MAN THE INDIVISIBLE

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Foreword

The author of this work would like his readers to read it as one reads a human document. For it has cost him all his life. That may not seem so much in terms of duration. For a human life is an ephemeral thing. But it does mean a considerable amount of pain. And that confers upon any human life a certain dignity: the dignity of pain. No man can be deprived of his share in that dignity.

In this connection, however, the writer also feels the urgent need of making a special confession: he is not only a man; he is an Occidental man.

So he shares the lot of Occidental men--even Occidental men in the twentieth century of the "Christian era". This means--according to his own views--that he suffers, himself, from a tragic lack of that Totality which he has dared to make the topic of his present volume.

However, all is not pitch darkness, of course, in the night of cultural crisis. Disrupted men, for instance, may at least be aware of their disruption. Some may, in fact, be intensely conscious of that mentioned "lack"--that abysmal gulf in the midst of their lives. There may be a correspondingly deep longing in their human breasts to build some kind of bridge across the chasm.

But the pain is not necessarily suspended or relieved for that matter. For even the very building of the "bridges" may be undertaken in a state of abiding super-tension, characterizing not

only "Occidental" men, but all isolated and disrupted men, wherever they are and whatever they do.

Perhaps it is rather man as such who suffers from this disruption, man as he is known through all ages and in all lands.

Let it be duly noted by the way: bridge-building is not the consuming passion which has unsettled the mental equilibrium of typical men in the science-minded modern Occident. The great cry here is rather an ever narrower specialization and departmentalization. Obviously, the burning desire of the well-ordered scientific specialist today is, indeed, to "know more and more about less and less". How soon will he reach the extreme end of his present trend? That would be to know "everything about nothing".

We understand perfectly the blame that is bound to come our way: with almost impudent unconcern, and undisturbed confidence in the external world, we launch out towards the wide horizons of new fields of human knowledge, in pursuit of our "lost bridges". How can a man with so little sense of rigid system and scientific limitation avoid losing himself in the bottomless depths of such an unbounded "extroversion"?

We do not deny the dangers of our approach. One ditch is not much better than the other. Ours would be to "know less and less about more and more". How soon will we reach the extreme end of

our deleterious trend: that is, to know nothing about everything!

To be sure, there are many pitfalls lying in wait for the over-zealous bridge-builders: they run into more fields than they can properly handle. They "bite off more than they can chew".

But sometimes it also happens that fanciful critics invent fields for them which they themselves had hardly ever dreamt of running into. Benevolent providers assign them tasks which they may have had no ambition whatsoever themselves of assuming. In our case the goals we have actually set for ourselves may be considerably more modest than what some readers would seem to have planned for us.

In fact it is not quite fair to an author--some would say it is a virtual violence exerted against him--to insist the he should produce for instance, "The History of Dualism"--or some sort of standard work on "The Idea of Immortality in the Western World", whereas he himself is satisfied with something infinitely less than this, or perhaps has made plans for something entirely different from this.

The objective of our work is, in its way, a particularly limited one. In the first place, it has been to explore a little further certain conditions for meaningfulness in human lives. In the second place, it has been the very specific task of establishing essential facts about the nature of certain relations between three capital values in human life:

1) Alterocentricity, 2) Totality, 3) Spirituality.

Or, negatively expressed, between:

1) Egocentricity, 2) Disruption, 3) Spiritualism.

Our method used in order to reach these aims was bound to adapt itself, to some extent, to the natural needs of the case at hand. The first step would seem to be to arrive at a deeper insight into the nature of each one of these three values, "in itself". However, this might come close to the illusionism taking place when elements which simply do not happen alone are theoretically abstracted or isolated. Moreover, how is it possible at all to gather further knowledge about qualities of the human spirit? We should like to know. Who would teach us "the trick"?

Of course one may start off with some kind of "definition". But a definition is hardly more than sketching a certain outline. It is not even the first stage of a penetration right into the core of the matter.

Some would no doubt propose a stringently analytical method. Analysis enjoys a formidable prestige in our culture. Whoever chooses--mainly, or occasionally--a merely descriptive method in scientific research, must expect to be looked upon with suspicion. How could simple description, in any case, take the place of subtle analysis?

It is our firm belief, however, that conclusive results in matters of the present kind would have been reached more quickly, and with less risk of error, if we had placed greater confidence in methods of simple observation, description, and juxtaposition. Just placing the data carefully, conscientiously, side by side, and then comparing them, this is what leads to the establishment of truths of the most dependable, the most significant, kind.

In summary retrospect, then: What stands out as the most striking fact that has so far forced itself upon our attention, regarding precisely the relations between Alterocentricity and Totality?

We assume that our readers already have an approximate notion of what the two terms stand for. Who could be a man at all, without an intuitive recognition, right in the core of his everyday life, of what Totality is, and, also, what a lack of that Totality is bound to be!

As for Alterocentricity, that term is more rare. But our definition is easy to grasp: it is the precious gift or the fundamental attitude (in some men, and particularly in a good number of women) of finding the centre of one's life, not in oneself, but outside oneself--so rather in "the other ones", and above all in the "Great Other One"; that is God.

But if two phenomena are most intimately related to each other, by what, then, is their fundamental reality primarily constituted? Is it

by the essence each one possesses as a separate entity? No, it is rather by that very relation that exists between them. So our topical question here is still the same: what is the nature of the relation between Alterocentricity and Totality?

We have formulated the answer briefly as follows: at the historic moment when a human being makes the momentous gesture of turning towards the exterior world, towards "the other ones", or the "Other One", that is, towards any genuine value, found outside himself--at that very moment a most remarkable event takes place: he becomes whole.

It is as though some imperious, irresistible command had been pronounced. And all of a sudden the disruption is healed. A disorganized life is being organized. A disintegrated mind is being integrated.

This is what we have pointed out in our conclusion to the volume on Alterocentricity.[1] Although our present book, all alone, forms an independent entity, it is good to prepare its special treatment of the topic of Totality by this glance in retrospect.

Alterocentricity has revealed itself to us as the great organizing force of human totality. (This implies, of course, that egocentricity has, in a corresponding way, revealed itself as the great disorganizing and dis-integrating force in human life, as we currently know it.)

In other words, in his very act of reaching out for the other ones--and above all for the Other One--man finds the power, or the miracle, of becoming whole (and, vice versa: in the very act of enclosing himself in the "I", man becomes inwardly disrupted, lacerated).

Let us illustrate this infallible rule by taking an example from the physics teacher's laboratory: With the attentive student's eager expectation we stand there watching a heap of iron filings. What we see, so far, is not particularly dramatic, however. There is something highly haphazard about the way one of those metal chips turns this way, the other in an entirely different direction; in fact, there could hardly be a better image of disorganization, or inertia and stolid indifference. What we see is a heap, but is it a unit?--I mean in the sense of an organized whole, a living organism? No trace of it. It is all as dead and disrupted as the heap of bones that Ezekiel describes in his 37th Chapter. He saw a whole valley full of them, dry and dreary.

But now back to our mass of iron filings: the physics teacher approaches them with a magnet. And what is the change magically taking place in the amorphous pile at the moment when that magnetic field becomes effective in the vicinity? Each little piece of iron has suddenly begun to behave like a living member of an organic whole. It is almost as though they had all received an imperious command. Like soldiers in an army, they straighten out and line up in the most perfect order, every individual tending in the

same direction. If you watch carefully, you may even detect something like converging lines in their mutual pattern of harmonious oneness.

Towards what do they converge? Obviously towards something invisible outside themselves, some curious force of commanding virtue, of life-giving virtue. The dead mass has been transformed into a living body, as it were, an organic totality. They have simply found, outside themselves, something stronger than themselves, something of unifying effect.

On entering a Protestant church building in France, I was surprised one day to see, in the entrance, a strange image carved out by a modern artist. On first view, it might impress the visitor as just another specimen of incomprehensible futuristic art, nothing but a bunch of distorted lines. But very soon you notice that there is something harmonious about those lines. They too have a remarkable trend of converging towards some mysterious centre outside themselves. And right under the carving you read the following text from the Gospel:

"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to me." (John 12:32)

This is a supreme spiritual formulation of how alterocentricity works the wonder of totality in ordinary human lives. Christ is our unique Other One. At the very moment when the wandering, disrupted gaze of a modern Occidental like you and me finds its rest

in Him as the supreme peak of a glorious reality outside himself, the unfathomable thing takes place: the internally split and shattered one becomes whole again. That is the historic event of God's encounter with man.

The conscientious historian of ideas cannot close his eyes to a veritable sacrament of other-centredness as a fundamental motif in Christianity. Here Alterocentricity then grows up to become the Value above all values, nothing less than a worthy synonym for the historic Agape.

But it is the history of a weird Disruption, namely Occidental dualism, that has cast the vague contours of our knowledge about Totality into the sharpest relief. That is why we now turn with great expectations towards the illuminating world of human thought made historically alive. We want more conclusive evidence of the deepest nature of that fascinating Wholeness in man's life, brought about concomitantly with his Elan Altérocentrique. Just the history of ideas, we think, with its dramatic display of conflicting forces in human minds, ought to shed decisive light on elements of this order.

Who knows, in fact, whether Alterocentricity and Totality, on one hand, versus Egocentricity and Disruption on the other, may not constitute batteries of momentous bipolarity in the history of mankind, actually raising them to the rank of fundamental motifs! In other words, why should they not be equal, in destiny-laden significance for the human race, to such gigantic rivals as Agape and

Eros, shaking the world to its very foundations, as Anders Nygren has tried to show.

Does this sound boastful? Remember: in historical research, too, what is truly imposing is not the historian; it is history. What is a pitiable little researcher, anyway? Just a grovelling creature, surrounded on all hands by strange empirical data, data not always too comforting to the one who happens to be looking for meaning in human life. It is right in this maze of apparent inconsistencies and more or less hostile facts, that one should imagine us piteously striving to find our way toward some distant light of meaningfulness, after all, a stable foundation which might even prove firm enough to be built upon. Build what? Let us confess our temerity: to build upon it nothing less than a thesis on "Totality in human life".

Finally, just one plea of quite particular frankness and temerity: in order to provide reasonable evidence for the general validity of this daring thesis, we propound what we regard as an inalienable right: we must be allowed to seek data to support our conclusions exactly where we can find them! This means that we may have to linger in certain areas, and dwell upon certain points, with a predilection which might look somewhat disturbing and "arbitrary" to the admirers of impeccably well-proportioned dissertations.

Note:

1. "Essai sur l’Altérocentrisme contre l’égocentrisme, en tant que motifs fondamentaux de la culture occidentale", a smaller dissertation not yet published, but presented and publicly defended for a "doctorat du troisième cycle", Faculté des Lettres et Sciences Humaines, Université de Montpellier, France.

Chapter 1

A Psychological Approach Towards a Philosophical Problem

The main study of our present work is Totality in Human Life as revealed by Occidental thought. But in our world of dramatic strife, that may be tantamount to studying the very opposite, namely a force which has kept counteracting the trend of totality in every aspect of human existence down through the centuries of our history. We have called that opposing force splitness or disruption.

From the very beginning, however, our study will reveal itself as simply a study of dualism: to what degree is it correct to characterize that peculiar attitude towards human life as disruptive?

Dualism, as we see it, is not only a tendency to distinguish. Distinction is often inevitable and fully legitimate even from the monist's point of view. But dualism is a tendency to divide, to separate, we would even say to lacerate. In our opinion that tendency has proved pregnant with destiny in our culture.

As a sort of preamble, we shall here consider modern man's general attitude towards the "inward" and the "outward" in various domains of everyday life.

Of course it must be permissible--in fact, it is often absolutely necessary--to distinguish between something inward and something

outward even in a totality as indivisible as that of human life. Typologists currently describe human attitudes in terms of inward-directedness and outward-directedness. Above all, in philosophy and religion one has always dwelt with great insistence upon a distinction between "something outward" and "something inward". Just at the moment, we are thinking here of what is commonly called the human body and the human soul.

Before we take our full step over to our philosophical anthropology, let us catch a rapid glimpse of certain historical trends in modern psychology. Here there seems to have been a vacillation similar to that of philosophy and religion, as regards the true relations between the inward and the outward. Some psychological schools one might be tempted to call "dualistic", others rather "monistic".

By way of example, suffice it to mention briefly the case of just one fairly typical trend towards views of totality in American psychology: the functionalist school. The entry upon the scene of functionalism is reckoned by some historians as starting just from the days when the philosopher John Dewey and the psychologist James Rowland Angell both came to Chicago University (in the middle of the nineties).[1]

The main point here relative to our topic is this: previous psychological schools had tended to divide up reflex actions into two rather sharply separate parts: on one hand the stimulus, on the other the response. Dewey thought this sharp separation between

sensation and movement arbitrary. For even as early as at the moment of stimulation there is already some degree of reaction. On the other hand, in what is commonly called the reaction there is still something left of the original stimulus and the sensation continuing all the time.

Take for instance the distinction between seeing and looking. A child sees a flame and stretches out his hand for it. But even from the outset there is some active "looking" on the part of that child. Similarly, the "seeing" goes on during the whole ensuing reaction. In other words, that first stimulating phenomenon causing the child to see suddenly, to have a sensation, partly endures all the time.

Here we also see, by the way, how the new school came to be called functionalism. The conventional division--or splitting up--of reality into two separate elements, was now believed to be based upon the function which the different links of the series happen to have--on what they "do". Some distinct part of the process is emphasized as particularly important from the point of view of a certain function. The distinction is functional rather than existential. It does not depend upon really "existing" facts.

The process of human experience itself is in reality continual. It is not a reality divided into parts. In other words: once more the true point of view--we mean the one that is true for human life—is that of totality.

By the way, William James has already pointed out that the human consciousness can hardly be composed of a series of separate or separable particles. A static conception of reflexes had to be given up in favour of a conception of dynamic unity. Now functionalism continues his work. Unlike structural psychology, it makes no attempt to determine the number of variations in a mind material, considering perception as a sort of agglomeration of separate elements. It refrains from dividing up into distinct colours, tones, degrees of hardness, opacity, etc. It is only the highly abstracting psychologist who looks upon human perception as a chemist would look upon physical matter: a composition of separable atoms. Functional psychology has a very different viewpoint. It directs its attention towards the typical operations of consciousness under actual life conditions.

In fact, subsequent American philosophy has never really quite abandoned the principle established by James. We would call it a fairly clearcut principle of totality and monism in essential respects: the mental is here not just a quality pertaining to a sort of independent soul. On the contrary, it is so intimately connected with the body that the two constitute one absolutely inseparable whole. How have some investigators of man's mental faculties managed to adopt such views of human totality? We think the explanation is clear enough: they have simply taken care to include the element of life; the mental, too, has been placed right in its proper biological setting.

This provides a remarkable contrast, indeed, to what we shall find to be a common tendency of dualist ways and views. And let it be pointed out at once: not the view of totality, but rather the view of doublesightedness and disruption is the one which has most commonly been consecrated, down through the centuries, as the one respectable view adopted by the intellectual elite in our culture, not only in circles of typical "idealist", but even in circles of stern scientific research. It is rather just occasionally that a sort of intuition seems to be flickering through—and mostly for a quite limited spell of time: "Now it is high time that the abysmal gulf between a human body and a human soul, as our ingenious ancestors through so many centuries have done their utmost to forge it, be adequately bridged!" Then suddenly a curious question will tend to pop up once more for a certain period: what if those two "incommensurable elements" in human life should, after all, be entities belonging to the very same order, or even just sides of one single reality! Angell, for one, obviously regards their distinction as methodological rather than metaphysical. And for modern American psychology it would be right to admit that the general trend has been to regard the mental and the corporeal as a unity, and to study that unity in a matter-of-fact way, without bothering too seriously about the ontological problems.

But here it would seem imperative to make one thing perfectly clear:

There is in all science a tendency of trying, as it were, to adopt a monistic and a dualistic standpoint almost at the same time. Take

this instance: modern psycho-physiology has tended to be very monistic on one point: it has general maintained the principle that to every thought or sensation in a human mind there must correspond some kind of exterior process in the human brain. Without brain cells—no consciousness or mental life whatsoever.

Let us here notice one thing, however: to speak so emphatically about the "problem" of the relation between those external brain cells and that internal consciousness, is not strictly monistic at all. It is by no means indicative of any particular vision of totality. Viewed with the eyes of a full-bred monist that "problem" must present itself as entirely a pseudo-problem. For, in the very act of opposing "brain" to "thought", the scientist makes an abstraction which has nothing to do with monism or with any empirical reality. In fact, what empirical right does he have to speak of brains as devoid of thought? In the experience of mankind, brains have always, without one single exception, presented themselves as thinking brains (or at least brains of some kind of mental activity, either conscious or subconscious). A brain without any such mental activity is no living human brain at all. And who is here concerned with the brain cells of a corpse? Are we not all speaking about the brains of a man?

Similar it is curious, indeed, to see how the concept of human "thought" is frequently being used here in an abstract or almost Platonic way, even by natural scientists who regard themselves as free from all "idealizing" tendencies. In fact, we all act sometimes as though it were the most natural and "scientific" thing in the world to imagine human thoughts as fairly "independent of human brains".

How far from this is not the truly monistic attitude: the brain and the thought are only two aspects of one and the same reality.

Of course our scientists may excuse themselves saying: Oh, that is just a sort of game we are playing. Our dualist—or "Platonic"—use of the terms is simply a matter of convenience. It is all purely "methodological".

If that is the case, then one must at least be permitted to state emphatically: the practical impact of that methodology upon the eventual thinking of many scientists has been formidable. In fact, some of them are heard to say without any serious hesitation at all: "Brains produce thoughts." That certainly does not testify to any too great tendency towards monism. To believe implicitly in it must be dualism of the most inveterate type. Even just to express it—more or less thoughtlessly—is probably a sign of a certain dualistic trend in a person's thinking. To a real monist it would appear exactly as meaningless as to say about a sheet of paper: "Page 1 of this sheet produces page 2." To say that the brain produces thought would not make more sense, in his opinion, than saying that the thought produces the brain.

The viewpoint of consistent totality represents a radically different alternative, as regards the deepest relations between the inward and the outward. And that is, indeed, a most "problem-solving" alternative. But how far can it be applied as a fully reasonable explanation of the relations between the inward and the outward in human lives, wherever such relations are experienced?

We shall try and look at the whole question in a broad and unbiased way. This may prepare the way for a more detailed discussion in the properly philosophical section of our work. We shall make our preparatory notes as plain and commonplace as possible. One may arrive at the crucial problems soon enough, and the solutions we shall eventually suggest to some problems may turn out to be not quite as commonplace.

Our principal angle all the time, however, will rather be that of the historian. What are the historical facts about the development which man's ideas about man have gone through in this particular field? Is it a development towards greater totality or towards greater disruption? We shall try and show to what extent it is a development fraught with both drama and destiny. Too long already have men imagined that the anthropological relations of the inward and the outward are an insignificant thing, of practical interest to none but the speculative philosopher.

Note:

1. Harvey Carr: Functionalism, 1930; Einar Tegen: Amerikansk psykologi, utveklingslinjer och grundsyn, 1949.

Chapter 2

The "Outward Shell" Which Should Not Be Despised

Human beings down through the ages, in holding the "inward" up against the "outward" (for instance soul versus body, mental impression versus physical ex-pression) have felt strangely free to assert categorically, not only that one of them "causes" the other (and accordingly comes definitely "before" the other), but also that the one is definitely "better", "more dignified", "more real" etc., than the other. And the great general trend which that differentiation would almost invariably adopt was this:

"The inward (the impression) causes the outward (the expression)." Consequently, "the inward comes before the outward". Finally, "the inward is better (more dignified, more real) than the outward".

Of course it is here also possible to go to the opposite extreme, stating categorically: "The outward is better (more dignified, more real) than the inward." And we do not deny that we sometimes feel this latter viewpoint may, after all, be a sound reaction. But of course it should never be forgotten that there is a third alternative, as well. In some chapters of this book we discuss Aristotle's striking views of totality, as regards a certain monism of the inward and the outward, and also a certain monism of the theoretical and practical. But even in these introductory notes we shall soon return to a similar monism.

Professor Lagerborg of Uppsala University, in a brief survey "Om själslivets yttringar" (1959), gives a vivid description of some quite curious expressions, or "Ausdrucksbewegungen", as another modern psychologist (Freienfels) would call them. With these authorities as our "basis of psychological reference", we shall now in a simple and clearly understandable way—and just in accordance with the special needs of our particular topic—try to describe and interpret some very relevant facts of everyday life. Then we shall also briefly discuss the comments made by Hebb on the ideas of William James regarding the relation between human emotions on one hand and what we may call their behavioural correlates on the other.[1]

Note:

1. D. O. Hebb: The Organisation of Behaviour, a Neuro-psychological Theory, 1957.

Chapter 3

"I Am Afraid Because I Tremble"

As far as we know, it was the pragmatist William James who first formulated this idea in that paradoxical way. How much truth is there in it? Let us now, for the time being, look away from the possibility that perfect concomitance, or parallelism, or totality, is the truth here. Let us rather keep to the conventional view of a separateness, or may we say popular dualism: "One element comes first, the other comes immediately after it." The great question will then naturally be: Which comes first? Is it those thoughts and feelings of my deepest interior? Or is it the external expressions corresponding to them? As already mentioned, it has become a rather firm tradition to consider the inward and the outward in terms of cause and effect. And few people would dare to deny that causes should come before their effects. Provided that every law of conventional logic has not been turned upside down in these times of incredible upheavals, that rule may still seem to hold good, at least in this world of time-space reality which we common people know.

