The Romans, on the other hand, proceeding at an even pace in [the development of] their customs, quite lost sight of the history of their gods... but preserved in vulgar speech their heroic history, which extends from the time of Romulus to the Publilian and Petelian laws [104-115], and which will be found to be a continuous historic mythology of the Greek age of heroes.

159 This nature of human civil institutions is confirmed by the example of the French nation. For in the midst of the barbarism of the twelfth century there was opened the famous Parisian school where Peter Lombard, the celebrated master of the Sentences, began to lecture on the subtlest scholastic theology. And, like a Homeric poem, there still lived on the history of Bishop Turpin of Paris, full of all those fables of the heroes of France called paladins which were later to fill so many romances and poems. And because of this premature passage from barbarism to the subtlest sciences, French remained a language of the greatest refinement. So much so, indeed, that of all living languages it seems most to have restored to our times the atticism of the Greeks, and it is the best of all languages for scientific reasoning, as Greek was. Yet French preserves, as Greek did, many diphthongs, which are natural to a barbarous tongue still stiff and inept at combining consonants with vowels [461].

In confirmation of what we have said of both these languages, we may here add an observation in regard to young people at an age when memory is tenacious, imagination vivid, and invention quick. At this age they may profitably occupy themselves with languages and plane geometry, without thereby subduing that acerbity of minds still bound to the body which may be called the barbarism of the intellect. But if they pass on while yet in this immature stage to the highly subtle studies of metaphysical criticism or algebra, they become overfine for life in their way of thinking and are rendered incapable of any great work.

160 But as we further meditated this work we came upon another cause for the effect in question, and this cause is perhaps more apposite. Romulus founded Rome in the midst of other more ancient cities of Latium, and founded it by opening there the asylum which Livy defines generally as "an old counsel of founders of cities" (ceterus urbes condentium consilium) [114]; for since violence still reigned he naturally established the city of Rome on the same institution on which the oldest cities of the world had been founded [561]. And so it came about, since Roman customs were developing from such beginnings at a time when the vulgar tongues of Latium were already well advanced, that Roman civil institutions, the like of which the Greeks had set forth in heroic speech, were set forth by the Romans in vulgar speech. Thus ancient Roman history will be found to be a continuous mythology of the heroic history of the Greeks. And this must be the reason why the Romans were the heroes of the world. For Rome subdued the other cities of Latium, then Italy, and finally the whole world, because heroism was still young among the Romans, whereas among the other peoples of Latium, from whose conquest all the greatness of Rome sprang, it must already have begun to decay.

XXII 161 There must in the nature of human institutions be a mental language common to all nations, which uniformly grasps the substance of things feasible in human social life and expresses it with as many diverse modifications as these same things may have diverse aspects. A proof of this is afforded by proverbs or maxims of vulgar wisdom, in which substantially the same meanings find as many diverse expressions as there are nations ancient and modern [445]. 162 This common mental language is proper to our Science, by whose light linguistic scholars will be enabled to construct a mental vocabulary common to all the various articulate languages living and dead [D6, 482]. . . As far as our small erudition will permit, we shall make use of this vocabulary in all the matters we discuss.

163 Of the propositions so far stated, I-IV give us the basis for refuting all opinions hitherto held about the principles of humanity [J1]. The refutations turn on the improbabilities, absurdities, contradictions, and impossibilities of these opinions. Propositions V-XV, which give us the foundations of the true,
will serve for considering this world of nations in its eternal idea, by that property of every science, noted by Aristotle, that science has to do with what is universal and eternal (scientia debet esse de universalibus et aeternis) [F2, 332]. Propositions XV[1]–XXII will give us the foundations of the certain. By their use we shall be able to see in fact this world of nations which we have studied in idea, following the method of philosophizing that Francis Bacon, Lord of Verulam, did most to render certain, but carrying it over from the things of nature, on which he composed his book Cogitata [et] visa, to the civil institutions of mankind [137f]. 164 The propositions set forth above are general and are the basis of our Science throughout; those which follow are particular and provide more specific bases for the various matters it treats of.

XXIII 165 Sacred history is more ancient than all the most ancient profane histories that have come down to us, for it narrates in great detail and over a period of more than eight hundred years the state of nature under the patriarchs; that is, the state of the families, out of which, by general agreement of political theorists, the peoples and cities later arose [F7]. Of this family state profane history has told us nothing or little, and that little quite confused. 166 This axiom proves the truth of sacred history as against the national conceit pointed out to us by Diodorus Siculus [125], for the Hebrews have preserved their memories in great detail from the very beginning of the world.

