

eighteenth century. Its collapse was followed by a temporary destruction of the other institution, the existing order of the State and Society, during the Revolution. Thus the two powers which hold human beings together, the common faith and the social order, had for a moment disappeared; human society had become disintegrated or atomised.

Now, we may look upon the ethical problem as the endeavour to get beyond the individual Self, beyond the human being as the atom or unit of humanity, to arrive at an aspect deeper and broader than that afforded by the study of the Self alone and its selfish interests. There are two ways of getting out of the Self, of transcending or enlarging it.

The first is the attempt made by German idealism, to look upon the individual Self as rooted in a deeper, a universal Self; this may be variously conceived as the Natural, Moral, or Divine Order, with a more or less clearly defined intellectual or spiritual centre. This view suggested itself under the still surviving influence of the traditional religious doctrine of the Church, which it desired to understand, to make more living and active.

But where, as in France, this friendly feeling towards the traditional faith had been destroyed, another way had to be found out of the narrowness of the individual mind with its purely selfish interests. This was found by the revolutionary thinkers in France, in the historical phenomenon of human society, widened to the idea of mankind or humanity.

32.  
The social  
Self.

Expressed in different words, the first movement