But then comes the next question: which is the cause here, and which is the effect? That may sometimes be quite a problematic issue.

Let us take a very commonplace example: you have been particularly successful one day. Your "inward content" is one of joy

and satisfaction. And that is no secret either. For your whole face is lighted up by a big smile. That smile is of course the outward expression of your inward joy.

"Quite right", you say, "I am first glad, and then comes the smile."

Well, can we always be sure that this is the sequence of events in the process presented here for our inspection? Especially in the country of William James a peculiar catchword has developed: "Keep smiling!" So a person smiling at a given moment might of course simply be a sworn adherent to that purposeful American device. And just how much of that "hearty" smile could then be depended upon as a "natural consequence" of some constant feeling of happiness in the very depths of a human heart? Of course the principle of "Keep smiling!" is good enough. But such principles clearly imply what a teacher of morals and religion has called a stern "educating of the human will." And why do some people—even those who are not particularly compelled to do so by any religious sense of duty—adopt that smile as a standby rule in their most practical philosophy of life? Well, simply because they have experienced that the smile, somehow, carries inward happiness along with it. Briefly stated: the outward thing is accompanied by the inward.

In other words: where the outward is, the inward is also forced to be. Or, in the context of our chosen example: where the smile exists, the happiness is, to some extent, bound to exist also. If there

is something inevitably true in this, what reason should there be to imagine that the "trick" works only in our arbitrarily selected example? Would it not be more likely to assume here a principle of general validity: the outward is always accompanied by something inward.

We have here intentionally chosen the epithet "accompanied by". Please notice that this affords room for even this third alternative: "The outward and the inward are simultaneous and inseparable, simply because they are just two sides of one and the same total reality".

So, in fact, we have three possible answers to our original question, "What is the general relation between the inward and the outward?" To be honest, the main question here, to us, is just this one: Are we discussing a relation of justifiable dualism or a relation of the deepest totality? In our thorough discussion of some dualistic trends in history we shall deal, in a particular way, with philosophical anthropology. We shall also, in a further work,[1] give an historical sketch of the attitude adopted by the great religion of our Western culture towards the most topical questions of that anthropology. So our inquiry into the actual relations between the inward and the outward may eventually be seen to reach the full dimensions of a world drama: what are the destiny-laden relations between the "inward thing" called a human soul and the "outward thing" called a human body? Should they, as well, happen to be absolutely concomitant? Are they just inseparable sides of one single reality? Or is the viewpoint of totality in this case

immediately absurd--and even indecent or blasphemous? Is it so absurd and basically irreligious that neither any intelligent philosopher nor any true theologian would ever dare to advance such a theory?

But already at this preliminary stage we are to speak about some "inward things"--here called impressions, thoughts, and feelings--and about some "outward things"--here called expressions, gestures, and actions.

First: a question well worth asking may be: Do we not, by splitting up the reality of human experience into an "inward sphere" having "pre-existence" and an "outward phenomenon" which "follows" it, render ourselves guilty of an unwarranted abstraction similar to that which Aristotle could not accept in the Platonists? They conceived the Ideas (or Forms) as eternally pre-existing reality, whereas the outward manifestations of those Ideas in the visible world were just something subsequent, contingent, ephemeral, and as inferior to the Ideas as a shadow is to the reality casting it. Aristotle, too, knows some pre-existent causes. "The moving causes exist as things preceding the effects." Christian Aristotelians of the Middle Ages, like Thomas Aquinas, were to become particularly conscious of pre-existent causes--in fact one great eternal cause, God. Aristotle, however, so definitely refractory to Plato's theory about the Idea as the only true reality and a reality eternally prior to--and absolutely separable from--the visible phenomena of terrestrial life, points out that some causes may be

"simultaneous with their effects". But here he speaks about "causes in the sense of definitions".

Aristotle takes these examples: "When a man is healthy, then health also exists." It exists just as long as that man can be described as healthy. For health is simply the description of his present physical condition.

Similarly "the shape of a bronze sphere exists at the same time as the bronze sphere."[2] They are exactly co-existent. The Form is inseparable from the matter of which it is the Form.

Now the "soul" (or anything that we may describe as the "inward contents" of man) is--in Aristotle's terms--nothing but the Form of the living human body--or any bodily manifestations (i.e. what we have called the "outward expressions") of that living human reality. So soul and body, form and matter, the inward contents and the outward manifestations, are simply phases of the same total reality, and consequently concomitant and inseparable.

According to Aristotle, then, there is "no necessity ... for the existence of the Ideas." Here he obviously means of the Ideas in the purely Platonic sense, as something of separable and anterior existence.

Now our curious question is this: "Is there a definite "Platonism" right in our very common conception today of the inward in human life as something anterior, superior, and more real?"

Suppose that our traditional assumptions are entirely erroneous? What if, in reality, those inward impressions (or contents of consciousness) are just as closely united to their outward expressions (or concrete manifestations) as the soul--according to a consistent monistic anthropology--is united to the body? Then certain logical consequences will seem to devolve quite naturally from such an assumption.

According to that consistent view of totality, the union between the inward and the outward phases of any living human reality must be as intimate as the union between the inside and the outside of, let us say, a tangible dome. Of course you may reasonably say that the inside here is different and perfectly distinguishable from the outside. That certainly applies to any partition wall. But there would also be considerable reason to think that something must be wrong with your senses, your mental soundness, if you seriously suggest: "The inside of this wall "was here already before the outside had yet arrived"." Or: "I doubt that the outside of this wall "will ever have any existence at all"."

Turning now to the different phases of the human reality, we must frankly ask: is "the outward" perhaps equally inseparable from "the inward" there too? If so, then how could we marvel that the outward display of an inward state of the human mind simply appears to be absolutely indispensable for the realization of that inward state?

For instance, to return to our first example: Without your external manifestation of happiness, how could that happiness have any chance of realizing itself in a full and genuine way in your deepest heart?

We sometimes seem to imagine that we may cast down our eyes, making a sad face and singing funeral songs--and still remain perfectly happy. Is that simply a deplorable mistake? And is it actually the inevitable mistake of all radical dualism of the visible versus the invisible, the outward versus the inward?

Among the most well-known expressions of the happiness of a human being we may mention his hearty smile, his fresh peals of laughter, and why not his exuberant hugging of a whole world around him? Why not even his spontaneous words of praise and thanksgiving to his Maker and Benefactor in the heavens above? Every little unhampered "movement outward" of that person's happiness may, after all, simply be the prerequisite or a sine qua non for its full and real existence. His joy seems to be actually born in those manifestations. It lives in them and grows strong in them. No man should ever try to tell anybody that he has been happy if he has not yet given vent to his happiness. For that would probably be a still-born happiness. It would have no chance to breathe its first breath.

And now, what about that "most inward reality" called thinking? An operation as profoundly intimate as this should certainly manage splendidly without any outward manifestations at all, shouldn"t it?

Or does even thinking require some particular "elbow room" in order to develop naturally and successfully? Anyway, most people would no doubt deem it rather bold to assert that the external expressions of thinking constitute an indispensable element of the process of thinking.

Well, how does a man absorbed in thought behave externally then? Let us have just a furtive glance at him: he keeps his head in a definite position. His eyes may be closed, or they will keep staring at some casual, preferably rather distant object inside his field of vision. His brows are probably knit. His respiratory system has reduced its functions to a minimum.

Some uncomprehending observer might actually exclaim, "What silly sort of comedy is this? Can all that tomfoolery be strictly necessary for so inward a function as thought?"

It is necessary. And it is no "tomfoolery" at all. It is the house our thoughts live in. Just tear it down, and you will soon see what becomes of your deep meditation. Suppress every single one of those mechanical gestures. Go even still further in your conscious efforts of making your ideas homeless. For instance, put on an air characterizing quite another mental attitude, let us say that of wonder. That's right: your eyes wide open, your jaw hanging down--excellent! But tell me, do you suppose that you would be capable of very fruitful intellectual activity with your face adopting that expression? You do not feel much like a philosopher, do you? Perhaps more like a fool, if you are to be quite sincere. In fact, there

is every reason to doubt that even an Einstein would have made much headway with his heavy speculations over the mysteries of relativity if he had not been allowed to let his thinking give itself a more congenial expression than that, every time he sat down to meditate.

Of course here, too, going from one extreme to the other is very tempting. For ages people have reasoned conventionally: "Deep thinking produces intense staring." So it sounds quite subtle, even revolutionary, doesn't it, to state, "no-no, intense staring, on the contrary, produces deep thought." This is also almost exactly what we observe some iconoclastic psychologists to assert.

Rightly considered, however, that new statement--pronounced with almost equal cocksureness by some lovers of paradoxical formulations--might of course be criticized as a dualistic one-sidedness, just as unwarranted as the first. It is simply an analytical attitude of the opposite form. But if rather the synthesis, the totality, is the real truth, then we should think any separation, or splitting up of that totality, must inevitably remove us from the full and inalienable reality.

In fact, you are perfectly right in asking this very relevant question: if the inward thought or feeling on one hand, and its outward movement of expression on the other, are just different aspects of one single reality, why then give the latter a stress out of all proportion, as it may sometimes come to appear that we, too, have done in the present discussion?

Well, we have two good reasons for stressing the outward in our discussion: first, its dignity and importance as an equal partner has been sadly slighted in traditional thinking (as well as in traditional living). Secondly, its more tangible character--please notice this--makes it more apt to serve as a practical hold for a truly alterocentric orientation in life.

Notes:

1. Christian Spirituality versus Pagan Spiritualism the main work in this series, not yet published, but presented and publicly defended for a doctorate in theology, Faculté de Théologie Protestante Montpellier, France.
2. Metaphysica, Book III, Chapter 3, line (10a).

Chapter 4

A Philosopher Steps Down to Curious Facts of Everyday Wisdom

Even the subtle theorist Emanuel Kant must have had some considerable portion of practical insight in the very useful "science" of changing the inward by "first" changing the outward. At least he gives a most interesting piece of advice to such who have had the misfortune of being violently attacked by their fellow men. His counsel is to this effect:

Suppose there is an excited person darting into your room one day, heaping you with the worst terms of abuse he can think of. What is then the first thing you ought to do? Kant suggests the following: as politely as you can you should entreat him to have a seat. If you succeed in getting him as far down as that, you will have the whole situation under better control. In fact, your victory is half won; for, from that moment on, the abusive terms will show a remarkable tendency to cool down.

Why? Well, simply because that more peaceful and comfortable position of his body naturally involves a corresponding relaxation of his mind. He has first definitely relaxed in his outward attitude. And that "movement of expression"--as Freienfels would have said--proves simply paralyzing to his whole inward system of warfare. The threatening attitude and the shouting voice he managed to keep up while standing, are now like a deflated balloon.

Kant's amusing stratagem here is of considerable interest to our discussion in several respects. Of course both its theoretical and its practical applicability may easily be exaggerated. One fact, however, is obvious enough: any beast that is to fall upon its prey forcefully and effectively, must see to it that it is not deprived of its initial position of superiority in a very literal sense. Similarly, any man who is to deal stunning blows to another man (even in a purely "spiritual" sense) has had his chances of an efficient "unfolding" considerably reduced, of course, if he suddenly finds himself far down in the hugging depths of an easy-chair.

Just imagine a similar spit-fire breaking into your own office one day. His rage, too, is, after all, dependent upon a certain "elbow room". His primitive deportment requires a primitive medium to unfold itself. And then, all of a sudden, you cut off every means of a natural exteriorization. Your courteous invitation to sit down is simply an ambush of the most malicious sort. That man's fresh fury is actually doomed to die out in his heart, gradually but surely.

In fact, this is a point where psychology quite dramatically seems to touch even the realms of specifically religious problems. For one thing is of course to know ~ with Kant ~ how to disarm a usual adversary. But my most dangerous adversary, from a religious viewpoint, is just my own self, and the seething emotions of my innermost mind. If I manage to keep them under control, then I have triumphantly won the day. No religious thinking and living can ignore the problems of overcoming human passions and of changing

human minds. No true religion is ever indifferent to the strange "outward thing" called action (or "works"). Is not action, after all, the "movement of expression" par excellence? And, sincerely speaking, is it not an undeniable fact that almost any person would find it far, far less problematic to command his limbs to do something (even acts of love) than to command his heart to feel something (for instance just love)?

So a question of tremendous range and importance to the alterocentric system of moral theory, as well as of pragmatic deed, naturally arises here: is perhaps the alternative of doing "first", "then" feeling (or thinking, or believing) a workable approach toward changing the innermost depths of a human mind? Is this maybe one of the ropes of salvation let down to struggling man (not necessarily excluding all other "ropes")?

In fact, the idea is not all unknown to the thinking of religious men down through the annals of church history, that divine providence may thus have provided for human being in a strikingly realistic manner, simply through the working out of some admirable "natural laws" of psychophysical interaction, instituted by the Creator even on the first day when He said: "Let the human totality be."

We may quote here just one little statement from a modern religious writer. It contains nothing startling from a dogmatic Christian point of view. For the views are in perfect accordance with what are considered to be orthodox Christian views, as regards

man's utter inability to change himself without the grace and the miraculous intervention of God. Still it affords material for strange reflections:

It is a law of nature that our thoughts and feelings are encouraged and strengthened as we give them utterance. While words express thoughts, it is also true that thoughts follow words. If we would give more expression to our faith, rejoice more in the blessings that we know we have,--the great love and mercy of God,--we would have more faith and greater joy.

And we know the striking piece of advice Pascal would not hesitate to give a group of young men who desired to obtain a deeper feeling of piety: Just conform your outward lives to all the outward practices of the Christian congregation, and you will soon see that the inward feeling of piety gradually appears "spontaneously", so to speak.

It is the theorist who makes us believe that religious life, too, may be divided up into separate departments, something called "faith" on one hand and something called `works" on the other. In our `Christian Anthropology" we shall in due course discuss what we call the dualism of faith versus works, showing that this too is an abstraction foreign to life's reality.

But is not this peculiar pattern of Christian "pragmatism", here recommended by Pascal, after all, a sort of dualism in its turn? you might perhaps object. "Perform some outward action first", it seems

to say, "and you will have some inward experience afterwards." Ought not the true viewpoint of a really consistent totality and synthesis to rather exclude every form of mutual interaction between the outward and the inward? Should it not render impossible--in principle, so to say--any influence of Form upon matter, or of matter upon Form--to continue using Aristotle's terminology?

May we try to answer this by means of a rather rough illustration:

In order to make a bicycle move on the road, it does not make any difference in principle whether you push the back-wheel or the front-wheel. Still, no one can deny: it is the totality--the bicycle--that really moves. Every normal movement in this case automatically implies a movement of the front-wheel as well as the back-wheel. In fact, all parts of the bicycle may be imagined as chained together in the most tight and intimate way. But does that make it false to say that the back-wheel, once set in motion, will immediately also "cause" the front-wheel to move? Of course it does not matter a bit whether you apply your initial motive power to one wheel or to the other. We mean quite theoretically considered. That there may be a practical difference here--a difference to you who have in front of you the tangible task to make that bicycle move without taxing your physical forces too heavily--that is quite another story. In fact, in a given case, it may be far more practical to start the pushing on one wheel than on the other. (If you decide to ride a bicycle of the usual type, we assume for instance that you will soon make up your mind to concentrate your leg-power around the

pushing of the back-wheel rather than the front-wheel.) We may express it in this way: in practice one of the wheels proves far easier to "get hold of" than the other one.

And is not that exactly the difference which also asserts itself in the case of the outward versus the inward in human psychology, as well as in any anthropological field?

We are all anxious to choose the wisest mode of tackling life's numerous problems. And then it will immediately appear more practical by far, to prefer the outward as our "point of departure", so to speak. Why? Simply because it is so infinitely more practicable to "get a firm and efficient hold" just there. Accordingly, we do not hesitate to apply our initial "pushing" on that very point. But, as for the "movement" eventually realized, it is of course the whole man who is being "moved" all the time, and not only this or that "exterior" or "interior" "part" of the compound reality he stands for.

Interestingly enough, by the way: in many respects man has adapted his behaviour quite intuitively, we assume, to these simple facts of common-sense reality.

Or is it sometimes just a sort of psychological cunning and technique on the part of a shrewd minority? Take as an example the really clever detective story writer. He has evidently made up his mind, in one particular case, not just to inform you that Miss So-and-So suddenly gets afraid, but certainly to make that idea quite humanly alive to you. Does he say then, "She got afraid"? No, no!

That would not have convinced you, his incredulous reader, at all. He prefers to say something just as simple, perhaps even much simpler, but also ten times more efficient. He says, "She suddenly stopped. Every limb was stiff. Her face turned pale. Her eyes were frigidly staring. She gave a cry."

"Why all that round-about business?" some will ask. Does not everybody know how a woman behaves when she is afraid? Well, look at every sentence once more. What is described in each case? Simply a gesture of expression. The author--consciously or unconsciously--takes into account one capital fact: you are actually not able to read about those expressions without imitating, in your own body, every one of them. At least you do make the initial movement towards "turning pale", "staring", "crying", and so on and so forth. And what happens? To express it in a graphic and highly simplified way, the various gestures do not fail to "drag along" the corresponding feelings or inward "contents" of your mind.

Chapter 5

Psycho-physical Relations in the Light of Modern Philosophy

The late Professor of Moral Philosophy at the University of Edinburgh, A.E. Taylor--in spite of his fairly strong general leanings towards traditional views of Occidental idealism--makes a strikingly monistic statement in a chapter on the mind-body problem in his remarkably original work Elements of Metaphysics. After having expressed his personal preference for the alternative of interaction as the most reasonable answer to the psychophysical question in metaphysics, he says:

We have explicitly defended Interaction as being no statement of actual experienced fact, but a working hypothesis for the convenient correlation of two scientific constructions, neither of which directly corresponds to the actualities of experience. This means, of course, that Interaction cannot possibly be the final truth for Metaphysics. It cannot ultimately be the "fact" that "mind" and "body" are things which react upon each other, because, as we have seen, neither "mind" nor "body" is an actual datum of experience; for direct experience and its social relations, the duality subsequently created by the construction of a physical order, simply has no existence. (p. 331)

The author admits that his duality is even superfluous as an assumption for the purpose of making experience consistent with

itself. It is the preconception of the physical as a rigidly mechanical system which has now caused the artificial necessity, for speculative minds, to devise the concept of a "body" and a "soul" separated from each other, and interacting on each other. Having first constructed the notion of a "body" by itself, man in this modern Western World of super-mechanization in all fields finds it inevitable to follow up, as it were, by constructing an additional notion, that of a "mind". In other words, it is, in this case, precisely the materialistic scientist who feels a certain obligation of adding this abstracted "soul" concept, simply for the purpose of recognizing, in some way--at least symbolically--the possible existence of a certain "non-mechanical" character, which "might"--after all--be that of actual human life.

Personally we must admit that we have accepted, and will go on to accept, the viewpoint of interaction as one we can never do away with, or feel the slightest need to do away with. We realize, in fact, that this particular way of expressing the mystery of psycho-physical relations in human life is a way naturally adapted, from time immemorial, to the highest levels of spirituality. Elevated religions, as monistic and close to life as Judaism and Christianity, have, unhesitatingly, availed themselves of a language of interaction here.

In fact, we realize that, in the history of ideas, very opposite "languages"--for instance a language of "parallelism"--have frequently been used to express views of the hardest and coldest materialism. This even applies to fairly recent representatives of

scientific and speculative thought. So expressions of radical monism in this respect do not necessarily indicate an alternative of greater human totality, if we go on to demand an element of spirituality as essential to that totality.

Perhaps a reasonably comprehensive list of the most important alternatives of psycho-physical interpretation is the following: 1) pre-established harmony, 2) occasionalism, 3) epiphenomenalism, 4) psycho-physical parallelism, and 5) interaction.

To the alternative of interaction we may here first oppose the two which seem to have had the greatest appeal to men during this last century of singularly intensified scientific research.

a) Epiphenomenalism

No interpretation has appealed more tremendously to modern minds deeply absorbed in the problems of our physical sciences, both physicists and physiologists. According to epiphenomenalism, all mental states are but "epiphenomena", i.e. a sort of mere accessories. They do arise in the human mind concomitantly with the series of bodily phenomena, it is true. But presumably they exert no "determining influence" on that series. If we are to believe the epiphenomenalist, it is the physical changes taking place in a human body which deserve capital attention. And he feels confident that these may be studied without "danger" of any serious interference on the part of mental factors, and, accordingly, without any serious disturbance as regards the working out of those specific physical

laws governing the physical or physiological processes. This of course ensures a wonderful uniformity, each single bodily alteration being solely determined by other bodily facts as antecedents. It is admitted that bodily conditions may be "attended by" certain "corresponding" states of consciousness, but such, "mental phenomena" do not impose themselves as efficient causes, producing any real changes in subsequent bodily conditions. Nor are they supposed to have any mutual causal connection among themselves. In other words, one state in the mental series does not even influence a subsequent state in the same series.