XXIV 167 The Hebrew religion was founded by the true God on the prohibition of the divination on which all the gentile nations arose [365, 381]. 168 This axiom is one of the principal reasons for the division of the entire world of the ancient nations into Hebrews and gentiles [F7].

XXV 169 That the flood was world-wide is proved ... by physical histories discerned in the fables [194, 380].

XXVI 170 The giants were by nature of enormous build, like those monstrous and fierce creatures which travelers report finding at the foot of America, in the country of the so-called Patagones [Big Feet]. Ignoring the vain, abortive, and false reasons adduced for these creatures by the philosophers

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did not appear until some two thousand years after the gentile nations were founded [E8]. On account of their failure to observe these differences between the three [natural laws], the three systems of Grotius, Selden, and Pufendorf must fall.

CVI 314 Doctrines must take their beginning from that of the matters of which they treat [A4]. 315 This axiom, placed here for [its application to] the particular matter of the natural law of the gentes, is universally used in all the matters which are herein discussed. It might have been laid down among the general axioms [I–XXII]; but it has been placed here because in this more than any other particular matter its truth and the importance of using it are apparent.

CVII 316 The [first] gentes began before the cities; they were called by the Latins the greater gentes or ancient noble houses, like those of the Roman fathers of whom Romulus constituted the senate and, with the senate, the city of Rome. On the other hand, the new noble houses founded after the cities were called the lesser gentes; those, for example, with whose fathers Junius Brutus, after the expulsion of the kings, replenished the senate when it had been depleted by the deaths of the senators executed by order of Tarquinius Superbus [631].

CVIII 317 There was a corresponding twofold division of the gods [392, 734]. First, there were those of the greater gentes; that is, gods who were consecrated by the families before the time of the cities. Among the Greeks and Latins these were certainly twelve [642], and among the Greeks their number was so well known that they were called simply “the twelve.” . . . (In Book Two, following a natural theogony, or generation of the gods, framed naturally in the minds of the Greeks, they will be set forth in this order: Jove [502], Juno [511]; Diana [528], Apollo [533]; Vulcan, Saturn, Vesta [549]; Mars, Venus [562]; Minerva [589], Mercury [604]; Neptune [634].) Secondly, there were the gods of the lesser gentes; that is to say, those consecrated later by the peoples; for example Romulus, whom after his death the Roman people called the god Quirinus.

318 By these three axioms the three systems of Grotius,
[Section III]

PRINCIPLES [I 1–3]

330 Now, in order to make trial whether the propositions hitherto enumerated as elements of this Science can give form to the materials prepared in the Chronological Table at the beginning, we beg the reader to consider what has hitherto been written concerning the principles of any subject in the whole of gentile knowledge, human and divine. Let him then see if it is inconsistent with the above propositions, whether with all or some or one. For inconsistency with one of them would amount to inconsistency with all, since each accords with all. Certainly on making such a comparison he will perceive that all that has so far been written is a tissue of confused memories, of the fancies of a disordered imagination; that none of it is begotten of intelligence, which has been rendered useless by the two conceptions enumerated in the Axioms [125, 127]. For on the one hand the conceptions of the nations, each believing itself to have been the first in the world, leaves us no hope of getting the principles of our Science from the philologians. And on the other hand the conceptions of the scholars, who will have it that what they know must have been eminently understood from the beginning of the world, makes us despair of getting them from the philosophers. So, for purposes of this inquiry, we must reckon as if there were no books in the world.

331 But in the night of thick darkness enveloping the earliest antiquity, so remote from ourselves, there shines the eternal and never failing light of a truth beyond all question: that the world of civil society has certainly been made by men, and that its principles are therefore to be found within the modifications of our own human mind. Whoever reflects on this cannot but marvel that the philosophers should have bent all their energies to the study of the world of nature, which, since God made it, He alone knows; and that they should have neglected the study of the world of nations, or civil world [B5], which, since men had made it, men could come to know [F2–3]. This aberration was a consequence of that infirmity of the human mind by which, immersed and buried in the body, it naturally inclines to take notice of bodily things, and finds the effort to attend to itself too laborious; just as the bodily eye sees all objects outside itself but needs a mirror to see itself [236].

332 Now since this world of nations has been made by men, let us see in what institutions all men agree and always have agreed. For these institutions will be able to give us the universal and eternal principles (such as every science must have [163]) on which all nations were founded and still preserve themselves [12].

333 We observe that all nations, barbarous as well as civilized, though separately founded because remote from each other in time and space, keep these three human customs: all have some religion, all contract solemn marriages, all bury their dead. And in no nation, however savage and crude, are any human actions performed with more elaborate ceremonies and more sacred solemnity than the rites of religion, marriage, and burial. For, by the axiom that “uniform ideas, born among peoples unknown to each other, must have a common ground of truth” [144], it must have been dictated to all nations that from these three institutions humanity began among them all, and therefore they must be most devoutly guarded by them all, so that the world should not again become a bestial wilderness. For this reason we have taken these three eternal and universal customs as three first principles of this Science [D5].

