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Dictionary of the
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PREFACE

Artists, writers, and scientists do not hesitate in their creative efforts and researches to borrow ideas outside their own special fields whenever their themes reach beyond established forms, styles, or traditional methods. The languages of the arts will often show the impact of literary themes, scientific discoveries, economic conditions, and political change. The physical, biological, psychological, and social sciences have branched out from ancient mythical and metaphysical ideas of nature and man, and in their historical development have utilized the results of analyses and experimental methods that have emerged from the cross-fertilization of tested ideas and methods. This outward reaching of the mind motivates the historian of ideas to explore the pivotal clues to man's artistic and scientific achievements in diverse fields. While respecting the integrity and need for specialized departments of learning, the historian of ideas makes his particular contribution to knowledge by tracing the cultural roots and historical ramifications of the major and minor specialized concerns of the mind.

The editors have invited contributions from scholars of many countries, especially those scholars who have shown a particular awareness of the cultural and historical affiliations of their respective disciplines with other allied fields. Departmental and national boundaries have thus been crossed in the cooperative exchange of ideas and cultural perspectives among editors and contributors.

We cannot emphasize too strongly the point expressed in the subtitle of our work, that we are presenting a varied array of selected pivotal topics in intellectual history and of methods of writing about such topics. Although the number of topics discussed is large, we do not pretend that these volumes represent the entire range of intellectual history. To attempt a complete history of ideas would be to attempt (of course, in vain) to exhaust the history of the human mind; hence, the limited number of topics dealt with, and even these contain lacunae which we hope will encourage further studies. Students of the history of ideas should profit from the substance and methods of

interpretation contained in the scholarship of our contributors, and in future research the cross-references, bibliographies, and index should be valuable aids.

The topics chosen are intended to exhibit the intriguing variety of ways in which ideas in one domain tend to migrate into other domains. The diffusion of these ideas may be traced in three directions: horizontally across disciplines in a given cultural period, vertically or chronologically through the ages, and "in depth" by analysis of the internal structure of pervasive and pivotal ideas. Internal analysis is needed if one is to discover the component ideas that have become elements of newer and larger thoughts or movements. A now classic model is Arthur O. Lovejoy's historical study and internal analysis of the Great Chain of Being into its component "unit-ideas" of continuity, gradation, and plenitude. These unit-ideas are not descriptions of the whole organic cultural and historical setting of thought, but products of analysis, which Lovejoy proposed as aids to the unravelling of complex ideas and of their roles in different contexts. However, no single method or model has been prescribed or adopted as exclusive by either editors or contributors. We have, therefore, studies of three different sorts, cross-cultural studies limited to a given century or period, studies that trace an idea from antiquity to later periods, and studies that explicate the meaning of a pervasive idea and its development in the minds of its leading proponents. Minor figures cannot be neglected since they often reflect the prevailing climate of opinion of their times.

The cross-references appended to each article have been carefully prepared to direct the reader to related articles in which the same or similar idea occurs within a different domain, often modified and even transformed by the different context. But despite our interdisciplinary aim, we do not ignore the fact that departments of study are established in academic and other specialized institutions. The *Dictionary* will facilitate the reader's transition from the ideas familiar to him in his special area of study to those very ideas operative in, and transformed by, related ideas in other fields with which he is less familiar.

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In some cases the same word will have entirely distinct meanings in different disciplines, so that it is important not to confound words with ideas; for example, it is a sophistic confusion to draw inferences from the theory of relativity in physics to relativism in morals, or to impose seventeenth-century mechanical models on organic or social phenomena. But it is germane to the history of thought and culture to record the historical role of such pervasive models in diverse fields. Consequently, we did not seek to collect topics for articles at random, but organized an analytical table of contents into a seven-fold grouping of topics, thus discovering important relationships which might otherwise have been overlooked. The following domains and disciplines, of course, involve unavoidable overlapping, but form the basic framework of the selected topics contributed.

I. The history of ideas about the external order of nature studied by the physical and biological sciences, ideas also present in common usage, imaginative literature, myths about nature, metaphysical speculation.

II. The history of ideas about human nature in anthropology, psychology, religion, and philosophy as well as in literature and common sense.

III. The history of ideas in literature and the arts in aesthetic theory and literary criticism.

IV. The history of ideas about or attitudes to history, historiography, and historical criticism.

V. The historical development of economic, legal, and political ideas and institutions, ideologies, and movements.

VI. The history of religious and philosophical ideas.

VII. The history of formal mathematical, logical, linguistic, and methodological ideas.

Few of the pivotal ideas presented fall squarely and only within any one group. Even the ancillary topics

will lead outward to still other clusters of ideas. The "Faust Theme," for example, is an illustration of the more general idea of "Motif" in the history of literature, but the Faust theme is itself pregnant with symbolic references to the problem of evil, to the ideas of tragedy, of macrocosm and microcosm.

Although the intensive synchronic study of any "period" of cultural or intellectual history may reveal the predominance of certain artistic, scientific, industrial, political, religious, or philosophical ideas, there is no *a priori* ranking of these groups of ideas. Nor can it be presumed that they are all of equal importance through all periods of cultural development viewed diachronically. The *Dictionary's* emphasis on interdisciplinary, cross-cultural relations is not intended as a substitute for the specialized histories of the various disciplines, but rather serves to indicate actual and possible interrelations.

The purpose of these studies of the historical interrelationships of ideas is to help establish some sense of the unity of human thought and its cultural manifestations in a world of ever-increasing specialization and alienation. These cumulative acquisitions of centuries of work in the arts and sciences constitute our best insurance against intellectual and cultural bankruptcy. Taking stock of the ideas that have created our cultural heritage is a prerequisite of the future growth and flourishing of the human spirit.

The editors are indeed grateful for the cooperation of so many scholars, including advisers and readers as well as contributors and the staff of the publisher. Without the unstinting aid and constant encouragement of Mr. Charles Scribner, who initiated the idea of this *Dictionary*, the project would not have come to fruition.

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