Expressed in terms so obviously suggestive of materialistic bias, the epiphenomenalist theory is bound to obscure any spiritual perspective of true human totality, as we have conceived it. For how could we imagine such spirituality at all unless we take, as our point of departure, certain fundamental realities which the highest religions have always invested with axiomatic dignity; and the same seems to apply to the recognized peaks of human philosophy: rational knowledge, as well as religious faith, exerts the most profound and decisive influence on man's external behaviour.

Of course the adherent of the epiphenomenal hypothesis may attenuate the rigid character of his standpoint by inferring that it is to be considered mainly as a mere methodological approach. For the sake of certain aims of physiological science it has proved useful to simply look away from the reality of mental conditions as determining factors for the whole process of bodily changes. In other words, the postulate of epiphenomenalism may be envisaged

as practical device simplifying the task of the scientist, levelling his path towards approximate knowledge of the rigid laws governing nature. That would mean a quite conscious abstraction, treating the physical or physiological processes as if psychical concomitants did not exist at all. It would be unreasonable to deny that such abstraction might serve the causes of natural science in a given instance and within this or that limited field of research (although even this calls for the utmost caution).

But as soon as the same abstraction is assumed as an adequate means of grasping the very essence of vital facts constituting the totality of a human being, it must necessarily be a sad case of oversimplification leading to serious error. One thing is to assume that certain physiological events may be foreseen, and even scientifically determined, according to certain laws of causality. It would be quite another thing to contend that they have an existence as realities entirely detached from their mental correlates.

The metaphysician who considers teleology as an integrated part of metaphysics--and there is no reason why a psychologist should not, also, be entitled to state his dependence upon similar fundamental metaphysical concepts--will invariably tend to regard ethical appreciation as an indispensable presupposition for any psycho-physiology which is to be truly meaningful, even as a science. Does epiphenomenalism now make allowance for any such place ascribed to ethical realism? An unqualified acceptance of the epiphenomenal hypothesis would rather oblige research in this field to commit itself to the great ineluctabile fatum. But to any

researcher who regards elements of religion as an integrating part of the human reality, this would be impossible. For such fatalism is not only Mohammedan and essentially pagan, it is positively anti-religious as we in this thesis understand religion.

b) Parallelism

The psycho-physical theory of parallelism may, in certain radical and dogmatic forms, manifest a very similar spirit of adamant hardness and icy coldness, which are the inescapable characteristics of automatism wherever it asserts itself. But let us rather first consider the general principles of parallelism as a modern interpretation of the body-mind reality. The parallelist theory distinguishes itself from the epiphenomenalist theory inasmuch as it gives a fairly equal treatment to the physical and the mental. A relation of causality is here accredited not only to the different terms of the physical series, but also to those of the physical series. So one state of mind stands in direct causal relation to another state of mind. True, some professed adherents of parallelism, like Munsterberg, claim that causal connection must be limited to universals, and every mental state, being a unique phenomenon, must be causally independent of any other mental state (Grundzuge der Psychologie, p. 402). In practice this reservation makes Munsterberg's parallelism come pretty close to the epiphenomenalism of other theorists. However, what has given parallelism its very name, is certainly the dogmatic insistence on the following viewpoint: If one compares a physical series and a psychical series, the two entities are entirely distinct. They remain

without any causal relation to each other. This is not only valid for one series as a whole compared to another series as a whole, but also applies to every single element of one series compared to the corresponding element of the other series. There is no causal interrelation from one side to the other; there is just parallelism.

In its rigid form, that mutual independence of the physical and the mental is an idea at total war with the stress we place upon teleology and alterocentricity--briefly on human meaningfulness. As compared to this, Spinoza's doctrine of identity expresses its theory of parallelism in terms which are bound to appear frigidly inhuman. It implies, after all, an inexorable separateness which is not very suggestive of any true monism.

Perhaps we ought to add an important remark here, lest our own "monism" be misunderstood. Repeatedly we have formulated such statements as this one: "Soul and body constitute two sides of one and the same reality."

Or: "Faith and works denote one single entity, only considered from different points of view."[1] Such formulations, however, should not be taken to imply that the terms are simply interchangeable, or synonymous in the usual sense of synonymity. No, if they are said to constitute two "sides", this does not mean one single "side". It is possible and even necessary sometimes--to distinguish between the two. What is not possible--and sometimes rather a serious act of violence--is to separate them. One should respect the fundamental fact that the two "sides", or "series",

constituting such a structured reality, are one unbreakable whole. One cannot be present if the other one is absent. They are concomitant. Therefore the name of one can be used to designate the whole they form together. Such abstractions are mere "façons de parler". They do not correspond to any actual separability. Any such idea, taken seriously, would lead to the saddest break with reality.

Ebbinghaus has a significant expression. He calls that reality which is expressed with equal adequacy by one series or by the other: a tertium quid.

In a cultural environment in which abstractions have managed to be invested with the dignity of posing as actual realities "all by themselves", we do admit that such a designation for the full reality (the structured whole) may have its merits, its legitimate place.

In the further development of our philosophical anthropology we have pointed out the curious fact that even Descartes, the man who was to secure a place of honour and prestige for dualism still extant in this age of modern scientific investigation, seems to have had a similar lucky realization of the distance between abstractions and reality. He actually feels in duty bound to admit that the human soul and the human body, when "united", suddenly manifest the "capricious behaviour", we might say, of "changing" into something "very different" from those old abstractions kept alive from age to age in the respective terms used to name each single one of them. Of course he could not fail to see that their "mysterious union" placed him face to face with nothing less than a real man! True, Descartes

did not happen to give that name of a "tertium quid" to this "new thing" his sound human senses were bound to perceive right in front of him in spite of his radical theoretical dualism. But he could have done so. At least the realistic intuition that dawns upon his mind for a moment is clearly a very similar case (see pp 309-311).

But for some reasons we feel that the strange mixtum compositum (or rather absolutely "non-mixtum/ non-compositum") which rigid parallelism conjures up, as its own peculiar type of reality, must be relegated to the realms of some "quartum quid";--or we do not really know how to express the infinite distance we feel between this ism and any imaginable form plain reality might ever adopt!

In one sense, it is true, parallelism might be assumed to favour a trend toward some kind of "monistic anthropology". But we are afraid that this would turn out to be a monism of death, not a monism of life, of living oneness. Of course, on first views, the alternative of inter-action, which we are to examine in a moment, might give the immediate impression of promising far less than parallelism does in terms of totality. But no rash conclusions should be drawn from external appearances. Decisive to our eventual choice will be the following; we can see no possibilities for a philosophy of totality in which no safe place is procured for meaning and worthiness in human life. But this is tantamount to postulating freedom as a conditio sine qua non. So nothing could be more dubious than an alternative interpretation of man's mind-body

reality involving automatism as a built-in feature, the very opposite of freedom, as a prerequisite for meaning.

There is something fundamentally negative about the theory of parallelism which, from the outset as it were, could hardly be likely to inspire us with confidence. Notice this: the best argument one seems able to offer in favour of it is an essentially negative one. And what is it that one denies here? One denies that there can ever exist any significant relations between states of the mind and states of the body in a human life. Why can there not exist any such relations whatsoever? Because there is no "scientific basis", allegedly, for thinking that any equation can reasonably be established between dimensions so "qualitatively different"! In other words, the two aspects of the human reality, a person's mind and the same person's body, represent dimensions so despairingly incommensurable that their "being together" simply remains "devoid of sense to the scientist"! What creates the problem is not quantity; it is quality. This is once more the tragedy of quality in a modern world. Quality had to be ostracized because it could find no legitimate place as a meaningful reality in a universe erected by the scientific mind. What a disaster!

For instance, it is a well-known historical fact that modern mathematical physics, from its very origins, has proved incapable of constructing a system which could include qualitative change as an objectively verifiable reality. And even up to the present day mathematical physicists seem to think that their success in building up a world of reality is entirely dependent upon their willingness to

sacrifice quality. Or how, otherwise, could one interpret this willful resolution to close one's eyes to qualitative change under the pretext that it is "purely subjective" (translate: "devoid of scientific sense")?

Now an ironic epilogue could be attached to this sad story, for even as early as the beginning of this century the philosopher A. E. Taylor was able to show, thanks to an irrefutable metaphysical argument, that mathematical physics actually destroys the whole concept of cause, if it persists in reducing all change to quantitative transformation. For the very problem of the origin of what is qualitatively new, happens to be an essential part of the idea of causality (op. cit. pp. 1 and 323).

Of course, there is no lack of evidential cases where science is simply forced to include the fullness of human life in order to mean anything whatsoever. This is what happens, for instance, to psychophysiology. In such cases any would-be-scientific one-sidedness is certainly bound to become disastrous. That should be one good reason why we are well advised to consider with serious hesitation the current type of "parallelism" as an alternative theory to account for human body-mind reality. In the form philosophy and science have constantly tended to give this parallelist interpretation of man, it comes so alarmingly close to a virtual denial of all living integration that meaningfulness simply ceases to exist, not only on a spiritual level, but even on a purely temporal level.

Scientists with rather materialistic leanings have also referred to the principle of conservation of energy as an argument against all

causal connections between so heterogeneous entities as body and mind. If any "purely mental" state were assumed as exerting an actual influence upon the course of a "purely physiological" change, then one would also have to assume that actual work had thereby been performed, and notice: work performed in a physical organism "without the obligatory expenditure of physical energy"! Vice versa, there is similar fear that, if there should happen to be a morsel of "nonphysical" elements in the process of nervous change, then there might be "loss of energy without due work being done exactly corresponding to that energy".

Ward, in his work Naturalism and Agnosticism, already met this apprehension by showing that the principle of conservation of energy is nothing more than a law of exchanges. True, the quantity of the energy in a conservative system remains constant under all transformations happening to that system, but it affords no means of deciding what transformation is to occur in the system, or when this shall take place. Suppose that just mental conditions can determine that moment when energy in the organism is to be transformed, say, from a kinetic to a potential state, then there would be no breach with the principle of conservation (p. 324).

Within the precincts of parallelism the views may be considerably modified. Stout, a professed parallelist himself, gives evidence of such modification in his Manual of Psychology. Here he suggests that the mental series present a "more adequate revelation" of man's psycho-physical reality than do the physical series.

Dogmatic parallelism, as well as any other rigid theory of an automatic psycho-physical correlation, is bound to run a serious risk of one-sidedness and estrangement from life if it bluntly refuses to recognize any duality whatsoever or any causal connectedness whatsoever in the human body-mind relations. However correct it may be to say that body and mind, the outward and the inward, constitute two sides of the same reality, plain teleological metaphysics seems to imply that this is not the whole truth. There is an inherent necessity of assuming that the human connection between any elements of that structure is a living one. And here there must even be room for considering them from the viewpoint of "different levels". Accordingly it must be permissible to consider one term, the soul, as revealing the human reality more fully and more adequately than does another term, the body. A man is not a wall. His "sides" are not like those of a dead piece of wood. The relations between inward and outward in that living totality, man, are bound to be far more captivating.

c) Interaction

Anyway, the perspective of interaction may certainly present an interpretation of man's psychophysical enigma just as reasonable as any other hypothesis suggested. Does this necessarily mean that for instance a certain Inward state of mind, called for brevity's sake "I", is kept at abeyance somewhere as a "cause", and "then", after due contemplation of its obligation and dignity as a "cause", eventually rises up to produce its respective "effect", for instance in the form of some bodily condition? Does it mean that the mind-body, or body-

mind, interaction constitutes a definite two-term process, in which one term precedes and the second follows?

We have seen in the case of biblical theology that a similar anteriority-posteriority viewpoint is not inevitable. The creative command from the lips of the Omnipotent One (some would say the "cause") on the one hand, and the produced creation (some would say the "effect") on the other, perfectly coincide with each other. It is only an abstracting afterthought, an artificial theoretical reconstruction, that distinguishes the two as separate events, one "following after" the other. The fact is: "There be light"--And there was light (Genesis 1:3), a process of "causal succession" and still perfect unity, absolute oneness in time.

How far can the Inward and the Outward in human psycho-physics be imagined as simultaneous? How far can--or must--psycho-physical interaction be imagined as a process of totality? First the theoretical possibility. To come to the aid of our imagination, let us return to our previous schema of the bicycle. Or better still: we simply take two wheels firmly and indissolubly connected together by a power transmission chain.

Wheel I Wheel O Wheel I-O

According to the common formulations of the alternative of interaction, it may here be said that "I" influences "O" and "O" influences "I". But in what way? Is it in such a way that one may say: "The cause precedes its effect"? Of course it is the current

impression that an "initial motive Impulse" operative in "I" will "subsequently" cause "O" to rotate (or vice versa). But in practical reality that "effect" is instantaneous. And that whole transmission of power "from one wheel to the other" proves to be so evenly distributed along any imaginable "point" of the "machine", as a whole, that you could hardly with any empirical evidence or logical reason maintain: "In this particular sector of this particular wheel the cause is concentrated, for just here my hand grasped that wheel and pressed it forward." Or: "In that other sector--or that other wheel--the effect--and nothing but the effect--must be concentrated. For I, at least, never touched the machine at those other points!"

Such categorical distinctions are meaningless to practical reality in this case, just as they would be meaningless in the following and somewhat simplified case: Imagine one single wheel--or, if you prefer, one larger wheel "placed outside" a smaller "interior" one. In fact, the "exterior" wheel is constructed in one piece with the "interior". In other words, they are inseparably connected with each other. Or better: they are one single wheel. (See Wheel I-O.)

Now your great "causa efficiens", that initial pressure from your finger, may of course concentrate on any single "point" of this larger unity, the wheel. And you may say, "may cause" is limited to this particular spot (e.g., some definite part of the "exterior" wheel). Nevertheless, without any lapse of time whatsoever--according to all practical evidence--any movement in that "limited part" is extended to a movement comprising the entire mass of "both" wheels. You might of course, theoretically, "explain" this immediate and all-

comprehensive transmission of power by saying to yourself, "The molecules upon which my finger first exerted its pressure obviously influenced the molecules closest to them; these, in their turn, influenced the ones closest to them, and so on, and so forth." But all this is just superimposed theory and, in one sense, rather vain imagination. For the factual datum is and remains this one: The whole wheel was here exposed to pressure. And nothing less than the whole wheel started moving immediately. So if you still prefer to say that wheel "I", for instance, communicates its motive power to wheel "O" you might just as well proceed to say: wheel "O" reacts back on wheel "I", etc., etc.

In fact, it is logically contradictory to imagine any kind of causation as discontinuous. And in our present case we undoubtedly have to do with a continuous system. In various respects any wheel may obviously be regarded as a series presenting the distinctive features of continuity. For, according to definition, "a series is continuous when any term divides the whole series unambiguously into two mutually exclusive parts which between them comprise all the terms of the series, and when every term which so divides the series is itself a term of the series" (Change and Causality, p. 171).

These conditions always apply to the time series. Accordingly the time series is of necessity a continuous series. And this is of the greatest interest to us when we consider causal relations, particularly the notion that a cause is "bound to" precede its effect. Since the days of Hume, logicians were for a long time under the impression that the causal processes are discontinuous. Experience was

assumed to come to man, not as an unbroken stream of consciousness, but as isolated "atoms". These separate morsels were then, allegedly, linked together by man himself in an artificial way, which was the human notion of causality. In other words: there is no necessary concatenation. May we sum up Hume's question in this way: How has man hit upon the fixed idea of connecting together events in the law-directed unity of a continuous series? Our question ought to be: How has Hume--and his followers--hit upon the idea of disconnecting them? We shall soon return to both the historical circumstances and the logical facts here implied. But let us first try to clarify some points as regards the idea of a causal connection between mind and body.

F.H. Bradley, in his work Appearance and Reality begins by stating the reasons why he has felt obliged to reject the idea of simple identity (p. 323, ed. 1906). Then he turns to the belief "which occurs to the unbiassed observer". That is the belief that soul acts upon body and body upon soul. If, "without any theories you look at the facts", you immediately find that "changes in one series ... are often concerned in bringing on changes in the other". It is "obvious that alterations in the soul come from movements in the organism. And it is no less obvious that the latter may be consequent on the former. We may be sure that no one, except to save a theory, would deny that in volition mind influences matter. And with pain and pleasure such a denial would be even less natural. To hold that now in the individual pleasure and pain do not move, but are mere idle accompaniments, to maintain that never in past development have they ever made a difference to anything--surely this strikes the

common observer as a willful paradox" (p. 324). Bradley seriously doubts that most of those who have accepted the doctrine in general, have fully realized its meaning. His own conclusion is that the natural view—that of a body and a soul having influence on each other--is a view he has found to be proof against attacks.

This eminent metaphysician, however, modifies his statement of the mind-body interaction in a way which we believe to be worth noticing:

Let me say at once that, by a causal connection of mind with matter, I do not mean that one influences the other when bare [the latter emphasis is ours]. I do not mean that soul by itself ever acts upon body, or that mere bodily states have an action on bare soul ... I understand that, normally, we have an event with two sides, and that these two sides, taken together, are the inseparable cause of the event which succeeds. What is the effect? It is a state of soul going along with a state of body ... And what are we to say is the cause? It is a double event of the same kind, and the two sides of it, both in union, produce the effect. The alteration of mind which results, is not the effect of mind or body, acting singly or alone, but of both working at once.

This complicating affirmation of the facts is undoubtedly very much to the point and absolutely necessary. The causal connection in either direction being this double one, our convenient simplification may lead to false conclusions, however correct our general postulate of mind-body interaction may be. How could we

avoid falsifying our issues if we fail to distinguish between total causes and part causes, between total effects and part effects. So if the interaction statement is to have any validity at all, we might say that it has to be formulated approximately thus: there is mutual influence between one body-mind condition and another body-mind condition. But what is a body-mind condition in any case? In the world of empirical reality it is an entity so mysteriously blended that an abstraction of distinct elements in it leaves no meaning whatsoever. In fact, even this body-mind condition as a whole may, in the last analysis, be an abstraction leaving no meaning. From what should this have been meaninglessly abstracted? Well, why not from the totality of the universe? And we are not speaking about a universe without a God above it (and constantly interfering with it). For that too would be an unwarranted, full-truth disturbing abstraction.

It will be remembered that one important reason why we could not accept the psycho-physical alternative of absolute identity, was the radical issue of automatism to which it seemed to lead us. It would clash with our views of meaningfulness if we were to establish relations of such automatism either between mind and body or between the body-mind totality and the greater totality of the universe. The schema of the two wheels--or of the two opposite pages of one and the same sheet of paper--is useful enough as such. One should only be careful not to imagine that the schema contains the whole truth. It is a fateful error to put a sign of equation between the inward and the outward. A soul can never be identical with a body. Faith is not the same as works. How hopelessly heterodox

would it not be to state, in religion, that "faith is works"? What would happen to texts in the New Testament if one simply substituted one term for the other? For instance: "The just shall live by works". Luther would have every reason to condemn us as stiff-necked heretics, if ever we violated the text of Romans 7: by treating faith and works as completely interchangeable terms in that light-minded way.

Now you may reasonably ask, "If, in one instance, one adopts, for the psycho-physical reality of man, a viewpoint of perfect wholeness, in the sense that the two terms of this reality should be envisaged as aspects of equal dignity, and, in the other instance, one suggests that one of the terms--the soul, or the faith--must definitely be regarded as presenting a "higher level", or a "fuller degree of reality", do we not then render ourselves guilty of some obvious contradiction?

Or, first this objection: if, on one hand, we defend viewpoints of unqualified monism and mere "concomitance" as the proper expression for a relation between the "inward" and the "outward", and then, in the next moment, viewpoints of indubitable interaction, i.e. a mutual influence in terms of cause and effect, do we not then render ourselves guilty of an equally gross contradiction? Do we not commonly demand of a cause that it precede its effect? And is not this concept of the preceding versus the subsequent something very different from concomitance?

We may meet this charge of a contradictory attitude by first referring to our own recent schematic illustration. Did the "two wheels" show mutual relations of a continuous or a discontinuous character? This is an important first question. For it casts some significant light upon the question as to whether or not cause and effect must be considered in terms of priority and posteriority respectively.

As a brief and mainly historical intercalation, we may refer to our discussion in Book III[2] of the respective thought patterns of two different cultures. The spirit of the ancient Hebrews differs widely from that of our Western culture precisely in this: with the former there was a viewpoint of "togetherness" and totality even when their minds were invited to assess the proper relations of events we modern Occidentals would characterize as definitely separate events. As a plausible explanation it has been suggested by several prominent students of Hebraic versus Greek or Western thinking, that we heirs of a Hellenist culture have been engrossed in our viewpoints of prevailingly causal relations. Our "logical concept" of a cause that "precedes" and an effect which is bound to "follow" exerts a formidable sway over our minds.