334 Let not our first principle be accused of falsehood by the modern travelers who narrate that peoples of Brazil, South Africa, and other nations of the New World... live in society without any knowledge of God. Persuaded perhaps by them,
selves and nothing for their companions, they cannot bring their passions under control to direct them toward justice. We thereby establish the fact that man in the bestial state desires only his own welfare; having taken wife and begotten children, he desires his own welfare along with that of his family; having entered upon civil life, he desires his own welfare along with that of his city; when its rule is extended over several peoples, he desires his own welfare along with that of the nation; when the nations are united by wars, treaties of peace, alliances, and commerce, he desires his own welfare along with that of the entire human race. In all these circumstances man desires principally his own utility. Therefore it is only by divine providence that he can be held within these institutions to practice justice as a member of the society of the family, of the city, and finally of mankind. Unable to attain all the utilities he wishes, he is constrained by these institutions to seek those which are his due; and this is called just. That which regulates all human justice is therefore divine justice, which is administered by divine providence to preserve human society.

342 In one of its principal aspects, this Science must therefore be a rational civil theology of divine providence [385], which seems hitherto to have been lacking. For the philosophers have either been altogether ignorant of it, as the Stoics and the Epicureans were, the latter asserting that human affairs are agitated by a blind concourse of atoms, the former that they are drawn by a deaf [inexorable] chain of cause and effect; or they have considered it solely in the order of natural things, giving the name of natural theology to the metaphysics in which they contemplate this attribute [i.e., the providence] of God, and in which they confirm it by the physical order observed in the motions of such bodies as the spheres and the elements and in the final cause observed in other and minor natural things. But they ought to have studied it in the economy of civil institutions, in keeping with the full meaning of applying to providence the term "divinity" [i.e., the power of divining], from divinari, to divine, which is to understand what is hidden from men—the future—or what is hidden in
them — their consciousness. It is this [divinatory providence] that makes up the first and principal part of the subject matter of jurisprudence, namely the religious institutions [e.g., augury] on which depend the secular institutions which make up its other and complementary part [398]. Our new Science must therefore be a demonstration, so to speak, of what providence has wrought in history, for it must be a history of the institutions by which, without human discernment or counsel, and often against the designs of men, providence has ordered this great city of the human race [B9]. For though this world has been created in time and particular, the institutions established therein by providence are universal and eternal [F6].

343 In contemplation of this infinite and eternal providence our Science finds certain divine proofs [349, 630] by which it is confirmed and demonstrated. Since divine providence has omnipotence as minister, it must unfold its institutions by means as easy as the natural customs of men [309]. Since it has infinite wisdom as counselor, whatever it disposes must, in its entirety, be [institutive] order. Since it has for its end its own immeasurable goodness, whatever it institutes must be directed to a good always superior to that which men have proposed to themselves.

344 In the deplorable obscurity of the beginnings of the nations and in the innumerable variety of their customs, for a divine argument which embraces all human institutions, no sublimer proofs can be desired than the [three] just mentioned: the naturalness [of the means], the [unfolding institutive] order [in which they are employed], and the end [thereby served], which is the preservation of the human race [M9]. These proofs will become luminous and distinct when we reflect with what ease the institutions are brought into being, by occasions arising often far apart and sometimes quite contrary to the proposals of men, yet fitting together of themselves. Such proofs omnipotence affords. Compare the institutions with one another and observe the order by which those are now born in their proper times and places which ought now to be born, and others deferred for birth in theirs (and all
the human necessities or utilities of social life, which are the two perennial springs of the natural law of the gentes [141]. In its second principal aspect, our Science is therefore a history of human ideas, on which it seems the metaphysics of the human mind must proceed. This queen of the sciences, by the axiom that "the sciences must begin where their subject matters began" [314], took its start when the first men began to think humanly [338], and not when the philosophers began to reflect on human ideas. . . .

348 To determine the times and places for such a history—that is, when and where these human thoughts were born—and thus to give it certainty by means of its own (so to speak) metaphysical chronology and geography, our Science applies a likewise metaphysical art of criticism with regard to the founders of these same nations, in which it took well over a thousand years to produce those writers with whom philosophical criticism has hitherto been occupied [392]. And the criterion our criticism employs is that taught by divine providence and common to all nations, namely the common sense of the human race [142], determined by the necessary harmony of human institutions, in which all the beauty of the civil world consists [344]. The decisive sort of proof in our Science is therefore this: that, since these institutions have been established by divine providence, the course of the institutions of the nations had to be, must now be, and will have to be such as our Science demonstrates, even if infinite worlds were born from time to time through eternity, which is certainly not the case [1096].

349 Our Science therefore comes to describe at the same time an ideal eternal history traversed in time by the history of every nation in its rise, development, maturity, decline, and fall [A4, 145, 245, 294, 393]. Indeed, we make bold to affirm that he who meditates this Science narrates to himself this ideal eternal history so far as he himself makes it for himself by that proof "it had, has, and will have to be" [348]. For the first indubitable principle posited above [331] is that this world of nations has certainly been made by men, and its guise must therefore be found within the modifications of our own human mind.

And history cannot be more certain than when he who creates the things also narrates them. Now, as geometry, when it constructs the world of quantity out of its elements, or contemplates that world, is creating it for itself, just so does our Science [create for itself the world of nations], but with a reality greater by just so much as the institutions having to do with human affairs are more real than points, lines, surfaces, and figures are [F3]. And this very fact is an argument, O reader, that these proofs are of a kind divine and should give thee a divine pleasure, since in God knowledge and creation are one and the same thing.

350 By the definitions of the true and the certain proposed above [138], men were for a long period incapable of truth and of reason, which is the fount of that inner justice by which the intellect is satisfied. This justice was practiced by the Hebrews, who, illuminated by the true God, were by his divine law forbidden even to have unjust thoughts, about which no mortal lawgiver ever troubled himself. (For the Hebrews believed in a God all mind who searches the hearts of men, and the gentiles believed in gods composed of bodies and mind who could not do so [F7].) This same inner justice was later reasoned out by the philosophers, who did not arise until two thousand years after the nations were founded. In the meantime the nations were governed by the certainty of authority, that is, by the same criterion which is used by our metaphysical criticism; namely, the common sense of the human race [142], on which the consciences of all nations repose. So that, in this [third] principal regard, our Science comes to be a philosophy of authority [386ff], which is the fount of the outer justice of which the moral theologians speak [964]. Of such authority account should have been taken by the three princes of the doctrine of the natural law of the gentes [394], and not of that drawn from passages in the writers. For the authority of which we speak reigned among the nations well over a thousand years before the writers could arise, and they could have taken no cognizance of it. For that reason Grotius, more learned and erudite than either of the others, combats the Roman jurisconsults in almost every
things revealed by God; a science which, among the Tuscans, considered as knowledge of the true good and true evil, perhaps owed to that fact the first name they gave it, “science in divinity” [K7].

366 We must therefore distinguish three kinds of theology ... First, poetic theology, that of the theological poets, which was the civil theology of all the gentile nations. Second, natural theology, that of the metaphysicians. ... Third, our Christian theology, a mixture of civil and natural with the loftiest revealed theology; all three united in the contemplation of divine providence, which has so conducted human institutions that, starting from the poetic theology which regulated them by certain sensible signs believed to be divine counsels sent to man by the gods, and by means of the natural theology which demonstrates providence by eternal reasons which do not fall under the senses, the nations were disposed to receive revealed theology in virtue of a supernatural faith, superior not only to the senses but to human reason itself.

[Chapter II] Exposition and Division of Poetic Wisdom

367 But because metaphysics is the sublime science which distributes their determinate subject matters to all the so-called subaltern sciences; and because the wisdom of the ancients was that of the theological poets, who without doubt were the first sages of the gentile world [199]; and because the origins of all things must by nature have been crude: for all these reasons we must trace the beginnings of poetic wisdom to a crude metaphysics. From this, as from a trunk, there branch out from one limb logic, morals, economics, and politics, all poetic; and from another, physics, the mother of cosmography and astronomy, the latter of which gives their certainty to its two daughters, chronology and geography — all likewise poetic. We shall show clearly and distinctly how the founders of gentile humanity by means of their natural theology (or metaphysics) imagined the gods; how by means of their logic they invented languages; by morals, created heroes; by economics, founded families, and by politics, cities; by their physics, established the beginnings of things as all divine; by the particular physics of man, in a certain sense created themselves [C6]; by their cosmography, fashioned for themselves a universe entirely of gods; by astronomy, carried the planets and constellations from earth to heaven; by chronology, gave a beginning to [measured] times; and how by geography the Greeks, for example, described the [whole] world within their own Greece [K5].

368 Thus our Science comes to be at once a history of the ideas, the customs, and the deeds of mankind [347, 391]. From these three we shall derive the principles of the history of human nature, which we shall show to be the principles of universal history, which principles it seems hitherto to have lacked.