Now it must also be admitted that this present age has been an age of an intensely realistic inquiry into the crude facts of human life. Such inquiry could not fail to reveal to many of our leading scientists and thinkers a flagrant discrepancy between simple empirical reality and the "logical derivations" from the traditional principles of causal thinking. The result is that some modern minds

have actually been forced back into thought patterns of a well nigh Hebraic totality. After a radical application of the causal principle they had to face the frustrating predicament that this principle, consistently applied, did not yield a logically satisfactory explanation of one single event. Taylor describes the dilemma of an infinite regress to which the causal postulate inevitably leads in these words:

The same reasons which lead us to demand a cause A for any event B, and to find that cause in an assemblage of antecedent events, require that A should be similarly determined by another assemblage of antecedent events, and that this cause of A should itself have its own antecedent cause, and so on indefinitely. (Op. cit., p. 177)

The time series, as we have already pointed out, is, per definitionem, a continuous, infinite one. Just as any point on a line is without any conceivable next term, because this line is a continuous series, so any moment you may like to choose along the "line" of time is without any next term. If it had such a next term, time would not be continuous.

But time is continuous, according to the definition of continuity. And causation taking place in time must be equally continuous. What would it mean, however, to contend that a cause "precedes" its effect? It would be tantamount to saying that the time series is one, after all, in which a given term does have a next term. If Hume were right in his postulate that causation is discontinuous, this would

mean that a gap of "empty time", as Taylor puts it (p. 173), actually separates a "first" event--the cause--from the "following" event--the effect.

This conception of the causal process as a discontinuous series and its corollary, the idea of a priority-posteriority relation of cause and effect, bequeathed to modern logic by Hume, is a curious thing. It presupposes that the cause has first had some kind of separate and complete existence. Only after it has reached this stage of completeness, is it eventually followed by its effect. But what does such separateness and completeness of the "preceding" cause imply? It implies, once more, an actual "gap" of intermediate time separating it, unquestionably, from its "successor" on the scene. The fact of the case is, however, that the cause has no sooner reached its stage of completeness than the effect is also there. And "no sooner--than" means no gap whatsoever. It means simultaneously. And if simultaneity and precedence are qualities used to describe the same process, then words have ceased to have any true meaning. "Togetherness" can never become synonymous for "separateness".

Here we must also keep in mind Bradley's timely admonition. We may sum it up as follows: The cause itself--if we accept this term--is a weird mixtum compositum (an intimate "togetherness") of bodily and mental states. And so is the effect. In other words, to speak of, for instance, a "physical condition" as the cause A leading up to for instance a "physical condition", the effect B, is at best a daring oversimplification. We might suggest another schema which would seem considerably closer to the truth: a mind-body condition

in which the mental element appears to be preponderant, and therefore called Mb, presents itself as a cause of--or at least a human fragment having some definite connection with--a body-mind condition in which the bodily element appears to be predominant, and is therefore called Bm.

This increased complication of the matter makes it still more improbable that it makes any sense in practical reality to speak about a cause-effect separateness--either in time (corresponding to the old theoretical schema of "before-after"), or in quality (corresponding to the equally theoretical schema "body-mind" or "mind-body").

Conclusion: psycho-physical inter-action, if it means anything at all, must mean togetherness--at least this more than anything else.

We may here seem to have been constantly conniving for a general impeachment against causal reasoning as an adequate means of reaching tenable conclusions about the human reality. Does any school of thought, through its particular awareness of the demands of totality, or for other reasons, envisage any special system of logic adapting itself more readily to viewpoint of connectedness than does the traditional schema of causal sequence? At least there is "another system". And, as far as I can see, it is one leading astonishingly close to what we have described as a definitely non-Western and a non-modern mode of thinking. With us that means, in more affirmative terms, a Judeo-Christian way of thought.

The "cause-versus-effect" concept is occasionally, even right in the age of modern philosophy, replaced by a "ground-and-consequence" concept. As we have substituted here the connective "and" for the "versus" (which latter interpolation is also a device of emphasis we have taken the liberty to use), we might perhaps just as well have replaced the word "consequence" at the same time. For its etymology implies, after all, something "following upon" something else, as the simplex "sequence" amply testifies.

But what is, then, in the technical language of logic, meant by ground and consequence? Ground is defined as the underlying principle of a logical system. The consequence is the "detail in which that principle finds its systematic expression". Important here is the following: ground and consequence constitute one single systematic whole. This whole, considered from the point of view of a common all-pervading nature, is the "ground". Considered from the point of view of every detail, the same system is envisaged as the "consequence". The latter constitutes a plurality of differences, but each one of those differences is pervaded and determined by one common principle, which is the former.

Where change is taking place, one event may seem to succeed the other in an "arbitrary" way. But this succession of a plurality of allegedly "separate" states (the consequence) is an appearance which may not occur at all to the person who has once succeeded in grasping a vision of the underlying principle of a common structure (the ground).

Is there any difference then between the "ground-consequence" concept and the "cause-effect" concept? Yes, there is a remarkable difference of perspective. In the former case the two terms constitute one single systematic entity, a well-balanced whole. The principle of ground-and-consequence is certainly no narrow one. It goes to the length of saying that the whole of existence is one complete system in which each single part has the most intimate coherence with that whole and is entirely determined by that coherence.

How does this difference affect the question of a "separateness" in time for the two terms? That goes without saying. If ground-and-consequence form a coherent whole, and this whole completely determines the details of which the system is composed, then it would be an unwarranted license to detach one particular component saying that this one, all by itself, could suffice to determine another constituent of "lesser ascendency" (or of no ascendency at all, as this is traditionally assumed for the "effect", exerting no influence whatsoever on its respective cause, according to the well-known one-sided system of causal dependence).

Admittedly, to logicians of the conventional type it would appear downright nonsensical to contend that an effect, to any degree, determines its cause. But as soon as one has accepted the full implications of the principle of ground-and-consequence, one has admitted a perfect reversibility of the determining influence. An effect determines its cause just as much as a cause determines its effect (167-8).

The absolute reciprocity of two terms here seems to bring us right back to some prevailing viewpoints we have observed as essential to Hebraic thought forms and revealed in significant phases of Hebrew grammar: past, present, and future form an undifferentiated whole. Once the observer has grasped the inherent principle of this continuous flow of events, their co-existence and interdependence, then he has no difficulty in realizing their parity of standing, and the arbitrariness of selecting one of them as unique in its autocratic relation to the others. Taylor takes the example that, in reality, eclipses can be equally well calculated for the future and for the past. In fact, if the future is determined by the past, it is equally true that the past is determined by the future. It makes no essential difference at which point you start or in what direction you conduct your reasoning. You must only know the general principle of the whole process. You must know the common ground, according to which the particular terms, the different details, belong together, we might say, in order to keep the stress where it is actually due. Here it is not a bit more logical to make an inference from such a detail even of an earlier date to one of a later date than vice versa. For both are stages of the very same process. Choosing one or the other as your point of departure, is simply a matter of your preferring positive or negative values for your time-variable.

No wonder that physicists as thoroughly experienced and as philosophically open-minded as Mach and Oswald finished by placing their hopes in a so-called descriptive approach of scientific explanation. The ideal here suggested is that of merely "describing" the progressive course of events. This is done by means of just

general formulae--formulae as plainly conceived as possible, and as few in number as possible. In accordance with this descriptive method in science, the proper question asked by the investigator is not: "in consequence of what antecedents do things in nature at a given moment behave in such or such a way?" No, the question is in all its modesty--and its greater realism--simply: "In what way do they happen?" full stop! Do scientists of that kind manifest any great confidence in the supreme virtues of the theories of causation classically conceived? Ernst Mach is known to have gone even to the extreme of asserting that the word "cause" ought to have been expelled from the nomenclature of modern science (Science of Mechanics, p. 483).

The viewpoint of a truly continuous process is bound to be something radically different from the viewpoint of successive events in the sense of a certain separateness. For if you keep the idea of a continuous process unmolested, you cannot without utter arbitrariness undertake to draw your mental line of demarcation between an "earlier event" and a "later event". Of course you serve a useful theoretical purpose every time you put your pencil down on the paper making dots denoting the series of single details (or "separate events") along that continuous line of the real process. Each one of those dots represents values simply helping you to visualize the process as a whole. But the sad misconception arises at the moment when that descriptive formula which has helped you to draw a line from one value of your time-variable to the other, thus showing the course of the whole process, is suddenly conceived as the cause of that process, whereas, in reality it is simply the

principle by which it is what it is. The brave step our descriptive science has actually taken is just to leave the category of cause out of the picture completely. Instead of this it concentrates its attention on the ground of the whole process. And where is that ground to be found? Not in a system of "separate" and "anterior" events, but simply in the inherent and all-pervading principle which that ground itself represents. A system which to the student of living reality must have seemed disruptive and tyrannical in its one-sidedness, has been superseded by a system of harmonious rest.

Notes:

1. E. G. White: Ministry of Healing, 1905, p. 251.
2. Spirituality versus Spiritualism, II, 2 (Totality in Hebrew Anthropology).

Chapter 6

Religion's Greatest Principle of Outward Action: Does It "Turn Into" Something Inward?

First briefly an incident related recently from an American community. It is a simple story from everyday life. But it may imply deeper philosophical problems than most people imagine. To us it serves the purpose perfectly of posing those problems, thus forming an excellent basis for some essential points we want to make in our further discussion:

A young woman visited a well-known psychiatrist one day. Her marriage had gone on the rocks, and now she wanted to be divorced. However, before leaving her husband she had the frenetic desire to hurt him as vehemently as ever possible. She hated him with all her heart. That was the only reason why she solicited the psychiatrist's advice.

"Well, I know men," said the psychiatrist. "So I can tell you exactly what will hurt your husband's feelings more acutely than anything else. If you take my advice you simply stay with him for another three weeks or so. In the course of that time you should treat him with treacherous friendliness. In fact, you ought to do him all the good you could ever imagine. Let him gradually be wrapped up in the deceptive idea that you love him sincerely. And then, suddenly one day, you break away from him as cold as ice. That will hurt him to the core. But we shall plan the rupture in more detail

once you have practiced your fraudulent work upon his self-conceited mind. The departure should be made as scornful and cutting as possible. But remember: now in the first round you are to load him with goodness and all imaginable tokens of love. And see to it that they look as genuine as possible."

The woman thought that was a shrewd plan, and just sufficiently wicked and cynical to suit her purpose. She joined it wholeheartedly and followed the instructions as closely as she could.

Finally one day she came back to the psychiatrist, as she had promised.

"Well, did you proceed exactly as I told you?" he inquired.

"Yes, I have been heaping him with goodness and love every day since I left your consulting room", she said.

"Good, and now, what date do you think would be most convenient to leave him?"

"Leave him? Why should I leave him? I couldn’t think of leaving him now. Not for a moment. I love him. I have never loved him as I do today."

We do not bother about the authenticity of any details in this case history as a particular event. To us it may simply serve to represent an endless number of stories in actual life, presenting very

similar features in the main trend. And what particularly interests us at the moment is just some theoretical problems they all seem to raise. (We shall later have opportunity to discuss Aristotle's theory that "we do not possess virtue until we have put it into practice".[1])

What is it, generally speaking, that takes place in cases of this order? Has the inward transformation been brought about through the simple instrumentality of an outward action? That sounds almost like magic--the more so as the actions in many cases do not even have the advantage of basing themselves on any palpable trace of genuine motives from the outset. But in spite of that serious handicap, they simply seem to seize any motive available, just as the potter seizes the neutral lump of clay. The decisive is not the material, it seems, but rather the mould. "By constantly repeating acts of vice you become vicious. By constantly repeating acts of virtue you become virtuous" (Aristotle, see his Nicomac. Ethics--1103 a, ss.).

But still, how could such totally external movements of expression actually mould the deepest emotional attitudes of human minds after their own image? Is not this, after all, exaggerating the power of the outward over the inward--exaggerating it almost just as unreasonably as, from times immemorial, the tyranny of the inward over the outward has tended to be described in exaggerated terms?

We are certainly as afraid as anybody of every kind of exaggeration. As a general principle we would rather warn against the tendency to consider the outward and the inward, exaggeratedly,

in terms of superiority and inferiority. In the history of our culture so far--as we shall amply demonstrate later--the inward has been extolled as the one "sovereign reality". Don"t let us commit a similar blunder in the opposite direction. That would only tend to keep false dualism alive, and to go on indefinitely doing violence against totality.

An endless debate taking place between eminent American psychologists regarding the so-called "James-Lange Theory of Emotion", certainly show to what extent the classical dichotomy penetrating our whole culture has been able to confuse the issues here, even for sober-minded scientists who do their best to obtain a true and objective picture of human nature.

We have mentioned James" point already: a danger suddenly perceived may be the stimulus. The response follows immediately: the subject starts trembling. Only then comes the conscious feeling of fear. Or, as Hebb puts it: James and Lange postulate that the awareness follows the emotional behaviour; it does not precede it and cause it. ("I see the bear, I run, I feel afraid.") The more recent assumption that the "higher" centres of the cortex are not needed for the response,[2] is no refutation of the position adopted by James. On the contrary, it clearly supports it. What, then, can be responsible for an inconsistent argumentation on the part of some investigators here? Hebb finds only the explanation: It must be "the immutable idea that only emotional awareness or feeling can produce emotional response. If the response is there, the feeling must be there also".[3]

Perhaps it would be a still clearer expression of what people have always erroneously tended to think: "If the response is there now, the feeling must have been there even earlier."

Or is it, after all, the common people who are most inclined towards this inveterate view that the inward comes first? It strikes us as a noteworthy historical fact that, repeatedly, men with no scientific theories of modern psychology at all, but with a fair amount of intuitive perception, prove admirably capable of grasping some flashing truths about the relations between the outward and the inward in human lives. May we, by way of example, mention a seeming paradox from Roman literature. It once made an indelible impression on our minds, as soon as we became fully aware of its deeper significance. It is Tacitus who says somewhere in his Annals:

Proprium est humani ingenii odisse quem laeserit.

"Can that be true?" some would immediately inquire. Is it really a characteristic of the human mind to hate the person it has hurt?

Of course we are all quite familiar with the idea that human beings have a characteristic tendency to proceed to the act of hurting a person towards whom they already accumulated a certain amount of that not too uncommon emotion called hatred. But suppose I have, myself, happened to cause some offense or damage to somebody--perhaps even quite inadvertently. In other words, that unfortunate victim, perhaps an entire stranger to me, has so far had only one "fault": in some way or other he has exposed himself to my

presumably quite thoughtless and involuntary blows. And now comes the serious anthropological question: What monster from the bottomless abyss of human wretchedness urges me to entertain suddenly an instinctive resentment against that unfortunate and perfectly innocent fellow-creature?

If you are rather lenient in your evaluation of my case, you will perhaps say that my guilty conscience--or even just an intensely unhappy consciousness of that poor fellow's sufferings--has finally rendered the bare thought about him quite disagreeable to me. So--consciously or unconsciously--I get busy trying to track some concrete and more "decent" reason for that gradually increasing resentment I feel against the person himself. And those who search shall find. That seems to apply even to the absurd and evil things for which human minds may search.

Anyway, before long, I have half a dozen excellent "reasons", all nicely adapted to the urgent needs of the case.

"Why!" I say to myself--"of course that fellow was not, after all, quite as innocent as he looked at first. Why did he do this and that in connection with the accident? Others, too, I hear, have had difficulty with him. Perhaps he is just the "rascal" who would deserve all the bad treatment he has now received." It is so comforting to know that finally someone got "just what he bargained for". In fact, even if he got a little more, that probably just "serves him right". So why not give him a little more?

The further relations between me and my "enemy" develop at a rattling pace, both internally and externally. I hurt him still harder now--and not quite as inadvertently this time, I am afraid. Every new negative action against him, however, draws along new negative feelings--exactly in accordance with the principle laid down by old Tacitus. Hurting produces hate, and hate produces hurting--an interminable vicious circle.

But notice this above all: to divide up that restlessly rotating wheel of human misery--or, in the opposite case, of human happiness--into sharply delimited sectors, is an absolutely hopeless task--probably also an absolutely meaningless task!

To separate hate, "the inward reality", from hurting, "the outward reality", is an analysis undertaken in the closet of the theorizing philosopher. But whether it will be acknowledged as legal tender on the empirical exploration grounds of practical life is another question.

Notes:

1. See also our chapters on Aristotle, I, II, etc.
2. Bard's work, "Emotional expression after decortication" (Psych. Rev., 41, 1934), once aroused great interest. It suggested the posterior hypothalamus as a centre on which sham rage depended. In a later work, "Neural Mechanisms in Emotional and Sexual Behavior" (Psychosom. Med., 4, 1942), he modified those theories considerably, and Lashley

and Masserman are cited as authors limiting the functions of the diencephalon to a motor integration. Earlier this region was regarded as the "seat of human emotions". See Hebb: The Organisation of Behaviour, 1957, p. 235.

3. Hebb: op. cit., p. 237.

Chapter 7

The Receptacles of Life

If we were to venture upon a general formulation which might give a somewhat understandable idea of the relations between the inward and the outward in human lives, it would have to be this rather figurative one:

We may imagine that the outward expressions are kinds of containers, and into those containers we pour various things. But what happens quite naturally to a liquid for instance when you pour it into a vessel? What shape does it take? It simply has no choice. It is obliged to take the shape of the vessel. In a somewhat similar way we may imagine the situation of our minds. Their contents are our thoughts, our moods, our emotions. All such inward things, however, must have an outward form, a certain embodiment. Otherwise they probably won"t have any existence at all. True enough, it has been a favourite fancy of human speculation to create a sort of bodiless spirit. We have found it essential to stress a remarkable predilection for abstractions in our culture. But this alone can hardly be sufficient to account for our fanciful conception of a sort of human mind monster fluttering around without any kind of body, without any kind of external substance.

One thing is sure, however: no psychology basing itself upon the simple data of observable life has--so far--proved the existence of any such human "inwardness" entirely divested of its corresponding

"outwardness". The only thing that has been scientifically proved to exist is contents contained in a container. The interior essence invariably depends on an exterior form. And that exterior form is simply decisive for the very character of the contents.

Have we not sufficiently observed the consistency of this process? Whatever was poured into the container "Astonishment", became astonishment. Whatever is poured into the container "Fear", becomes fear.

"You are afraid because you tremble", said William James. There is a startling truth in that statement. For only at the moment when your fear is permitted an adequate expression--in the form of, say, cries and trembling gestures--only then will that fear unfold itself and become a really living sentiment. To be quite exact: only then has it actually begun.

And we have seen--fortunately--that the same applies to more useful emotions (we do not mean by this to suggest that fear cannot be useful in any form).

In fact, the assumption that all more favourable contents of our unfathomable interior have the same dependence on the particular mould of their concrete containers, gives us some new reasons to hope. For this actually means that there must be a certain "medium" through which we may have a better chance to "catch hold" of them.

To those students of human life who desire to go beyond the limited realms of "pure" psychology--into the realms of morals and religion--the present topic must have a particular significance. For here there seems to be nothing less than the possibility of a certain control over human emotions, for instance simply by means of a volitional force towards concrete ameliorations. We shall see how far this is compatible, not only with views of obstinate stoicism, or with optimistic humanism, but also with views espoused by the Christian Church across the centuries.

But even here and now--as soon as we have turned to look at those contents and those containers from this essentially moral angle--we must have the right--as well as the duty--to express our opinion in essentially moral terms. And then we wish to emphasize that it has become a fateful habit of man in our culture to despise everything that is exterior. The more he thinks himself educated and superior and "spiritual", the more he seems to feel duty-bound to despise it.

"Just an outward little thing!" we say more or less contemptuously all of us, judging various kinds of "containers" with our haughty eyes. Who cares about the "shell"? The real thing is the "kernel", isn’t it? Why should we waste our time considering "mere skeletons"?

Let us be a little more careful here. Some more reverence for the "bags" and the "boxes" seems to be an urgent necessity. For those "pitiable containers" may--in the skillful hands of a person near to

life--become instruments with which he is able to mould even his own destiny. Anyway, the soundly outward-oriented lover of life will take care not to make light of "outward things".

Nothing seems more difficult for man to learn than the simple lesson of life itself. Its supreme wisdom, however, should be eloquent enough: there is danger in losing one's path in the lonely maze of moods and ideas. For the bewildering world of the deep interior often has no real resting place for the weary foot of a human wanderer. In the outward walk of practical life with its tangible tasks and its firm realities there generally seems to be far more of soundness and safety. At least that has all the encouraging substantiality of the concrete and the particular. Here, in the great loom of individual actions, even the textures of the deepest values in interior life are woven thread upon thread.

Chapter 8

A Worthwhile Alternative: Totality

In the history of psychological and philosophical anthropology there has been a constant oscillation in this world between radical spiritualism and radical materialism. That oscillation has caused fateful disruption in human life. An astonishingly small number of thinkers have opted for a third alternative: that of totality. The majority of high-aspiring idealists among them seem to have regarded a more or less radical spiritualism as the culmination of a really worthwhile spiritual attitude, and that spiritualistic type of dualism will be the main topic of our work.

We do not for a moment doubt the good intentions of thinkers who have sought their refuge in the idea, the tenacious idea, of something they call pure spirit, that is, an independent mental quality perfectly able to do without its bodily correlate. It is undoubtedly with the greatest sincerity they have believed that the only true spirituality was to be found just in this.

We do understand perfectly man's convulsive efforts to rise above the evident impotence and helplessness of the body. His senses tell him unmistakably that bodies die. But if life does have the wonderful value we commonly ascribe to it, then survival is bound to be a most important thing. To put it briefly: his intense longing for immortality inspired man to defy every testimony of his sound physical senses. The great disruption he feared was the one

that obviously threatened to cut him off inexorably from everything he held dear. So the kind of connectedness that was bound to have the strongest appeal to his heart was the one really promising to maintain his identity, put as much as ever possible of his conscious life across the gloomy Styx, the river of death and destruction.