[Chapter III] The Universal Flood and the Giants

[369–373 The founders of gentile humanity, the giants, were men of the races of Ham, Japheth, and Shem who had renounced the true religion of Noah, their common ancestor [301]. They owed their size to the wild and strenuous life of wanderers in the dense forest that covered the earth after the flood. (Of these giants there were two kinds: the first, autochthons, sons of Earth, or nobles, from whom, as being giants in the primary sense of the term, the age of giants took its name; the second, less properly so called, those other giants who were subjugated by the first [553].) Only the Hebrews retained the normal human stature, to which the descendants of the giants gradually returned [F7].]
tells that they spoke of hearing the sun pass at night from west to east through the sea, and affirmed that they saw the gods. These very rude and simple nations help us to a much better understanding of the founders of the gentile world with whom we are now concerned.) At the same time they gave the things they wondered at substantial being after their own ideas, just as children do, whom we see take inanimate things in their hands and play with them and talk to them as though they were living persons [166].

376 In such fashion the first men of the gentile nations, children of nascent mankind [209], created things according to their own ideas. But this creation was infinitely different from that of God. For God, in his purest intelligence, knows things, and, by knowing them, creates them; but they, in their robust ignorance, did it by virtue of a wholly corporeal imagination. And because it was quite corporeal, they did it with marvelous sublimity; a sublimity such and so great that it excessively perturbed the very persons who by imagining did the creating, for which they were called "poets," which is Greek for "creators" [K4]. Now this is the threefold labor of great poetry: (1) to invent sublime fables suited to the popular understanding, (2) to perturb to excess, with a view to the end proposed: (3) to teach the vulgar to act virtuously, as the poets have taught themselves; as will presently be shown [379]. Of this nature of human institutions it remained an eternal property, expressed in a noble phrase of Tacitus, that frightened men vainly "no sooner imagine than they believe" (fingunt simul creduntque). 2

377 Of such natures must have been the first founders of gentile humanity when . . . at last the sky fearfully rolled with thunder and flashed with lightning, as could not but follow from the bursting upon the air for the first time of an impression so violent. Thereupon a few giants, who must have been the most robust, and who were dispersed through the forests on the mountain heights where the strongest beasts have their dens, were frightened and astonished by the great effect whose

2A. 5.10.
pect a rational civil theology of divine providence [F6, 342], which began in the vulgar wisdom of the lawgivers, who founded the nations by contemplating God under the attribute of providence, and which is completed by the esoteric wisdom of the philosophers, who give a rational demonstration of it in their natural theology [366].

Il 386 Here begins also a philosophy of authority [350], a second principal aspect of this Science, taking the word "authority" in its original meaning of property. The word is always used in this sense in the Law of the Twelve Tables, and the term *auctores* was accordingly applied to those from whom we derive title to property. *Auctor* certainly comes from *autos* (= *proprius* or *suus ipsius*); and many scholars write *auctor* and *autoritas*, leaving out the aspirate.

387 Authority was at first divine; the authority by which divinity appropriated to itself the few giants we have spoken of, by properly casting them into the depths and recesses of the caves under the mountains [C2]. This is the iron ring by which the giants, dispersed upon the mountains, were kept chained to the earth by fear of the sky and of Jove, wherever they happened to be when the sky first thundered. Such were Tityus and Prometheus, chained to a high rock with their hearts being devoured by an eagle; that is, by the religion of Jove's auspices [719]. Their being rendered immobile by fear was expressed by the Latins in the heroic phrase *terrore defixi*, and the artists depict them chained hand and foot with such links upon the mountains. Of these links was formed the great chain of which ... Jove, to prove that he is king of men and gods, asserts that if all the gods and men were to take hold of one end, he alone at the other end would be able to drag them all.² The Stoics would have the chain represent the eternal series of causes by which their Fate holds the world girdled and bound, but let them look out lest they be entangled in it themselves, because the dragging of men and gods by this chain depends on the will of Jove, yet they would have Jove subject to Fate.

³Cf. 3.7.
²T. 8.18–27.

388 Upon this divine authority followed human authority in the full philosophic sense of the term; that is, the property of human nature which not even God can take from man without destroying him ... This authority is the free use of the will, the intellect on the other hand being a passive power subject to truth. For from this first point of all human things, men began to exercise the freedom of the human will to hold in check the motions of the body, either to subdue them entirely or to give them better direction (this being the impulse proper to free agents [340]). Hence it was that the giants gave up the bestial custom of wandering through the great forest of the earth and habituated themselves to the quite contrary custom of remaining settled and hidden for a long period in their caves [C2].