True, if his passionate desire for immortality leads man to refute every clear testimony of his sound senses, he must expect to be criticized, by unshakable realists, for harbouring an unreasonable attitude. On the other hand, however, one should have a fair amount of sympathetic comprehension just for this kind of unreasoning. For the issue--to man--is not a negligible one. To be or not to be, that is the question!

The choice that appears to present itself to men in general, is not at all necessarily, in unambiguous terms, a choice between totality and disruption. No, it is rather, from their point of view, a question of two alternatives to disruption. Which of the two shall they consider the lesser evil?

Let us be a little more explicit regarding this dilemma facing man:

What we are all naturally eager to secure is the widest possible conservation of our personal identity. We want a certain guarantee of unbreakable connectedness in the all-important dimensions of human life and human destiny, a more or less dependable safe-conduct across the threatening abyss of total annihilation and utter

meaninglessness. It is precisely with this intention--or to a considerable extent for this very reason--that many have resigned themselves to accepting a certain undeniable disconnectedness, namely the alternative to a body-mind disruption suggested from time immemorial by philosophical dualism. This is a trend we shall try to follow down through the centuries, viewing it from our most specific angle. People imagine that this is, after all, the lesser disruption; the visible death they perceive with their literal senses otherwise leaves them without any hope whatsoever. A life partly cut up would seem to be better than a life cut away altogether, body and mind.

But what is this now? Is there an inherent split right in the very conception of totality? Are there two types of totality, of which you have to choose one and leave the other? If so, then the spiritualistic dualists may still have made the worthier choice. Here, indeed, our idea of totality seems to have entered the solemn courtroom where it is destined to be put to its decisive test. For just how "whole" would our celebrated "wholeness" turn out to be at the moment when we should be bound to say about that life we had boldly characterized as whole: "It will inevitably come to a point one day where every deeper meaning, every true connection with universal and transcendental realities (if any such realities exist) is brutally and irretrievably cut off."

One thing becomes quite clear then, regarding the items we have to include in our study: there is no escape from the question of immortality. Does man have an immortal soul? Yes or no. If our

totality is really total--i.e., if it includes meaningfulness in human life in the widest sense, then we seem to be in an awkward position in either case. Suppose we answer, "Yes, the soul is immortal." Then we have admitted an absolute disruption between body and mind. Suppose we answer, "No, the soul is absolutely mortal", full stop! That would, indeed be the highest degree of disruption any truly spiritual-minded creature could imagine.

So this becomes a problem of both philosophical and religious order. But who would venture to say that it does not all the time also have a foot right in the field of the psycho-physical realities with which a modern scientist has to reckon? Above all it is here a question right in the very focus of our discussion concerning the relations between the inward and the outward: Is the innermost life of man (that "something" which we have agreed to call his soul, sometimes also his mind, or his spirit) radically dependent upon, or radically in-dependent of, its phenomenal counterpart (that physiological instrument the neurologist calls a human brain)?[1]

A modern investigator of the secrets of immortality, Aloys Wenzl,[2] in his serious endeavours to obtain some clues relative to the problem of how interior contents could do without their exterior media ventures upon a speculation which must be characterized as mildly hypothetical:

There is nothing to contradict the fact that a subject could experience, see and love truth, beauty and goodness without the instrument of the brain as a means of expression, if one frees oneself

from the naivety that the path accessible to our experience, even if it is itself incomprehensible, is the only one.

So he arrives at the not very uncommon conclusion that nothing can prevent us from assuming that such things as imagination and memory, thinking and feeling, are perfectly possible faculties of the "leiblose Seele" (just that "bodiless soul", once more, which is the fascinating theme of our further inquiry).

Nothing? Really, should nothing prevent us from assuming the possibility of thoughts without brains? Some, we hope, would still feel here the need of modifying that bold "nothing" a little--for instance, by adding: "nothing but the factual experiences of our whole little world through all known ages so far." And personally we are naive enough to think that that may mean "something"!

The author admits, it is true, as very probable that such memory, imagination, thinking, and feeling would have to be of a somewhat "different quality", as compared to those of our usual experience today. For, in the experiences which we have on this side of the grave, "the reality of expression" is inevitably implied (What an appropriate concession!). However, we should not forget, he thinks, that the "contents are prior to their expression".

Well, that is just the great doubtful question, isn’t it?

Wenzl alleges--as a sort of circumstantial evidence of that famous "priority" of the contents--a very common occurrence in

everyday life: you may have some thought or memory in abeyance at a given moment, but somehow you are not quite able to "catch" that thought off-hand, or clearly formulate the memory. They still remain just outside your conscious grasp.

They are contents of a psychic realm that transcends our consciousness, but they are!

Are they really? That is just what we have permitted ourselves to doubt. And here we can only refer to the psychological considerations recently presented. That thought or memory which you have not yet actually caught or formulated--thus giving it flesh and bones, as it were--well, it simply does NOT exist! So far, it doesn’t. That it may--perhaps very soon--come into existence, that is quite another matter.

And even Wenzl freely admits: we cannot imagine any mental contents at all without at least some kind of "imagined" expression. To a very good mathematician paper and pencil may often be superfluous, it is true. Similarly a very good chess player is perhaps able to carry on a game without any literal chessboard in front of him. Nevertheless, some kind or some degree of expression, some means of exteriorization, is seen to be absolutely indispensable in every case of interior realization.

If any one should be under the queer illusion that it is a truly practicable thing to have an impression without an expression--or, generally speaking, that thinking is possible without doing--then we

should like to ask him one little question: did you ever try to think of a melody without singing or playing it? We dare say that any one will find that pretty impossible (unless he should happen to be better at this bit of abstraction than Mozart and Beethoven and all the other musical geniuses of history put together).

Notice: we do not say that you have to unfold the whole dramatic beauty of your stentorian voice in order to get a consciousness of that melody you have once learnt. The faintest humming will do--or even just making the first preparatory movements towards humming. But you will have to do something. You must have some degree of expression. Otherwise the impression, the conscious feeling of that melody in your mind, will obstinately refuse to present itself.

We know for instance, that the aging Beethoven was independent of the sense of hearing for composing music. From the external physical world of sound no single tone could reach him any longer. Still his head and his heart were full of music, weren't they? Yes, but who would dare to say that there was no movement in the opposite direction--"from within and outwards"? It would be hard for anyone to maintain that Beethoven, while he played or composed during his later years, lacked expression!

And now what about the mathematical genius? Mathematicians confess their dependence upon certain holdfasts every day. It obviously does not make any difference whether they are doing differential geometry, non-Euclidian, or multi-dimensional

geometry, or any other kind of geometry. In the case of dimensions the professional mathematician has to suppress the super-dimensions, simply in order to have some kind of graphic representation at all.

Even if we speak of a pure order structure, we must still give this order structure itself names and symbols, and for this we need images and language. It's possible that there are other realms in which other beings than ourselves could perceive the inner workings of reality and its meaning without spatial images and without linguistic names--we cannot. (Ibid. p. 26)

So the concession is practically universal: even the most ingenious sorcerer of human contemplation and introspection admits his dependence--psychologically speaking--on some kind of temporal and spacial representation in the form of names, signs, or graphic images, by way of actual expression. He needs this urgently, simply in order to make sure that he has really "laid hold upon" something.

How then any serious investigator can still make the jump so easily to the distant theoretical possibility of a "body-free" subject, enjoying a perfect experience of interior values, that may seem strange enough!

It is a captivating sight to watch the historical development of that headstrong spiritualistic attitude towards the body-soul relations, and towards the whole "problem" of the inward "versus"

the outward. The one-sidedness of that spiritualism is almost incredible. And the immense popularity it has reached right in the midst of an outrageously materialistic age is perhaps still more incredible.

But it has also had to endure some very bad shocks sometimes. Not so much on the part of stolid materialism, strange enough. Fortunately however, there is also a third viewpoint from which man's world can be envisioned. There is a more harmonious chain of human realities, forming an unbreakable ring of massive resistance, as it were, against all partial realities. That is the indivisible ring of totality in human life.

Both one-sided spiritualism and one-sided materialism have kept bumping and bumping against the supreme reality of that ring for centuries. But each attack has only left it more unbreakable and more buoyant than before. This special book on dualism as a disruptive phenomenon in our culture is an attempt at giving a certain historical outline of that buoyant totality and of the battle it has had to fight against schisms in human thoughts and human lives.

Notes:

1. See our discussion of the theories suggested by William James in his Ingersoll Lecture on human immortality, The Mysterious Paths of Human Consciousness, next point, p. 72.
2. Wenzl: Unsterblichkeit, Ihre metaphysische und anthropologische Bedeutung, 1951, p. 25.

Chapter 9

The Mysterious Paths of Human Consciousness

Particularly during the last hundred years of our modern age sagacious and sober-minded men have made heroic efforts to throw real light upon the enigmatic connections between spirit and matter, between the inward and the outward, between mental activity and bodily functions. A more naturalistic line of philosophical approach towards the problems of the Psyche was destined to be made by modern psychology. By way of example, and in order to clarify the general trend, as well as the general findings, we wish to follow some pertinent reasonings by William James and discuss their import relative to our present topic.

While James was Professor of Philosophy at Harvard University, he was called upon to deliver one of the recently instituted Ingersoll Lectures on Human Immortality. Soon afterwards his lecture was published, and in 1899 there even appeared a second edition. Copies of that edition are extremely rare, but particularly interesting owing to a special preface the author has inserted. We have had the good luck of finding a copy of it in the Oslo University Library, and we want to discuss its contents at some length from our particular viewpoint.

James starts by expressing his regrets that the task of giving this lecture has been assigned to him, among all men. It was a sort of purely ex officio assignment, he thinks. For he must confess that his

own feelings about immortality have never been of the keenest order, whereas there are men and women for whom the hereafter is a pungent craving.

As we may remember, James" first connection with Harvard University was in the capacity of a physiological expert. And certainly nothing could be more natural than his starting out with some psycho-physiological remarks in a lecture of this kind. He speaks about the absolute dependence of our spiritual life, as we know it here, upon the brain. He mentions the current idea that our inner life is nothing but a function of that famous "grey matter" of our cerebral convolutions. And "how can that function possibly persist after its organ has undergone decay?" The great psycho-physiological formula seems to be absolutely watertight: Thought is a function of the brain.

But here James adds something. He suddenly asks if there is only one kind of functional dependence? The psychologist commonly thinks of just one kind. And that one seems to cut off, inexorably, every hope of human immortality. He invariably thinks in terms of a productive function. When he says: "Thought is a function of the brain", then this is to him almost as if he said: "Steam is a function of the tea-kettle", or "Power is a function of the moving waterfall". In other words, the material objects in question have the function of inwardly creating or engendering their effects. Hence the author's term: a productive function.

In clear opposition to this category, William James introduces that of a transmissive function. He chooses the illustrative example of organ music. The keys of the organ successively open the various pipes and let the wind of the air-chest escape in various ways. The air is not engendered in the organ. The organ proper is only an apparatus for letting portions of the air from the air-chest loose upon the world in those peculiarly limited shapes.

So James" thesis is this: in our case--the case of "thoughts being the function of the brain"--we should be perfectly entitled to consider a similar permissive or transmissive function.

Before we go on exposing James" transmission theory in more detail, we want to insert a very important fact. The author has, throughout, placed himself at the ordinary dualistic point of view of natural science. According to this, mental facts are assumed to be made up of one kind of "stuff" or substance; physical facts are made up of another kind; and the two are entirely separate and heterogeneous. It is, indeed, very interesting to note that William James, with his exceptionally open mind, admits the possibility of solving some of the problems that seem insoluble when propounded in dualistic terms. He knows, for instance, the heterodox ideas of an absolute phenomenism, which does not suppose such a dualism to be ultimate. So far, however, he remains at the conventional dualistic assumption. And, in harmony with that, he can see only two really different sorts of dependence of our mind on our brain:

1) The brain "brings into being" ("produces") the very stuff of consciousness of which our mind consists.

2) Consciousness pre-exists as an entity, and the various brains give to it its various special forms.

In fact, it is just to the latter of these two possibilities that he gives full attention in his Ingersoll Lecture. And certainly he does a good job at making it appear--if not superior to the old "production" theory, considered from the point of view of scientific reasonability--so at least perfectly on a par with it. He knows full well that the only advantage the production theory really has, is the fact that it happens to be more popular. It is "not a jot more simple or credible, in itself, than any other conceivable theory" (William James, Human Immortality, 1899, two supposed objections to the doctrine, p. 22.) He agrees that the production of such a thing as consciousness in the brain is nothing less than a paradox, a stumbling-block to nature--"the absolute world-enigma" (p. 21).

Into the mode of production of steam in a tea-kettle we have conjectural insight, for the terms that change are physically homogeneous one with another, and we can easily imagine the case to consist of nothing but alterations of molecular motion. But in the production of consciousness by the brain, the terms are heterogeneous natures altogether; and as far as our understanding goes, it is as great a miracle as if we said, Thought is "spontaneously generated", or "created out of nothing". (pp. 21-22)

We shall not go into more detail in the author's exposition than we think indispensable for our subsequent discussion. But that discussion will be of great importance to our special presentation of the essential trends in spiritualist anthropology during this last century of our Occidental culture.

According to James" theory of a permissive function, the brain is not a generator of consciousness. Brains are rather comparable to domes of transparent material, variously coloured and of varying opacity. Toward such a dome the full super-solar blaze of a sort of pre-existing consciousness of the universe may be imagined to flow. Though opaque enough as a general rule, the glass of that dome could at certain times and places grow sufficiently transparent to permit certain beams to pierce through into this sublunary world:

Glows of feeling, glimpses of insight, and streams of knowledge and perception float into our finite world. ...As the white radiance comes through the dome, with all sorts of staining and distortion imprinted on it by the glass, ... even so the genuine matter of reality, the life of souls, as it is in its fullness, will break through our several brains into this world in all sorts of restricted forms, and with all the imperfections and queernesses that characterize our individualities here below. (pp. 16-17)

The barrier of obstructiveness he speaks about has something in common with the psycho-physical threshold Fechner had already introduced by that time. It may be imagined to rise and fall alternatingly. When the brain is in full activity, it sinks so low that a

comparative flood of spiritual energy pours over. At other times only dream-like waves of thought are permitted to get by. And then finally there comes a day, as we all well know, when the brains stops its functions altogether. Then that "special stream of consciousness" will vanish entirely "from this natural world".

But the sphere of being that supplied the consciousness would still be intact; and in that more real world with which, even whilst here, it was continuous, the consciousness might, in ways unknown to us, continue still.

We pointed out above that James" speculations are entirely based upon the ground of conventional dualist views which have moulded both philosophy and science in our culture. Small wonder, then, that even his philosophical theory of a transmissive brain function immediately leads our thoughts back to Platonic idealism. To be sure, platonism considers the whole world of natural experience as nothing but a "time-mask, shattering or refracting the one infinite Thought, which is the sole reality, into those millions of finite streams of consciousness known to us as our private selves" (pp. 15-16).

And what about the "pre-existence" of a continuous wave of consciousness flowing out from a sort of "mother-sea" of a transcendental world? To be sure, William James had no reason to be astonished when his critical audience came to him complaining that this seemed more like the pantheistic idea of human souls surviving in the "soul of the world" than the Christian idea of

immortality, which inevitably implies a totally individual survival, such as quite ordinary men and women are able to appreciate.

In that preface to his second edition, it is true, the author meets these objections by retorting that one may, of course, feel free to conceive the "mental world behind the veil" in as individualistic a form as one pleases, without any detriment to the general scheme by which the brain is represented as a transmissive organ" (Ibid., Preface, p. VII).

So an emphatic effort is made to reassume readers who may happen to be of a more individualistic mould: that "larger" and "truer" personality of ours, already having its full reality behind the scene, and destined to procure continuity to us when the vicissitudes of this mundane life are happily brought to an end, has little to fear in reality. That precious identity which we feel we cannot do without, still has a genuine possibility of being safeguarded.

In other words, for that grey and comfortless ocean of a world-mind, William James has been generous enough to substitute another transcendental consciousness far more in keeping with the temperaments of common people--we are almost tempted to say a transcendental consciousness specially devised and custom-tailored, as it were, to suit the capricious tastes of incurable individualists.

But does he really satisfy those who were complaining that they did not find "the Christian idea of immortality"?

Now this is not yet the part of our work in which we examine, from our totality viewpoint, the trends of Christian anthropology, as compared to Christianity's great rival in the Western World: pagan idealism. In this present volume we rather limit ourselves to a general portrayal of the character of dualism in our civilization, its rise into secular power and its changing forms in the history of Western thought. This is, in a way, just a preparation for finally presenting the main clashes in the battle between the giants at actual grips with each other.

But already the time is suitable for calling the reader's attention to a significant general fact: the original and genuinely Christian idea of a survival distinguishes itself most strikingly from the one currently prevailing in religious as well as philosophical circles of Western Christendom.

James obviously alludes to some general trends of popular belief in this Hellenized world culture when he claims that even "common sense believes in realities behind the veil". 78

If a man like Feuerbach had been able to overhear his remark, he "would have turned in his grave", as the saying goes, wondering greatly what kind of "common sense" William James could be talking about here. In fact, Feuerbach had devoted considerable study to the anthropological views of "common folks". He particularly refers to the ideas about death current among primitive peoples. And he certainly does not think them devoid of "common sense". He preferably goes all the way back to those who have not

yet been contaminated in their natural way of thinking by the vitiating influence of dualistic thought patterns. These most unsophisticated population groups do know a life. And they do know a reality. But certainly not "behind the veil". If their imagination is sound, it does not visualize any automatic survival of a bodiless soul. These sober-minded realists believed one thing about death: when a man dies he dies, body and soul! (cfr. Feuerbach, Die Unsterblichkeitsfrage vom Standpunkt der Anthropologie, 1938)

But both Feuerbach and James are victims of a serious mistake when they try to deal with the Christian beliefs regarding death and immortality. Their confusion is not a rare one, by the way: they stand in front of Christendom, and think they have to do with Christianity. The error is understandable and excusable. But its effects are no less deplorable for that matter.

Let us concentrate our attention again on James" awkward case. He thinks he has suggested a solution which may be perfectly well adapted to the peculiar needs of the Christian spirit as well. He sincerely imagines that his speculative theory of a survival of the "transmissive function" type may be brought beautifully in accordance with a genuinely Christian pattern of thought and sentiment. How does this come to pass?

The reason is simple: he does not look to the Bible for patterns of the Christian religion. He bases his knowledge on Christendom, i. e. what he has observed in our modern civilization. And then he

draws conclusions of analogy which he believes to remain valid for people of a civilization fundamentally different from ours. We try to show in our Christian anthropology to what extent the children of Hebraic civilization--who were also the founders of the first Christian congregation--happened to be entirely incapable of thinking and feeling in harmony with any schema of thought and feeling such as that to which a forthcoming Occidental anthropology was destined to adhere.

We should not forget one thing: those natural children of a Hebrew culture were instrumental in handing down to us almost every written page of the Old Testament. More than that: genuine Jews, men of a thorough Jewish heritage, were the writers of almost every chapter of the New Testament as well. Indeed there is no sign that these men, laying the scriptural foundation for our Christian creed, had in any way been exposed to anthropological views inherent in the weird speculations of pagan philosophy.

So when we stop to look at the basic conceptions of man in death, handed down as an anthropological legacy to the Christian Church, we have no reason to be astonished at their realistic acceptance of the simple testimony of their common senses: when a man dies, he dies. Death is a serious matter, a realistic matter, which should not be explained away through spiritualistic tricks of subterfuge. The child of realism has established his invincible fact: men do die.

So what about the gospel message of hope, the promise of eternal life, according to full scriptural evidence? Could that bear any sentimental subterfuges of the spiritualistic type? Could it dare to break the customary trend of full realism found in fundamental childlikeness? No. Even the doctrine of salvation had to follow the pattern of popular plainness and straightforwardness. The hope of salvation and eventual survival was bound to be proclaimed in terms of the plainest monism: an unbroken human reality. There was no choice but to adopt the expression of a literal resurrection; that is the resurrection of man in his common sense totality. And common sense has never known any man whose body was ever separated from his soul.

So let us be realistic as well: the immortality William James has shown to be theoretically possible within the framework of the current dualist conceptions, favoured by traditional Western philosophy, and even by Western science in many ways, may be anything you like but it is not Christian.

By the way, James openly admits that himself in the Preface to which we have called our reader's attention. His whole trend of ideas in the Ingersoll Lecture rather seems to have affinities with pre-existence and with possible re-incarnation, and those trends, we know, have no birth-right whatsoever in the true realms of Christianity. We have also tried to demonstrate that it is extremely difficult to reconcile them with ideas of true individuality within any system of thought.

But of course William James is not the one to be blamed. He has done everything he promised to do in his lecture. He did not promise to show the possibility of a Christian form of immortality within the framework of traditional dualist thinking, fortunately for him and his fine reputation for logical consistency! For that immortality does not exist there at all.

On the other hand, he has rendered a valuable enough service. He has given new confirming evidence to an important fact: within that same dualistic framework of conventional science and philosophy there are invariably two possibilities presenting themselves, and one is as good (or as bad) as the other.