389 This authority of human nature was followed by the authority of natural law; for, having occupied and remained settled for a long time in the places where they chanced to find themselves at the time of the first thunderbolts, they became lords of them by occupation and long possession, the source of all dominion in the world. These are those "few whom just Jupiter loved" (pauci quos aequus amavit/Jupiter)³ whom the philosophers later metamorphosed into men favored by God with natural aptitudes for science and virtue. But the historical significance of this phrase is that in the recesses and depths [of the caves] they became the princes of the so-called greater gentes, who counted Jove the first god [317]. These were the ancient noble houses, branching out into many families [433], of which the first kingdoms and the first cities were composed. Their memory was preserved in those fine heroic Latin phrases: *condere gentes, condere regna, condere urbes; fundare gentes, fundare regna, fundare urbes.*

390 This philosophy of authority follows the rational civil theology of providence because, by means of the former's theological proofs, the latter with its philosophical ones makes clear and distinct the philological ones [342–359]; and with reference to the institutions of the most obscure antiquity of

³Vergil: A. 6.129f.
Passing now to the other branch of the main trunk of poetic metaphysics, along which poetic wisdom branches off into physics and thence into cosmography and thus into astronomy, whose fruits are chronology and geography [367], we shall begin this remaining part of our discussion with physics.

The physics the theological poets considered was that of the world of nations, and therefore in the first place they defined Chaos as confusion of human seeds in the state of the infamous promiscuity of women [B5]. It was thence that the physicists were later moved to conceive the confusion of the universal seeds of nature, and to express it they took the word already invented by the poets and hence appropriate. [The poetic Chaos] was confused because there was no institution of humanity in it, and obscure because it lacked the civil light in virtue of which the heroes were called incliti, illustrious [533]. Further they imagined it as Orcus, a misshapen monster whichdevoured all things, because men in this infamous promiscuity did not have the proper form of men, and were swallowed up by the void because through the uncertainty of offspring they left nothing of themselves. This [chaos] was later taken by the physicists as the prime matter of natural things, which, formless itself, is greedy for forms and devours all forms. The poets, however, gave it also the monstrous form of Pan, the wild god who is the divinity of all satyrs inhabiting not the cities but the forests; a character to which they reduced the impious vagabonds wandering through the great forest of the earth and having the appearance of men but the habits of abominable beasts. Afterward, by forced allegories, the phi-
[550], which is properly the world of men [B8]. Thence the physicists were later moved to study the four elements of which the world of nature is composed [724].

691 The same theological poets gave living and sensible and for the most part human forms to the elements and to the countless special natures arising from them, and thus created many and various divinities, as we have set forth above in the Metaphysics [375]. This gave Plato² opportunity to intrude his doctrine of minds or intelligences: that Jove was the mind of ether, Vulcan of fire, and the like. But the theological poets understood so little of these intelligent substances that down to Homer's time they did not understand the human mind itself insofar as, by dint of reflection, it opposes the senses. On this there are two golden passages in the Odyssey³ in which it is called sacred force or occult vigor, both of which mean the same thing.

[Chapter II] Poetic Physics concerning Man, or Heroic Nature

692 But the greatest and most important part of physics is the contemplation of the nature of man. We have set forth above in the Poetic Economy how the founders of gentile humanity in a certain sense generated and produced in themselves the proper human form in its two aspects: that is, how by means of frightful religions and terrible paternal powers and sacred ablutions they brought forth from their giant bodies the form of our just corporature, and how by discipline of their household economy they brought forth from their bestial minds the form of our human mind [C6, M7, 520, 524]. Here is a proper place for calling attention again to that development.

[693–696] The theological poets discerned being and subsistence in man. The former they identified with eating, just as when our peasants want to say a sick man has not yet died

²Cratylus 404ff.
³18.34,60.
us, not the particular history in time of the laws and deeds of the Romans or the Greeks, but (by virtue of the identity of the intelligible substance in the diversity of their modes of development) the ideal history [349, 393] of the eternal laws which are instanced by the deeds of all nations [112] in their rise, progress, maturity, decadence, and dissolution, [and which would be so instanced] even if (as is certainly not the case) there were infinite worlds being born from time to time throughout eternity [348]. Hence we could not refrain from giving this work the invidious title of a New Science, for it was too much to defraud it unjustly of the rightful claim it had over an argument so universal as that concerning the common nature of nations, in virtue of that property which belongs to every science that is perfect in its idea, and which Seneca has set forth for us in his vast expression: *Pusilla res hic mundus est, nisi id, quod quae­rit, omnis mundus habeat*—"This world is a paltry thing unless all the world may find [therein] what it seeks."