First there is a "solution" suggested by radical materialism. And if we persist in imagining that it is a particularly plausible, simple and reasonable one, then this certainly is not the fault of William James.

Secondly there is its diametrical opposite, viz. a radical idealism. In logical content, the one matches the other.

Our point here is merely that there exist two highly diverging trends, of which both base themselves on a foundation of dualism. The unsympathizing monist viewing the historical spectacle of that dualism would probably say there is a constant falling from one ditch into the other. So dualism does not even manage to maintain a minimum of peace and wholeness within its own borders.

To sum up, we might perhaps say only this so far: dualistic thinking in our culture has made innumerable attempts to seize the reality of human life or the human soul. But as far as this thinking strove valiantly to remain logically consistent within its own premises and its proper postulates, it invariably seemed bound to end up in some kind of function theory. To the materialist dualist, human consciousness, in its last analysis, tended to present itself as some sort of productive function. To the idealistic dualist, the point of arrival was generally something quite, reminiscent of the transmissive function which William James has suggested as a logical theoretical alternative.

By way of conclusion, we cannot avoid briefly considering how those two mutually diverging aspects of the function theory compare to a third alternative. For there is a third alternative. That is as sure as the fact that there is always an alternative to dualism. We have called this special anthropology the perfectly naive, or the perfectly childlike. But does the typical child have an anthropology of his own, then? If so, what are his "anthropological views" like, after all?

Suppose that child has made the sad discovery one day that his mother is dead. (We all use that straightforward term without any euphemistic circumlocutions in everyday life, don’t we?) Let us even take the case that he has personally observed her being torn to pieces and thrown into a hole in the earth where there is no opportunity to doubt that her remains are gradually, but totally, decomposing. Well, will that child--of his own accord--hit upon the curious idea that his mother is only apparently dead? Hardly. Will

he, in his imagination, divide her being into two different parts, of which he capriciously disengages one saying: "That part of my mother, at least, is not dead." Never.

Or let us take his experience with a living person. He sees some man acting in a reasonable way. Will his own conclusion, as an observer, immediately be: "The brain of Mr. So-and-So certainly produces reason." By no means. At least not if that strange habit of abstraction has not been insistently suggested to him by a surrounding culture penetrated by dualism. On the contrary, he will think: Mr. So-and-So is reasonable.

But how can even an adult, say a stern psycho-physiologist with views of true totality, be imagined as giving himself up to the dissecting processes of modern analytical psycho-physiology? Would he not simply have too much confidence in the world of his immediate observations? And what would he immediately observe? Just inward and outward phenomena accompanying each other, internal experiences and external manifestations wandering harmoniously hand in hand--nothing else. This was obviously, to a large extent, exactly the deepest conviction of William James:

In strict science we can only write down the bare fact of concomitance, and all talk about either production or transmission, as the mode of taking place, is pure superadded hypothesis, and metaphysical hypothesis at that, for we can frame no more notion of the details on the one alternative than on the other. Ask for any information of the exact process either of transmission or of

production, and science confesses that her imagination is bankrupt. She has so far not the least glimmer of a conjecture or a suggestion--not even a bad verbal metaphor or pun to offer.

And have things here changed very much since the days of William James? Do we have a lot of factual knowledge today about the fine connections between body and mind? Do we really know the mysterious paths of human consciousness any better than our forebears did?

There is much reason to fear that an equally sincere answer today would be very much the same: ignoramus et ignorabim.

Chapter 10

Religious Origins of Radical Dualism

Historical investigation so far, in trying to establish the origin of radical dualism, has traced it back to one of the great Oriental religions. That is the Persian religion of Zoroaster. A fundamental idea of Zoroastrism is that of a combat between two opposite worlds, and this duality extends far beyond the limits found in most other religions.

Conditions, as we see them in the world today, are the result of that gigantic struggle between two antagonistic principles--the principle of good and the principle of evil. The principle of good is represented by Ormuzd (Ahura Mazda), whose symbol is light. The principle of evil is represented by Ahriman (Angra Mainyu), whose symbol is darkness. Ormuzd has created the world, but his work is constantly counteracted by Ahriman, "the spirit of destruction".

In this fight against Ahriman, Ormuzd is assisted by the archangels, but Ahriman, too, has his helpers. In fact, all living beings in the world may be divided into two huge armies fighting each other without mercy and without a moment's interruption. That universal fight, however, is also reflected in the human soul. Man's personality is endowed with a supra-sensitive element by means of which, even before entering upon the scene of this earth, he has already made his option for good or evil. His entire destiny after his birth is dependent upon that fateful decision.

It should be admitted that there seems to be some limit, after all, to the radical character of this dualism of good and evil. The great conflict between the two powers is not destined to last eternally. At the end of the ages Ormuzd will win a final victory over evil. Then good men will be separated from evil men. After a great conflagration, destined to cleanse the world, all men will be reconciled under the sign of the great God Ormuzd.[1]

Note:

1. See Charles Werner: Le Probleme du mal, 1944, pp. ff

Chapter 11

Dualism in Greek Philosophy

We shall now first consider Greece, the country showing an almost total autonomy in the field of philosophy. A modern historian[1] has summed up this fact in a striking, although perhaps somewhat exaggerated way:

It was a small people that was destined to create the principle of progress, namely the Greeks. Apart from the blind forces of nature, there is nothing moving in the universe which is not of Greek origin.

However, even if we fully accept the cultural supremacy of the Hellenes, particularly in the creation of philosophy as we know it today, we are certainly entitled to make some kind of objection: they most assuredly took over some considerable material accumulated by other peoples. One thing, for sure, they have not invented themselves: the theory of a soul clearly distinguishable from the body, and even able to leave that "sombre prison" at the moment of death.

The Pythagorean conception of the human soul bears the obvious imprint of its Oriental origin. The dualist views of Pythagoras may be traced back to Orphism, and for a considerable part Orphism in Greece is of foreign origin. The traces from a Dionysius worship are clear enough here, and that worship finds its cradle in Tracia or Phrygia, rather than in Greece. To Southern Italy

and Sicily the Ionians had come from Asia Minor. And Pythagoras has inherited much of his theories about the soul, as the true substance of immortality, from the Orphic communities. His ideas of a transmigration of souls, of a relationship between men and animals, and the involved necessity of abstaining from meat--all this, as we know, is still found in India. Traditions tell us that Pythagoras visited both Egypt and Babylonia. He had communicated with the Persian magicians, the heirs of Zoroaster.

"All of early Greek philosophy, all this magnificent blossoming, would not have existed if Greek thought had not sunk its roots in the deep soul of the Orient." Charles Werner.[2]

Notes:

1. Theodore Comperz: Les Penseurs de la Grece.
2. Charles Werner: La Philosophie grecque, 1938, p. 14.

Chapter 12

Idealism Versus Materialism, Viewed from our Special Angle

In the history of spiritual and intellectual culture, idealism and materialism have naturally been provided with opposite signs. For the former that sign has been just plus, and for the latter just minus. In our case that becomes a particularly fallacious simplification. From the viewpoint of totality both these qualifications are equally one-sided and deficient. The "ideal" partition line, in this new sense, or scale, of values we have taken the freedom to introduce will tend to cut right across the lines of classical idealism and materialism.

At the root of dualism, both in Pythagoras and in Plato, there is undoubtedly a high degree of idealism, even in the modern and popular sense of the term. And, as compared to the utilitarian trend in a good deal of Oriental thought, that idealism certainly testifies to a superior degree of spirituality, even as our special "system" of alterocentric totality understands the "spiritual". That superiority is most clearly described by Plato himself in the famous passage where he compares the Greek spirit, eager for knowledge first and foremost, to that of the Phoenicians and the Egyptians more eager for gains. And of course it would seem rather absurd to praise a spirit of sordid commercialism and narrow-minded utilitarianism as spiritually equal to that self-forgetting zeal for pure wisdom.

Aristotle also, in the first part of his Metaphysics, very aptly compares the same tendencies: on one hand the mind of the true philosopher, always longing for pure knowledge, i.e. not the knowledge of particular things, but a knowledge of the universal; on the other hand: the mind more anxious to collect just empirical facts. Aristotle leaves us in no doubt as to which group has chosen the "better part". That is the philosophers. They were always the elite of superior men. Why? Notice the proud reasons given:

They were pursuing science in order to know, and not for any utilitarian end. And this is confirmed by the facts; for it was when almost all the necessities of life and the things that make for comfort and recreation had been secured, that such knowledge began to be sought. Evidently, then, we do not seek it for the sake of any other advantage; but as the man is free, we say, who exists for his own sake and not for another’s, so we pursue this as the only free science, for it alone exists for its own sake. (Metaphysica, 9b, 20; here we have chosen Ross's translation, Great Books of the Western World, Vol. 8, p. 501).

Only in a later chapter shall we discuss more fully the proud elements of independence and self-sufficiency characterizing the philosopher's attitude here. So far, let us keep to what is obviously favourable in it.

Considered from an intellectual angle everybody must admit the crushing superiority of the Greeks, manifesting itself just in their preference for purely rational speculation. (At this point we accept,

so far, the common assumption that those speculations were just as genuinely Greek as usually supposed.) One understands perfectly well a certain feeling of deception overwhelming the minds of archaeologists when confronted with the cultural remains of some territories of less intellectual ancient cultures. They have perhaps for weeks and months been eagerly digging for what they hoped to be exquisite values of the human spirit, and then suddenly they stand in front of some Babylonian inscriptions or some Egyptian papyri. But what do these contain? Sad to say, almost nothing but empirical data relating to quite practical problems of everyday life. How infinitely more gratifying it would be to dig up a subtle thesis of Pythagorean mathematics.

On the other hand, we should also clearly see the dangers of that exaggerated concentration on purely theoretical problems, manifesting itself in Greek philosophy in a way which the world had never witnessed previously.

We think we are always safe in saying: immoderation, in whatever field it occurs, is the sworn enemy of sound totality in human life. A seriously unfavourable development is clearly seen already in the circle of Pythagorean disciples. A systematic depreciation of the practical, the corporeal and the outward could hardly fail to spoil the fine equilibrium of human existence!

The soul is considered by Pythagoras to be the only element of divine essence in man, the only part entitled to the prerogatives of immortality. Then, what is the body? It is a prison in which the soul

is kept captive. Worse, it is a tomb in which the soul has been buried. How could it happen to be so miserably incarcerated, so cruelly dealt with? There must have been some terrible weight of "personal guilt" some time, and this must be the heavy punishment that has to be suffered for it. But once in the future the human soul is destined to be liberated from this ignoble dungeon of a despicable human body. That will happen at the moment of death. Then the soul finally flutters away like the breeze of the morning. However, sad to say, it still remains subject to a dreadful necessity: It is doomed to enter some other body. The air is actually full of such unhappy souls waiting for their next incarnation.[1]

That change of abode (or prison) was certainly not always for the good. Pythagoras is even quoted as saying that the soul of a man might enter the body of an animal.[2]

Here it must be owned, in the name of what we, too, would call true spirituality: the doctrine of the Pythagoreans was not without some element highly favourable to the maintenance of good moral conditions. In other words, there is in it, after all, a practical point of definite importance to human lives. This point is a certain encouragement towards altruistic activity: the soul has to go through a whole series of existences, and always the type of life enjoyed--or suffered--in the future, is determined by the actions performed in the past. An inexorable law of justice and retribution provides that a soul go through exactly the same pains which it has previously inflicted upon others.

Generally speaking, however, the whole trend of the doctrine was rather such that it encouraged passive meditation and an inevitable depreciation of all practical and physical aspects of life. Most decidedly it represents a religion for the exceptional few, and adapted solely to their needs and their desires. It is not properly a religion for the people. Even this trait of a certain aristocratic exclusivism is an ominous sign, viewed from the angle of human totality.

The philosophical views of Pythagoras were taken over, and further developed, by Plato. He becomes the leading representative of dualism in Greek history; we might just as well say, dualism in the history of our world, for Plato's idealism was destined to mould the thinking of all subsequent ages. So it is here, first and foremost, that we have to study the interesting relations between dualist idealism and totality.

Notes:

1. Diogenes Laerties, in Herman Diel's collection: Fragmente der Vorsokratiker, 1922, VIII, and 32.
2. Ibid., VIII, 36, a view ridiculed by Aristotle: De anima, I, 3, 407 b, 20-25.

Chapter 13

A Curious Question: Was Plato's Idealism Fundamentally Greek?

Was this high-strung idealism, or spiritualism, typically Greek? Were the Greeks, as we have come to know them through the overall testimony available to us in the records of history, genuine representatives of that type of personality which we are bound to associate with radical dualism?

Our answer would be a definite no. The conclusion we have been obliged to draw, after the most serious study of the topic, is that Plato must have been a rather exceptional figure in an average Greek community. And when we say the average Greek, we do not necessarily exclude the general elite element of artistic and intellectual geniuses who have done so much to form our historical image of Greek culture.

The Greeks, as a people--even from the earliest times we meet them in history--seem to be of a fairly extroverted and open-minded disposition. In fact, they appear to be exactly what Schiller calls "naive", including his good friend Goethe, but excluding himself, the "sentimental" (see our Vol. I, Part I, Ch.3).

May we call to mind here a phenomenon related to Greek culture, but much closer to our own times: the Renaissance was supposed to be simply a kind of rebirth of the deepest spirit of Greek

culture, wasn"t it? But the Renaissance, as we shall point out in more detail on another occasion, was--particularly in Italy, its homeland--quite a simple, gay, and openhearted movement, and comparatively popular as well. It released in man the pent-up forces of a swelling urge to turn outwards, just as the child turns outwards with all his mind and all his physical energy.

In a few exceptional individuals, it is true, such an explosion of the natural forces of life may have developed more eccentric forms of abysmal genius. But as a general rule, it was a fairly broad movement. It was not limited to an elite of social or artistic or intellectual aristocracy.

It was a gushingly fresh middle-class community that had been awakened to the new life. Awakened to new art also, it is true. But that art included--perhaps more than anything else--just the art of life--I mean life with all its everyday fullness, excluding neither intellectual nor material enjoyments.

We believe the name "Renaissance" is fairly well justified in these respects also. Even the "temperamental" atmosphere of that movement may, to a large extent, bring us right back to the Old Greeks. In fact, it was probably just that popular broadness--or "democracy"--characterizing both movements, which actually prepared the ground for the exceptional or "aristocratic" geniuses who did appear here and there. It helped them to spring up and unfold in relative freedom. A roomy nest had been prepared for the young "cuckoos".

Here, however, one thing may have to be added right away: those exceptional geniuses--once they had arisen--could not fail to put their indelible stamp on the whole atmosphere, influencing it tremendously, sometimes even moving it considerably away from just that popular broadness and naiveté which originally belonged to it!

At this stage of our investigation we think it a matter of tremendous importance to have an idea as exact and as comprehensive as possible of what that naiveté in its undisturbed condition is really like. For that purpose we doubt that we could ever turn to a more reliable authority than Schiller. For he certainly knows the Greeks. And he also knows the dramatic battle between the "naive" and the "sentimental".

Chapter 14

Schiller's Remarkable Testimony

In his philosophical essay of literary and cultural criticism, Ueber Naive und Sentimentalische Dichtung, the great German dramatist analyzes the deep differences between the Greek and the modern spirit. The literary historian well knows that he is at the same time analysing the differences between himself and the contemporary giant in German literature, Goethe. But that underlying substance of a concrete and most personal drama only lends additional zest and graphic immediacy to his discussion of the peculiar features of Greek culture.

By the way, was Goethe a perfect picture of the naive? Not in our opinion or according to our terminology. He was not in Schiller's opinion either. In his opinion, no modern person can ever be perfectly naive. That is a prerogative of the old masters. We know the boundless admiration Schiller had for the poets of ancient Greece. In what does he see their overwhelming superiority? First and foremost in their harmonious totality, we would venture to say. And where is that totality found, according to Schiller? It is in the naive poet. To our keen German critic that laureate of old has one characteristic above all else: he is a genuine child of that original naiveté which is the source of beauty.

And let us notice this: in Schiller's evaluation, that has something to do precisely with the entire "Zeitcharakter". It is the

naturalness and simplicity of antiquity. These features have since been irrevocably lost in the artificial and complicated societies of our modern culture. See, for instance, what he also says in the sixth letter of his discussion "über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen":

Back then, in that beautiful awakening of the spiritual powers, the senses and the mind had not yet been strictly separated. For no discord had yet provoked them to divide each other hostilely and define their boundaries. Poetry had not yet courted wit, and speculation had not yet defiled itself with subtlety.[1]

What is that "Zwiespalt" to which Schiller is referring here and in so many other passages of his philosophical and aesthetic writings?

When he goes back to old Greece in search of a pattern of perfect harmony and simplicity, it is precisely not the idealist he sees in front of him, but the realist. Just listen to him describing the differences between the realist of antiquity and the idealist of modern times. It is almost as you might imagine Kretschmer describing the differences between the "cyclothyme" and the "schizothyme" characters of human personality.

The naive realist is above all a man of practical ability. In other domains he seems to have small chances considered as a pure type--of passing beyond a certain striking mediocrity. In what domains?

The realist knows and thinks little of that which has its value and purpose in itself (always excluding the whole); in matters of taste he will speak in favour of pleasure, in matters of morality he will speak in favour of happiness.[2]

The persons whom that realist loves, he will try to make happy (beglücken). The idealist will be more anxious to make them noble (veredeln). In political life the realist will therefore be most concerned about the prosperity his subjects may enjoy. The idealist is above all concerned about their liberty. To him that is more precious than any material well-being.

Of course Schiller is far from regarding everything in the simple and practical minded spirit of realism as pure advantage. On the contrary:

The realist alone would never have expanded the sphere of humanity beyond the limits of the sensory world, never have acquainted the human spirit with its independent greatness of freedom. Everything absolute in humanity is, to him, merely a beautiful chimera, and belief in it is little better than enthusiasm.[3]

But if now even the more elevated spirits of classical art have something, at least, of that somewhat narrowing realism inherent in the old Greek naiveté--why, then, does Schiller, the great representative of a new age and a new "sentimental poetry", still look back to that classicism with an actual "homesickness"? Why does he look up to the Greek poets as superior masters? For there is

no doubt: his admiration for them is wholehearted enough. "Nur die Alten", he writes to Körner, "geben mir jetzt wahre Genüsse." And, as a matter of fact, he had even made up his mind, on one occasion, to simply abstain from reading any modern authors at all for a period of two years!

Well, the reason is clear enough, after all: Schiller knew the seamy side of idealism, as well. There he had experienced the painful deficiencies right in the living core of his own experience. Where was, after all, the earthly happiness of that ever excited idealist, constantly stretching his hands towards the infinite and the eternal? Schiller knew the disruptive super-tension of such a convulsive idealism. Human happiness is absolutely homeless there. Only the naive realist has true equilibrium in his mind and full satisfaction in his heart.

The idealist's fate is far from as good. Not only does he often fall apart with fortune because he failed to make the moment his friend; he also falls apart with himself; neither his knowledge nor his actions can satisfy him. What he demands of himself is infinite, but everything he achieves is limited. (Ibid.)

Schiller knows very well the danger inherent in this radical severity. The idealist is a sworn enemy of anything that is cheap or mean. But his requirements may be strained to the point of bursting.

He thinks so highly of humanity that he is in danger of despising people. (Ibid.)

The realist, it is true, may have a far less exalted conception of man and of humanity, and nevertheless he may prove himself to be the truer philanthropist in everyday life. In fact, he is prepared to forgive any meanness almost, in others, as well as in himself. The only thing he is not able to forgive is the eccentric.

As a most suitable introduction to our study of dualism, we are mightily interested in one particular point on which the naive realist (who, to Schiller, is the average Old Greek as a human type) distinguishes himself from the idealist (who, to us in this work, is above all the man who laid the foundations of European dualism for millennia). This is a fundamental difference in the two types regarding their respective attitudes towards reality:

1) The naive permits reality to flow in upon him in its immediate purity. That is the intuitive form of perception, characterizing Greek poetry. And what is the peculiar vision with which it enriches the ancient world, according to Schiller? It is not a vision of the general and the generic. It is always a vision of the special and the individual. Of course the senses are bound to play a predominant part in this very graphic and tangible form of perception.

2) How different from the perception prevailing in the world of "chimeras" so dear to modern idealist; we might add the world of ancient idealist as well, for of course, what we are particularly curious about here, is the idealist par excellence, Plato, our

"exceptional genius", the man who gave European idealism its basic structure for thousands of years. And Plato, to us, is not just "the Greek", far from it. Plato is by no means the "naive", as far as we can see, whom Schiller keeps mentioning. He is not at all the "ancient" whose praises he chants. No--no, Plato is the great Occidental of a forthcoming world, of future generations. He is the Idealist of a rising, modern Europe. About him Schiller talks in quite different terms.

The idealist's striving goes far too far beyond sensual life and the present. He wants to sow and plant only for the whole, for eternity, and in doing so, he forgets that the whole is only the complete circle of the individual, that eternity is merely a sum of moments. (Ibid.)

Now you and I belong to a generation still more modern than Plato’s. In fact, we belong to a world even ten times more sophisticatedly adult than that of Schiller (the modern sentimental). So our alterocentrism (our concern about the other one, the particular case, the case of man as an individual, a neighbour) or any such like naively warm preoccupation with everyday things, certainly this must be an anachronism; if such childlike things have had their existence in our proud Occidental breasts at all, they must certainly be a past stage in our development towards the "ideal"! We are sadly lacking, probably, in that warm interest the genuine child would tend to take in the personal destinies. But still there may be a tiny bit of curiosity left in us to know the human interest part of this story as well: at was it, then, in the life of Friedric Schiller from

Weimar, that caused him to busy himself so seriously with these topics of human nature?

It may be most correct to say that the reasons are partly general and partly personal.

Of course Schiller is a product of his own age. We know to what extent Rousseau's pathetic message had influenced that age in human history. A violent opposition between nature and culture seemed to be the inevitable heritage of that influence. In fact, culture had come to be considered by many as the cause of all misery in this world.

Not that Schiller is any superficial imitator of contemporary behaviour patterns. He is rather a deep and dynamic spirit. He has found out, in a fairly independent way, that there is an unattainable greatness in the ancient "naives". That greatness consists of the fact that: they are natural. But the position of the modern "sentimental" is by no means hopeless in this respect. True, he is not natural, but he may aspire after nature. And in this heroic aspiration there may be--shall we say--a complementary synthesis of opposites which is liable to restore the equilibrium, perhaps even establish a unity superior to that of the fundamentally naive.

A return to nature in the sense of a return to a state of sensual enjoyment and the superficial peacefulness of this world, may have satisfied many of Schiller's contemporaries. It did not satisfy Schiller. Never was there any question of giving up the proud

soaring ideals of his passionate spirit, simply to drown them in the lukewarm ocean of Philistine indulgence. The peace and harmony he was yearning for was the one resulting from the fusing together of the natural and the cultural. In order to realize that higher totality, right in the heart of a modern sentimental, he is disposed to make his pilgrimage to antiquity and let the wholesome spirit of ancient naïveté work upon his mind.

But Schiller never ceased to be a fighter. And that fight of his was as intensely and bitterly subjective as any titanic fight could ever be. In his irreconcilable struggle for absolute perfection, the more distant image of Greek poetry may certainly have been the ideal object of his emulation. But right in the immediate world of his personal environment there was quite another object, his rival Goethe. For our study this is a rivalry of absorbing interest.

In the history of Norwegian literature we find an analogous case in Ibsen's relation to Björnson. It was a rather one-sided rivalry, we know. Björnson's part in the drama mainly consisted in his just being there--and being successful, of course--as it seems to be the inevitable lot of a natural genius to be successful. The success of the more introvert genius, the "sentimental", does not follow so naturally at all. Only after a painful struggle does he see the first victorious results of his convulsive efforts. But first something most characteristic should be noticed: Schiller's feelings towards Goethe during his initial struggle were as ambiguous and disruptive as only a "sentimental" mind can produce. Hate and love, envy and admiration, were tossing and alternating in his mind, as a tiny boat is

tossed on a tempestuous ocean. Self-scrutiny was his natural reaction. He became anxious to make sure of his own qualifications and his own calling.

The next consequence was his endeavour to analyse the qualifications of his "opponent" as well. And that analysis became the more fruitful and objective as he took the precautions of identifying the "opponent" with a whole and very remote generation. Schiller's decision to fight his own inward battle to the victorious end, appears clearly enough from his personal statement to his friend Karoline von Lengefeld in a letter of February 25, 1789.

I have too much laziness and too much pride to wait for someone to develop for me. There is a language that all people understand: use your strength. If everyone works with all their might, they cannot remain hidden from others. This is my plan.[4]

And the full ambitious goal of that plan is distinctly revealed in another letter: Schiller is bent on reaching "den höchsten Genuss eines denkenden Geistes: Grösse, Hervorragung, Einfluss in der Welt und Unsterblichkeit des Namens". We shall later come back to this remarkable characteristic of spiritualistic vanity and pathetic human emptiness: an "immortality" of the name. But at this point we shall keep to less tragic perspectives.

A continuous struggle for perfection fills long years of Schiller's subsequent life. And perhaps the most gratifying of all, to his proud and ambitious spirit, was to discover one thing in the end: in order to

reach as great an amount of that perfection as any man hopes to reach, it was not necessary for him to become either a Greek or a Goethe! Through tenacious personal efforts he might climb to peaks of perfection which they, in their natural greatness and generous unconcern, had never known: to his own peculiar advantage, as a sentimental, he might, through conscious struggle, even add some precious gems of that incomparable naïveté which was theirs.

Notes:

1. Schiller: Ueber die aesthetische Erziehung des Menschen, Samtliche Schriften, R. Kohler edition, 1871, Vol. X, pp. 287-88.
2. Schiller: Ueber naive und sentimentalische Dichtung, Samt. Schr., X, 516.
3. Ibid., p. 517.
4. W. Fielitz: Schiller und Lotte, 1879, I, p. 234.

Chapter 15

"Anmut und Würde"

A Remarkable Coalition, Testifying to Particular Totality in the General Spirit of the Greek People

Here we must add a few words on Schiller's discussion in "Über Anmut und Würde". This essay is perhaps better known than the former. Nevertheless, it belongs to a somewhat earlier period of Schiller's philosophical speculations, we would also say a less mature period. At least this seems obvious if we compare it just to that final and triumphantly liberating moment when the full meaning of an opposition--or a harmonious union--between the "sentimental" and the "naive" dawned on his mind.

In Schiller's conception of "grace" and "dignity" we feel that there must be an initial germ, in fact, of that whole bipolarity between the "naive" and the "sentimental", which he later conceived.

But is there any actual bipolarity at all between Schiller's "Anmut" and his "Würde? you may object. Are they not both simply considered as components of that same classical perfection which he opposes to the deficiencies of modern art and modern culture, by and large?

True enough, but one thing should be kept in mind: Schiller probably never believed in a perfection--even in that glorious Parnassus of Greek poetry--which could do entirely without that opposite element, in which the more typically modern poet--and maybe particularly Schiller himself--was bound to excel. Even Greece could hardly reach anything quite worthy of the name of perfection if she limited herself entirely to a rather one-sided indulgence in that pure naiveté.

One thing is unmistakable--in Greek poetry Schiller finds both grace and dignity. And would it be reasonable to overlook the possibility of a bipolarity here, actually corresponding to the general one (and more clearly grasped by Schiller's mind only somewhat later) between the naiveté of Antiquity and the sentimentality of modern times? In fact, grace is the rather original and natural phenomenon. Dignity is the more derived and cultural phenomenon, acquired through civilization. Moreover, who would deny that grace is closely related to the typically naive? A certain primitive prevalence of the senses is undeniable. "Grace" here has a fresh breath of the outward-oriented, of the sanguine: briefly, of the childlike. We have Schiller's own words for that:

Even the brutish man is not lacking in a certain degree of grace when he is animated by love or a similar emotion, and where can one find more grace than in children?[1]

And now the other component of Greek classicism, according to Schiller: dignity. Would it be too bold to call that quality

"sentimental"? Notice: that was a term Schiller had not, as yet, "discovered". We mean he had not, to the full, discovered the opposition between the "naive" and the "sentimental".

But it is clear enough, throughout his present essay, to what extent he conceives of grace and dignity in terms of a certain opposition: Grace is a sort of free play ("freies Spiel"). Dignity has more to do with a conscious, intentional control ("Beherrschung der natürlichen Neigung"). In other words: the former is characterized by activity and exhibition, the latter by passivity and inhibition.

Dignity is therefore promoted and shown more in suffering (pathos); grace more in behavior (ethos); for only in suffering can the freedom of the mind, and only in action the freedom of the body, reveal itself.[2]

To be sure, dignity is the more prevailing cultural phenomenon here. Consequently it is more in the field of the "sentimental", the deliberate. It is--in Schiller's own words--"an expression of the resistance which the independent spirit exerts against the natural inclination (Naturtrieb)".[3]

So, indeed, there is a very definite "contrast", if we may use such a strong word, between "Anmut" and "Würde". But the great thing Schiller finds in Greek art is that: both elements are wonderfully united in it.

Of course, that harmonious fusing together of the two, thus producing a perfect whole, is a fact which has impressed many admirers of antiquity before Schiller, and many after him as well. But few have dived so deeply into the underlying secrets of that striking fact. And few have given so good a description of the admirable totality characterizing the Greek mind in a general way, as a result of this synthesis.

For the Greek, nature is never merely nature; therefore, he should not blush to honor it. For him, reason is never merely reason; therefore, he should not tremble to step beneath its standard. Nature and morality, matter and spirit, earth and heaven, flow together wonderfully beautifully in his poetry. He introduced the freedom that is at home only on Olympus into the affairs of sensuality. And for this, one will forgive him for placing sensuality on Olympus.[4]

It is of tremendous interest to us to have this established as genuinely Greek. For if it is genuinely Greek, then Plato cannot be so genuinely Greek as most historians have been inclined to think. We would dare to say that originally he is not at all. At least he is as far from this harmonious "flowing together" as any one can be. According to Schiller's conception of the typically Greek, the material and the spiritual here have no difficulty whatsoever in associating together. In fact, he states: one is simply not allowed except in association with the other. We had rather say: one is not imaginable except in association with the other. At least, in the living current of human life a dissociation of the two would be unthinkable.

Let us conclude with this interesting idea Schiller has tried to impress upon our minds regarding the Greek, and regarding whole men wherever they are found.

That "sentimental" quality called "das Erhabene" seeks the company of the "gracious", which means that the great severity inherent in the august and the dignified is eternally united with the "desinvolte" and the perfectly naive. The result of this union is nothing less than the beautiful character. True, the perfect ideal of that character may be a level mortal man is not able to reach, even with his greatest efforts, but it is certainly "the ripest fruit of his humanity".[5]

Indisputably, that merging glory of a naturally enfolding child's most graceful childlikeness on one hand, and the systematically trained adult's dignified maturity on the other, is in fact the supreme fruitage, the highest peak humanity (or humanism) can ever reach.

And still something more is demanded. Something infinitely far beyond this human accomplishment is indispensable in order to restore meaningfulness to human life, in order to make man's existence whole.

We have seen the transcending movement in which Schiller sought his salvation. There must be some saving ingredient which even the relative perfection of the Greeks had not reached. The German poet seems to have realized this dimly.

What is this "third ingredient", transcending both "Anmut" and "Würde", both smiling art and ruminating philosophy? May we try to express it in a way that encompasses human Ethics, and still does not necessarily even stop there:

There is most definitely bound to be an evident need, an urgently crying need of something further, something besides the naive and the natural, to form the truly total character in human life. It is the need of an inflexible WILL to defy natural man's natural bent toward indulgence; that is, toward the carnal (if we may use a term at the same time Christian and Platonic). Schiller had much of that will (at least in its Platonic sense, if not particularly in the Christian one).

Our parentheses here are not without importance. In fact, we have found it necessary to go beyond the proper precincts of both art and philosophy for a moment, and turn to religion. That is where we find the mentioned ingredient in its truly whole-making form. For it is all an urgent question of making man whole. This is the curious effect we find realized in an incomparable way in the admirably sound and well-balanced spirit of the Old and the New Testament.

Of course some may think that there is a certain one-sidedness--or "Halbheit"--in Jewish "nomism" and in Christian "puritanism" also. But in reality the volitional element or the ethos element, here implied, constitutes a remarkable corrective to two different deviations at the same time: on one hand it makes a splendid cure

for the superficiality threatening the naturally "naive", as Schiller describes him; that is the opportunistic malleability and too generous softness of the cyclothyme.

On the other hand it also balances the super-tension and boundlessly soaring pride of the schizothyme. That raving sentimentality Schiller speaks about is probably found nowhere more strikingly typical than just in the radical intellectualism and the self-sufficient climbing (autarkeia) of Greek idealism; that is a spiritualistic counterfeit for genuinely spiritual religion.

On both sides there are weaknesses and extremes to be sensibly controlled, and without that sensible harmonious control both of cyclothyme softness and schizothyme pride, human life is doomed to be without both grace and dignity.

But if religion means this purposeful corrective of the respective "Halbheiten", then the Judeo-Christian alternative represents the integration changing a "Halbheit" into a "Ganzheit". The spirit of the Christian Gospel has a remarkable delicacy. It never runs the risk of killing at the same time both the defects of naiveté and that naivete itself. The reason for this delicacy is simple. The wisdom of biblical religiosity implies a sublime type of dignity and a sense of sacred duty which actually manage to carry the naive along, in a most harmonious embrace.

At length we feel we may be somewhat prepared to have our rendezvous with Greek philosophy. And then we shall be well

advised not to skip the very beginnings. For right there we have a philosophical trend which, in our opinion, is at least just as "Greek" as any later subsequent phenomenon in the history of ancient Greece. It is even more Greek, more genuinely Greek, as we appraise genuineness in the present case.

Notes:

1. Schiller: Ueber Anmut und Wurde, Samt. Schr., Vol. X, p. 115.
2. Ibid., p. 113.
3. Ibid., p. 115.
4. Ibid., p. 69.
5. Ibid., p. 105.

Chapter 16

Original Greece and Her Philosophy

We have particular reasons to throw a glance at "original" Greece and her "materialistic" philosophy. First, it will give us a chance to look at some interesting facts about that redoubtable "materialism" in a more general way.

Characteristically enough, at this period of Greek history we find little trace of actual dualism. The first leading philosophers of the country had a rather definitely monistic trend. The historian will remember in what direction the main interests of the "physiologues" of Ionia tended to go. Their principal preoccupation was not man. At least, a typical self-introspective activity for the purpose of analysing that man, was as far from their tendencies as anything could come. Truly and fully their gaze was turned outwards. The external world and its tangible physical properties were the object of their studies. So they have been qualified as "materialists" rather than as "idealists".

But one thing must be admitted by all: the Ionians had a tremendous efficiency in their proper field. They did not lose themselves in the maze of internal mysteries. Some historians seem to regret deeply the premature interruption of the period when the Ionians still had full freedom of action. Who can tell what formidable development the so-called true sciences might have experienced, even in those early and primitive centuries, if the great

monists of Ionia had been permitted to carry on their realistic program of scientific investigation?

At least, it is certainly hard to tell which might have benefited the human race most. Today we are sometimes tempted to think that certain secrets of the physical world have been penetrated early enough as it is. From that view-point, it might be regarded as an actual blessing and a providential event that those Ionians were definitively stopped in their fairly successful activity.

Unquestionably a very different group of philosophers are soon destined to get the upper hand. We generally call them "idealists". To popular minds that sounds simply perfect. To the professional observer, however, their triumph means the triumph of dualism, nothing more and nothing less.

Of course, even those who would prefer a more popular form of idealism, and a more total form of spiritually (instead of just one-sided spiritualism), will freely admit that there may be evils in this world leading to its destruction more speedily than any spiritual deviation would ever seem able to do, for instance the impassible demon of irresponsible scientific invention. Religious men believe that even the God of heaven has occasionally seen Himself obliged to "come down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded," and to spread confusion among those purposeful and soberly machinating realists, lest nothing "be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do" (Genesis xi : 5, 6).

Of course "confusions", in themselves, are not so good either. We are here to study a particularly serious confusion, as the true monist would probably not hesitate to call it. Some have asked themselves with anxiety the searching question of whether man is really doomed to pendulate between extreme materialism and extreme spiritualism. Is there not a third alternative? If not, well, then one should not perhaps wonder at those who opt for spiritualism, after all, particularly in an age like ours. For today the world has certainly seen the ghastly results of pure materialism. We have seen what soberly reasoning intelligence, firmly fixed to the hard ground of practical realities, may do towards the wiping out of a world culture.

Such considerations would tend to make even the ardent lover of totality in human life fairly lenient and forgiving, even towards the most fancy-ridden idealism.

Probably, it will always remain a matter of subjective opinion, whether or not the amazing victory of idealistic dualism from Plato onwards should be considered as a blessing of providence. But that victory itself may be studied as a firm historical fact. And grouped around it we may find several equally indisputable historical facts. One of these concerns the fantastic talents with which some of the men were endowed who formed the vanguard of the idealist movement. Not only did they manage to lead influential personalities through all subsequent centuries into the lofty realms of their own speculations, but they also had quite an exceptional ability of gripping the minds of the multitudes.

But we want to emphasize one thing again in connection with that commonly accepted historical reality: as far as we can see, the average Greek was essentially different from those highly "sentimental" geniuses. We dare say the great masses of ancient Greeks had much more in common with those preceding "earth-centred" physiologues of Ionia. In fact, we find very little in them even remotely reminiscent of that heaven-bound flight implied in Platonic idealism. The Hellenes are pretty well known to have been comparatively well satisfied with life as it unfolded itself here, not looking with any eagerness to the future compensations of a hereafter. Sufficient evidence is the character of Hades, according to their mythology. To a Greek the essential thing was obviously this life and the tangible realities of this earth. A continuation of life on yonder distant shores of the hereafter was, indeed, enshrouded in shadows.

Only in the course of the second half of the fifth century does some sort of belief in a celestial immortality of the soul make its appearance on Greek territory. Isn’t that, in itself, remarkable? And even after that time the concept of immortality is not too clearly associated with human destiny. With the Greeks, the word "immortal" is an epithet pertaining to the gods rather than to human beings. Their whole mythology is, in fact, based upon a certain principle of essential separation between the realms of the gods and the realms of men. An actual abyss seems to separate the world of the human from the world of the divine. At least that applies to the common hopes of common people. Only the great heroes had the

privilege of escaping from the common lot of mortal beings, joining the abodes of the gods.

Erwin Rohde has this to say concerning that topic:

Only to a small number of individuals, marvellously endowed and privileged, did the creed ever attribute the oldest form of immortality which Greek thought has imagined; we mean the uninterrupted continuation, in some delicious hiding-place, of that psycho-physical life begun on this earth. The immortality of the human soul as such--in virtue of its own nature and its own constitution, and as a divine imperishable energy placed in a mortal body--was never the object of popular Greek beliefs.[1]

Louis Rougier, too, assures us that a total transformation had to take place in the popular conceptions of the nations in the Western Mediterranean area:

To the conception of the vital breath which dissipates with death, to the faith in the survival of vain shadows which repeat, in ineffective gestures, in the subterranean kingdom of the dead, the works of terrestrial existence, it [that is: the entirely new belief in a celestial immortality] substituted the idea of ??a soul of celestial essence, lost in this lower world like a land of exile, destined to return to its original homeland, to taste, in the company of the sidereal gods, a radiant immortality.[2]

Even Socrates does not seem to have been so sure at all about the form of survival, or even about survival itself, as is generally assumed. For example in the Apology you will look in vain for any cocksureness in this respect. Listen to Socrate's quite cautious formulation of his beliefs, or rather his hopes:

Let us reflect in another way, and we shall see that there is great reason to hope that death is a good; for one of two things--either death is a state of nothingness and utter unconsciousness, or, as men say [italics still ours], there is a change and migration of the soul from this world to another. Now if you suppose that there is no consciousness, but a sleep like the sleep of him who is undisturbed even by dreams, death will be an unspeakable gain. For if a person were to select the night in which his sleep was undisturbed even by dreams, and were to compare with this the other days and nights of his life, and then were to tell us how many days and nights he had passed in the course of his life better and more pleasantly than this one, I think that any man--I will not say a private man only, but even the great king--will not find many such days, or nights, when compared with the other. Now if death be of such a nature, I say that to die is gain, for eternity then is only a single night. But if death is the journey to another place, and there, as men say, all the dead abide, what good, O my friends and judges, can be greater than this? (Ap. 40)

Well, you may perhaps object, but in other dialogues there are numbers of passages where Socrates is quoted as expressing his belief in human immortality in terms of the firmest conviction.

In other dialogues yes. But there is considerable reason to believe that only the Apology gives us the most authentic picture of Socrates. Later on, in the Phaidon for instance, we know to what extent Plato has taken liberties in having Socrates express ideas on immortality which are first and foremost Platonic. In the Apology, however, he probably had a very definite plan of showing his readers Socrates as he really was. Precisely his devotion to that great master, it would seem, prevents him from adulterating here, in any serious way, the true traits of the man he describes. This is not so much a matter of philosophical argument. No, here it is rather the human heart of a respectful disciple that is moved to hand down to posterity a reliable image of the man whose last days had filled every friend with deep commotion.

This is also the view of Maurice Croiset (Prefatory notes to Plato's Apology in Oeuvres Completes, 1920, p. 171):

We have reason to believe that it [the Apology] faithfully expresses Socrates" feelings. Plato did not want to give him more certainty than he actually had.

Rohde actually regards the Apology as the one among Plato's dialogues in which he reveals himself in his fullest simplicity and his fullest greatness. And this author, too, pays particular attention to the fact that Plato here, characteristically enough, does not show a Socrates who insists upon the hope of eternal life as the only alternative. Another possibility is vividly portrayed: death may bring

man into a state of total unconsciousness, like that of a dreamless sleep.

Socrates openly admits the two possibilities, relying on the justice of the gods who govern human affairs, and he does not push his investigations any further. How could he know with certainty what nobody knows?[3]

To tell the truth, the very words Plato now quotes Socrates as saying about that popularly assumed "kingdom of the souls", are liable to lead our thoughts towards the Hades of Homer rather than towards the bright home suggested by theologians, or by poets of the theologian mould.