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1Natural Questions 7.31.2: *Pusilla res mundus est, nisi in illo quod quae­rit omnis mundus habeat*—"The world is a paltry thing unless it offers matter for the researches of all the world," i.e., of all ages to come [111–12].
as the graces and beauties of the eternal order of God. The clear and simple observation we have made on the institutions of the entire human race, if we had been told nothing more by the philosophers, historians, grammarians, and jurists, would lead us to say certainly that this is the great city of the nations that was founded and is governed by God [B9]. Lycurgus, Solon, the decemvirs, and the like have been eternally praised to the skies as wise legislators, because it has hitherto been believed that by their good institutions and good laws they had founded Sparta, Athens, and Rome, the three cities that outshine all others in the fairest and greatest civil virtues. Yet they were all of short duration and even of small extent as compared with the universe of peoples, which was ordered by such institutions and secured by such laws that even in its decay it assumes those forms of states by which alone it may everywhere be preserved and perpetually endure. And must we not then say that this is a counsel of a superhuman wisdom? For without the force of laws (whose force, according to Dio [308], is like that of a tyrant), but making use of the very customs of men (in the practice of which they are as free of all force as in the expression of their own nature, whence the same Dio said that customs were like kings in commanding by pleasure), it divinely rules and conducts [the aforesaid city].

1108 It is true that men have themselves made this world of nations (and we took this as the first incontestable principle of our Science, since we despaired of finding it from the philosophers and philologists [330f]), but this world without doubt has issued from a mind often diverse, at times quite contrary, and always superior to the particular ends that men had proposed to themselves; which narrow ends, made means to serve wider ends, it has always employed to preserve the human race upon this earth [M9, 342, 344]. Men mean to gratify their bestial lust and abandon their offspring, and they inaugurate the chastity of marriage from which the families arise [505, 520f]. The fathers mean to exercise without restraint their paternal power over their clients, and they subject them to the civil powers from which the cities arise [584]. The reigning orders of nobles mean to abuse their lordly freedom over the plebeians, and they are obliged to submit to the laws which establish popular liberty [598]. The free peoples mean to shake off the yoke of their laws, and they become subject to monarchs [1007f, 1104]. The monarchs mean to strengthen their own positions by debasing their subjects with all the vices of dissoluteness, and they dispose them to endure slavery at the hands of stronger nations [1105]. The nations mean to dissolve themselves, and their remnants flee for safety to the wilderness, whence, like the phoenix, they rise again [1106]. That which did all this was mind, for men did it with intelligence; it was not fate, for they did it by choice; not chance, for the results of their always so acting are perpetually the same [F6].

1109 Hence Epicurus, who believes in chance, is refuted by the facts, along with his followers Hobbes and Machiavelli; and so are Zeno and Spinoza, who believe in fate. The evidence clearly confirms the contrary position of the political philosophers, whole prince is the divine Plato, who shows that providence directs human institutions [129ff, 179]. Cicero was therefore right in refusing to discuss laws with Atticus unless the latter would give up his Epicureanism and first concede that providence governed human institutions [335]. Pufendorf implicitly denied this by his hypothesis, Selden took it for granted, and Grotius left it out of account [394]; but the Roman jurisconsults established it as the first principle of the natural law of the gentes [310, 335, 342, 584, 979]. For in this work it has been fully demonstrated that through providence the first governments of the world had as their entire form religion, on which alone the family state was based; and passing thence to the heroic or aristocratic civil governments, religion must have been their principal firm basis. Advancing then to the popular governments, it was again religion that served the peoples as means for attaining them. And coming to rest at last in monarchic governments, this same religion must be the shield of princes. Hence, if religion is lost among the peoples, they have nothing left to enable them to live in society: no shield of defense, nor means of counsel, nor
the nations it reduces to certitude the human will, which is by its nature most uncertain [141]—which is as much as to say that it reduces philology to the form of a science.

III 391. The third principal aspect is a history of human ideas [347]. These began with divine ideas by way of contemplation of the heavens with the bodily eyes [377]. Thus in their science of augury the Romans used the verb *contemplari* for observing the parts of the sky whence the auguries came or the auspices were taken. These regions, marked out by the augurs with their wands, were called temples of the sky (*templum coeli*), whence must have come to the Greeks their first *theoremata* and *mathemata*, things divine or sublime to contemplate, which eventuated in metaphysical and mathematical abstractions [710]. This is the civil history of the saying “From Jove the muse began” (*A tempore principium musae*). For we have just seen that Jove’s bolts produced the first muse, which Homer defines as “knowledge of good and evil” [365]. At this point it was all too easy for the philosophers later to intrude the dictum that the beginning of wisdom is piety. The first muse must have been Urania, who contemplated the heavens to take the auguries. Later she came to stand for astronomy, as will presently be shown [739]. Just as poetic metaphysics was above divided into all its subordinate sciences, each sharing the poetic nature of their mother [367], so this history of ideas will present the rough origins both of the practical sciences in use among the nations and of the speculative sciences which are now cultivated by the learned [18, K7].

IV 392. The fourth aspect is a philosophical criticism which grows out of the aforesaid history of ideas. Such a criticism will render true judgment upon the founders of the nations, which must have taken well over a thousand years to produce the writers who are the subjects of philological criticism. Beginning with Jove, our philosophical criticism will give us a natural theogony, or generation of the gods, as it took form naturally in the minds of the founders of the gentile world;

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V 393. The fifth aspect is an ideal eternal history traversed in time by the histories of all nations [44, 349]. Wherever, emerging from savage, fierce, and bestial times, men begin to domesticate themselves by religion, they begin, proceed, and end by those stages which are investigated here in Book Two, to be encountered again in Book Four, where we shall treat of the course the nations run, and in Book Five, where we shall treat of the recourse of human institutions [L1].

VI 394. The sixth is a system of the natural law of the gentes [E1–8]. The three princes of this doctrine, Hugo Grotius, John Selden, and Samuel Pufendorf, should have taken their start from the beginnings of the gentes, where their subject matter begins [314ff]. But all three of them err together in this respect, by beginning in the middle; that is, with the latest times of the civilized nations (and thus of men enlightened by fully developed natural reason), from which the philosophers emerged and rose to meditation of a perfect idea of justice [G3, K3, 310, 313, 318, 329, 493, 972, 974, 1109].

398. For all these reasons, we begin our treatment of law—the Latin for which is *ius*, contraction of the ancient *Ious* (Jove)—at this most ancient point of all times, at the moment when the idea of Jove was born in the minds of the founders of the nations. . . . This then is our point of departure for the discussion of law, which was originally divine, in the proper sense expressed by divination, the science of Jove’s auspices, which were the religious institutions by which the nations regulated all secular institutions. These two classes of institutions taken together make up the adequate subject matter of

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4Vergil: *Bucolics* 3.60.
jurisprudence [342, 379]. Thus our treatment of natural law begins with the idea of divine providence, in the same birth with which was born the idea of law [E7]. For law began naturally to be observed, in the manner examined above, by the founders of the gentes properly so called, those of the most ancient order, which were called the greater gentes, whose first god was Jove [316ff].

VII 399 The seventh and last of the principal aspects of this Science is that of the principles of universal history. It begins with this first moment of all human institutions of the gentile world, with the first of the three ages of the world which the Egyptians said had elapsed before them; namely, the age of the gods, in which heaven began to reign on earth and to bestow great benefits on men . . . This is the golden age of the Greeks, in which the gods consorted with men on earth, as we have seen Jove begin to do [377]. Starting with this first age of the world, the Greek poets in their fables have faithfully narrated the universal flood and the existence of giants in nature, and thus have truly narrated the beginnings of profane universal history. Yet later men were unable to enter into the imaginations of the first men who founded the gentile world, which made them think they saw the gods [375]. . . . For all these reasons profane universal history has hitherto lacked its beginning, and, for lack of the rational chronology of poetic history, it has lacked its continuity as well [732ff].

[Section II]

[POETIC LOGIC]

[Chapter I] Poetic Logic

400 That which is metaphysics insofar as it contemplates things in all the forms of their being, is logic insofar as it considers things in all the forms by which they may be signified. Accordingly, as poetry has been considered by us above as a poetic metaphysics in which the theological poets imagined bodies to be for the most part divine substances, so now that same poetry is considered as poetic logic, by which it signifies them.

401 “Logic” comes from logos, whose first and proper meaning was fabula, fable, carried over into Italian as favella, speech. In Greek the fable was also called mythos, myth, whence comes the Latin mutus, mute. For speech was born in mute times as mental [or sign] language, which Strabo in a golden passage1 says existed before vocal or articulate [language]; whence logos means both word and idea. It was fitting that the matter should be so ordered by divine providence in religious times, for it is an eternal property of religions that they attach more importance to meditation than to speech. Thus the first language in the first mute times of the nations must have begun with signs, whether gestures or physical objects, which had natural relations to the ideas [to be expressed] [225]. For this reason logos, or word, meant also deed to the Hebrews and thing to the Greeks. . . . Similarly, mythos came to be defined for us as vera narratio, or true speech, the natural speech which first Plato and then Iamblichus said had been spoken in the world at one time [227]. But this was mere con-

11.2.6.
Vico, Giambattista, 1668-1744
The New science of Giambattista Vico: translated from the third edition (1744)