Anyway, the popular Greek idea emerges clearly enough: The blessed privilege of immortality is not natural to any human person. It is a special favour, a merciful gift provided by divinity. As Alfred Loisy expresses it:

We are predestined, chosen by her (i.e., by divine force), and we receive the pledge from her in secret initiation ceremonies.[4]

That was just how the religions of mysteries offered immortality. It was actual translations that were supposed to take place. And the peculiar "catarisms" demanded for such translations indicate clearly enough that the soul is not generally assumed to go on living after the body has died. The hero does not enter into the state of divinity without a process of glorification, which has to take place right in the body! In other words: the real conception of the

essence of human nature, here revealing itself, is a far cry from the profoundly dualist and spiritualist theories. Only through the introduction of Orphism and of Dionysian worship were these theories to make their way triumphantly into Greece.

From our point of view, the trend of the transformation here is very characteristic: the simple and the relaxed or the soundly peaceful have, by and by, been entirely replaced by the complicated and the excited. Super-tension and ecstasy characterize the rites of the new religions introduced from abroad. It is a question of "coming out of oneself" (exisasthai). That is, permitting the soul to be torn off from the body, thus finally "revealing its true nature". Only by means of such disruptive activity is the highest degree of "spiritual reality" supposed to be reached.

What about the "nationality" of that "sacred madness"? Was it genuinely Greek? And what about the origin of those veritable orgies which had to be arranged in order to bring about the queer sensation of the soul leaving its despicable bodily frame in order to join the glories of divinity? Were they genuinely Greek? Never. As a matter of fact, there continues, for a long time, to be a certain reaction against this in the Greek people. Precisely the Dionysos mysteries frequently passed the limit of what folks of common decency could tolerate.

We simply refuse to believe that this whole ecstatic religion was in any real harmony with the general spirit of the Greek mind. The Greeks were, after all, a matter-of-fact people, rejoicing in the

simple beauties and the tangible goods of this earth. We do not deny that they could be extremely enthusiastic. As Eiliv Skard puts it, "The Greek took an almost fanatical interest in politics."[5] In fact, he would feel quite miserable if he were not allowed to live in his "polis". You certainly remember how definitely Socrates turns down the suggestion made by Crito of his fleeing from the prison and going into exile. Such an idea to him appears even more abominable than that of death. This strong "polis consciousness" may be taken as a sign of an intense fellowship feeling. It may also indicate an idealism in the popular sense of the term. For that political interest often resulted in a boundless and most admirable willingness to sacrifice oneself on the altar of the community.

However, we think we are perfectly justified in stating that, as a general rule, the Hellene is more inclined towards a certain bourgeois materialism than towards any super-idealism, whether you take the latter term in its popular or in its philosophical sense. Thus he is perhaps, in the last analysis, more adequately represented by those first "materialist" philosophers, whose monistic conceptions had led them to deny both the divinity of the stars and the immortality of the soul.

At least, we have nowhere found any generally Greek tendency to despise things simply because they are material and practical, or of sorting them out as a "strange element" unworthy of having company with the spiritual. We have shown Schiller's evaluation of Greek culture in general and of Greek poetry in particular. But in connection with the artistic field, a little, but perhaps very

significant detail has attracted our attention: What was the Greek word for art? It was techne. But what is this "techne"? It is simply craftsmanship, the skill of making anything--from a pot to a poem. Art--we mean Art with a capital A--simply does not have any equivalent in the classical Greek language. Does that indicate any typical discrimination against the "lower" elements? On the contrary! At least, one cannot speak about any obvious trend towards spiritualistic dualism in this case.

But when and how, then, did that strange minority phenomenon of a radical Greek idealism enter upon the stage and start its triumphal procession?

Let us first mention the Pythagorean "spiritualists". These men had actually introduced the three points on which an immortality doctrine was likely to be based: 1) the dual nature of the world, 2) the divine nature of the stars, and 3) the close relationship between souls and stars.

Now it must immediately be admitted that the belief in a divine nature of celestial orbs is one which may be traced back as far as our records of the Greek people go. So the Pythagoreans had a comparatively easy job in persuading people that the human soul, as well, was destined to a higher lot than that shade-like existence provided by their original Hades. The revolutionary work of the really exceptional genius was prepared. We are still referring here to the fantastically influential "spiritualist" Plato.

However, we cannot immediately start discussing Plato's momentous dualism. There is first one serious question here from which there seems to be no escape. We have seen a certain tendency of moderation in the Greeks as a national group. Now we do believe that moderation, as a general rule, is a quality of considerable importance for the harmony and wholeness of a well-balanced life. This would speak definitely in favour of totality and true mental soundness in the Greek community. Sometimes, it is true, even moderateness can be carried too far. That may sound somewhat paradoxical. One thing is a fact: even in virtues the Greeks advocated a certain moderation. Perhaps just that "exaggerated fear of exaggerations"--of exaggeration in every and any field--may have prevented the Greeks from reaching what we here consider to be the highest culmination of totality.

We have adopted Spranger's standpoint, considering religiosity as the very highest of human cultural values. To us it also becomes the highest attainable peak of harmonious totality in human life. There should be no danger whatsoever of ever becoming "too religious". That is simply impossible!

In other words, there may, after all, be certain exceptions to the rule that "moderation favours totality". It should also be noted, however that when we here state the simple impossibility of ever becoming too religious, we are speaking about true religiosity. Religion has to do with spirituality, not with spiritualism. What is the difference? The difference is exactly the same as the one between totality and disruption. And to us that is no slight

difference. The truly spiritual remains harmonious through its inherent virtue of integration. That implies also an integration of mind and matter, of eternal and temporal values. At least for human beings as we know them in this world, that is an absolutely inevitable implication. The fatal mistake of the spiritualist, however, consists just in splitting this totality up into "hostile parts", and of excluding one part as "base", "unworthy", or at best, "negligible".

What so easily deceives us in this spiritualism (or one-sided and dualistic type of idealism) is precisely its brilliant exterior. It perfectly eludes as a religion. Spiritualism has the visible appearance of true spirituality. Therefore its peculiar form of idealism very easily insinuates itself as a substitute for true religion. It becomes the religion of the "not too religious", as we shall sometimes paradoxically define it. We have seen the Greeks manifesting a rather moderate religiosity, from the beginning. Now, to some extent, even as a general group, they do permit themselves to be persuaded into that dualist type of idealism. But that does not necessarily mean that they are suddenly lifted onto a much higher spiritual level. Perhaps the very opposite. For, in the very concreteness and down-to-earth sober-mindedness of their original and more "materialistic" philosophy, there had been something fundamentally sound, a favourable basis for life in all its phases. With the new heaven-bound flight of the "pure spirits" there was a serious danger of losing that firm foundation without reaching the higher level which was supposed to be the destination.

However, we still refuse to believe that the Greeks--as a people--were in any way thoroughly affected by this soaring flight of the general Idea, loosed from its terrestrial bonds of the particular and the concrete. It was rather Plato, and a limited circle of exceptional men around him, who reached those dizzying heights. Therefore we are not able to quite agree with Axel Seeberg, if he really speaks about the Greeks as a national group, when he states:

The Hellene looks for a general connection and an absolute reality elevated above the spheres of this changing life, and still united with all its manifestations. He boldly postulates that the real world is static and unchangeable. And this particular feeling of a more universal reality beyond the visible one, becomes a characteristic of Greek culture through and through.[6]

One thing may be admitted of course: the abstracting and generalizing tendency, established by an exquisite minority, may by and by have grown so strong that it was finally bound to become, in some way, a particular trait of what historians have come to look upon as the ancient Greek culture. But then it must clearly be pointed out: this is the eventual result of a fabulous influence gradually exerted by the exceptional genius, in fact an influence so overwhelming that the original nature of the Hellene--as a type--has simply had the fate of being entirely swallowed up in the forceful tide of a relentlessly sweeping current. It was not at all the Greeks who had most of the "natural" characteristics Seeberg describes. It was Plato.

The same author admits a certain sense of the concrete, rather than the abstract, in the way Greeks tended to consider history. To them history is action. The more impersonal factors, such as economic laws, conditions of nature, etc., were outside the realm of their comprehension, or at least outside the realm of what they had a desire to comprehend. Something similar applies to Greek poetry. The living action and the concrete, personal, human agent are constantly found to be in the centre.[7] Is not that a curious quality to emphasize in the Greek character, if at the same time one persists in qualifying Platonic abstractions as a typically Greek phenomenon?

James Barr seems to take his point of departure in a stereotype, entirely different from this, and assumed to be just as characteristic of current public opinion: "The highest philosophical developments of the Greeks were interested in an immutable reality, paying no attention whatsoever to action in history"! (Barr, Semantics of Biblical Language, 1962, p. 11)

The "highest philosophical developments" to be sure! But what about the fundamentally Greek conceptions then? We mean those not quite so high, but more popularly representative.

We sincerely believe that both statements--apparently so contradictory--may be correct enough. One should only be careful to distinguish between an original Greek conception and an eventual conception--the Platonic one.

We do not deny that the Greek people had an immediate and intense desire to communicate, to explain things and find reasons, to investigate and describe. But to just what point did it seem natural for them to carry such investigations? We would say that a certain mediocrity, which is not at all Platonic, asserts itself here as well: just the concrete facts of their own beloved little world are the favourite objects of their common eagerness to find laws and rules. Little wonder that they turn so immediately towards nature. In fact, even phenomena considered to be "more spiritual", such as history, actually become a piece of nature to them.

Just in the Greek attitude towards history, however, we feel a striking lack. We are thinking of a definitely spiritual element which to us seems indispensable as a guarantee of true totality. Later on we shall describe that in more detail under the title of "meaningfulness" in human life. We shall try to show, in fact, that human totality can never live without human finality.

But what is the Greek's concern about a human end, a meaningful goal, particularly an end in history? How much of unique significance is he able to get sight of in the turbulent drama of historical happening? The Norwegian specialist in Greek culture, Eiliv Skard, expresses the attitude of the Greeks as historians in the following terms:

Human history is in reality nothing but another piece of nature. History is a law-directed natural process, as everything repeats and renews itself, like autumn and spring, life and death. The Greek

endeavoured to find laws and rules in this game--naturally enough, by the way, for he had a real passion for laws and systems. However, the development toward a goal in history, that was an idea entirely foreign to most Greeks.[8]

Now it would probably be very wrong to imply that the Greeks have no sense of finality at all, no attitude of meaningfulness in human life. We are soon to see that in antiquity--considered as a section of the history of man's spiritual life--even philosophy still has a fairly admirable degree of such finality, especially if we compare it to modern times. However, if one compares the Greeks to the Jews for instance, as Professor Skard does, one thing becomes very conspicuous once more: their relative mediocrity in a religious respect. And theologians are well agreed upon this point.

For the Jew it is an imperative demand that history should have a goal. His conception of life is simply that of his religion. It coincides entirely with Yaweh's revelation. Everything there leads him immediately to the great conviction that history keeps rising towards a definite objective a glorious end. That is what we have described as the elan vital of alterocentricity. In both the Old and the New Testament this constitutes the very spirit of eschatology. It is God revealing Himself. And the locus of His revelation is nothing but history. Through it He realizes the kingdom of His justice. Thus everything is filled to the brim with meaning. This is the supreme finality, the meaningfulness of the eschaton.

History in Greek civilization is something widely different, something infinitely more trivial, if we may express what we mean frankly. It is, in so far as history, with the Greeks, avers itself as strangely akin to anecdote. It also possesses another kinship: It is narrowly related to tragedy.

Historians today may say about the Greek historian that he saw nothing higher in the historical processes than Fate or Necessity.

We have tried to express the same thing applying our concept of "Automatism". The true reason why the Greeks, and every subsequent civilization of the Western World, permitted themselves to be charmed by a system as little charming in itself (from a soundly human point of view) as that of inexorable total automatism, was the unfortunate circumstance of an original emptiness which we can hardly express by a more adequate term than paganism. For that term evokes its utter unrelatedness to both Judaism and Christianity. That automatism, or spiritual vacuum, elevated, by the highest pagan cultures in humanity, to the dignity of a sham-religion, here termed spiritualism, was the highest heritage the Hellenist heathen could legate to subsequent generations of Western culture-bearers. The most immediate literary translation of this aimlessness is Tragedy.

Characteristically enough, tragedy in this sense is unknown to the Jews. Why? Because Tragedy simply signifies the absence of meaningfulness. Anecdote, too, is unknown to the Jews. Why? Because Anecdote simply signifies triviality. And that, too, is

synonymous with the absence of meaning in life only with a somewhat different shade:

Triviality is the absence of deeper meaning on an everyday level. Tragedy is meaninglessness elevated by drama to the level of an ultimate end, a paganized eschaton, one might perhaps say.

Small wonder then that the Greeks, in search of their ultimate reality, tended to turn away from history, in favour of the unchangeable. We must explain that as an entirely natural resignation. The person who does not find in history anything profoundly human, nay more than that: profoundly religious, profoundly salvatory and full of meaning--takes his refuge precisely in the static, in the absolute zero, as the highest point. One is then happy not to have been reduced to a directly negative value. Tragedy is precisely that definitely negative value. The dissolution of all personal consciousness--thanks to the ingenious trick of the Idea (which, in Platonic spiritualism, renders exactly the same service, in this respect, as the Buddhist Nirvana)--saves man from his consciousness of himself; that is, the consciousness of a desperate condition. Such is the inevitable price paid for self-sufficiency, for self-redemption.

Seen from this view-point the difference between the Greek's attitude towards history and the Hebrew's attitude becomes easy to understand. To the Greek, history is an evil from which he should be saved. To the Hebrew it is the very locus of his salvation.

By the way, how could one ever expect an idea of finality of the concrete Hebraic type in the realms of Greek philosophy? Philosophers never had anything corresponding, even remotely, to the graphicalness of biblical revelation. Nothing but Christianity ever reached that full measure of true meaning, a meaning giving back to man his true totality. In fact, what was Christianity's unique conception of the "civitas Dei"? Simply a purposeful march along the road of history all the way up to the kingdom of God. With that conception, the Christian Gospel makes possible a spirituality that is identical with totality in human life. And outside that there is no cultural heritage worth mentioning in any civilization. It is this totality inherent in Christianity which no other spiritual efflorescence has ever known. Whatever crumbs they have managed to gather of it, they owe to Christianity.

Skard claims, and rightly so, that even the modern cultural optimism of such typical non-Christians as the Marxist historians are indebted to the Christian heritage of our culture for an incredible part of their much-lauded values, whether they know it or not.[9]

But the great question is whether there is so much to laud in it. The modern Occidental suffers from a lack of finality in his views on history which is really agonizing. And to whom does he owe that part of his heritage?

We distinguished in Greek history between the anecdote and the tragic attitude. Now the Jewish philosopher Martin Buber has an interesting distinction in his portrayal of modern man and that man's

conception of history (Werke, Der Mensch von heute und die judische Bibel, II 854-855):

1. It is either "libertinistisch"; that is, he accepts, and connives in, its pseudofinality ("Scheinsinn"), a tumultuous promiscuity of processes: the rise and decline of nations, greedy triumphs and miserable defeats.

2. Or he adopts a "dogmatic" attitude toward history, fixating its rigid laws and calculating in advance its future courses, at though its "great lines" were engraved on a rolling wheel just rolling down; history is nothing but a stale, rigid emptiness--"ein vorhandener Raum".

Double mistake! Human destiny is neither accidental episode nor ineluctable fate. Where origin and goal are humanly realized facts, there is no such aimlessness.

One is carried by a meaning that one could not conceive; but one receives it not in order to formulate it, but in order to live it; and it is lived in the fruitful and glorious fullness of decision of the moment, which in its realities is everywhere a biographical one, yours and mine no less than Alexander's and Caesar"s; but yours as the moment of your encounter.

But modern man knows no encounter, no beginning. To him history is like a splash of water reaching him from a cosmos devoid of all history. Nor does he know any end. And why are both these

realities unknown to him? For the simple reason that he insists on not knowing what lies between them, the present moment to which he would then be obligated to commit himself. But that would mean assuming a personal responsibility for decisions at this moment. Modern man feigns to be fond of risks, but the only risk really worth while, that of personal responsibility, is one he carefully avoids. In other words, he should keep quiet about the "absurdities" he pretends to find in history. They are his deliberate choice. So how could he expect to come across any meaningfulness?

We would not say, however, that this actual preference for non-sense rather than sense, found in modern Occidentals, is an immediate heritage from ancient Greece. That would be too hard an indictment.

The culture of Greece was at a sad disadvantage in that it was simply deprived of every possibility of any strong "infiltration" on the part of Jewish or Christian influences. It was outside the blessed sphere of totality (in terms of divine Spirit becoming human flesh), both in historical timing and geographical space. It was doomed to be pagan, downright arch-pagan. In other words, its sense of true human wholeness and harmony was also doomed to remain in a precarious shape. One should only admit that precariousness.

But to make specific nature and mental disposition of the Greek nation--en bloc, as it were--responsible for that extreme disruption we find in Platonic idealism, this we must disavow as a serious injustice, indeed. If one insists on venturing upon formulating

certain theses on "fundamental Greek character traits", we dare say one ought rather to seek inspiration in the profoundly reasonable conclusions drawn by Schiller. For certainly Schiller does give us a strikingly plausible image of the truly "average Greek". And that is by no means the image of any sentimental super-tension. It is not at all that proud titanism cutting all human values into tiny morsels. On the contrary, the portrait is that of a Greek, fairly respectful towards an integrated humanity:

It is humanity alone in which the Greek encompasses all beauty and perfection. Sensuality may never appear to him without a soul; and his humane feeling finds it equally impossible to separate raw animality and intelligence. Just as he strives to give every idea a body and also to embody the spiritual, so he demands from every instinctive act in man an immediate expression of his moral destiny.[10]

Now, frankly, what does this generous versatility, or many-sidedness, of general Greek humanity have in common with Platonic spiritualism? We dare say, practically nothing. Spiritualism is precisely one-sided. And it is anything but generously human. What is truly versatile and heartily human is a spirituality of an entirely different type. True spirituality demands wholeness and heartiness. That is not the spiritualism of Plato, but the spirituality of Jesus Christ. These two were destined to stand as symbols for an inexorable rivalry for the future of all Occidental culture. Which of the two was to win the race?

In the present chapter we have only arrived at the dawn of that culture. We are speaking about original Hellenism; that is the average character of a people lifting the Western World onto the stage of a world culture. This people had not met Jesus Christ. It had not met Plato either. And this latter fact is the one we should first try to fix in our minds. Plato is not a self-evident feature of original Greek character. It is falsely that one has been so quick to formulate some sort of anticipating conclusion (consciously or unconsciously): "Greece is Plato".

By the way, this erroneous assumption may be traced back to a current one of a more general order. One constantly imagines that by knowing the salient characteristics of a country's most famous men one may also know the predominant characteristics of that country itself. This is an understandable misunderstanding but also a most serious one. Personally, in that respect, we would rather lean towards the viewpoint of an American historian who has made this little, but most noteworthy remark (in the Preface to the English works of George Herbert, 1905, p. xii).

The tendencies of an age appear more distinctively in its writers of inferior rank than in those of commanding genius.[11]

We might perhaps elaborate on this terse statement of a general rule by adding that the writers of inferior rank tell us most about the actual conditions in their respective times, and within their respective territories. The writers of commanding genius tell us more about conditions in following times (perhaps during centuries

and millennia after their deaths), and covering a vastly extended territory (perhaps comprising the entire world).

In other words, if you just want the sober facts of here and now, turn to the "writers of inferior rank". If you want a sort of visionary panorama of things to come, turn to the "prophet", the man of "commanding genius". He is far ahead of his time. The image that his work and his personal character traits may convey to you, represents a rather curious extension both in space and time. In fact, his genius has been of such "command" that it has finished by moulding any present dimensions according to his own image.

So we, do see what we should expect to find in Plato. We also see what we should not expect to find in him.

We see what we may expect to find is the spirit of a prolonged Hellenism, the spirit of present-day Europe. And that is certainly not a spirit of human totality, not even the relative totality of the ancient Greeks.

Notes:

1. Erwin Rohde: Psyche, French edit., 1928, p. 573.
2. Rougier: L"Origine astronomique de la croyance pythagoricienne en l"immortalite de l"ame, 1939, p. III.
3. Rohde: op. cit., p. 479.
4. Alfred Loisy: Les Mysteres paiens et le Mystere chretien, 1930, p. 17.

5. Skard, Svendsen, and Winsnes: Tider og Tanker, 1952, p. 9.
6. Axel Seeberg: "Oldtiden", Aschehougs Verdenshistorie, I, p. 146, 1958.
7. Ibid., p. 147.
8. Skard, Svendsen and Winsnes: op. cit., p. 22.
9. Ibid.
10. Schiller: Ueber Anmut und Wurde, Samt. Schr., Vol. X.
11. George Herbert: Collected Works in English, 1905, p. XII (Preparatory Notes).

Chapter 17

Plato:
How Far Is His Philosophy Unfavourable to Totality?

It would be wrong to intimate that Plato is alpha and omega in the introduction of dualism into Greek thinking. In fact, even Empedocles, with his bipolarity of the forces of love on one hand and the forces of discord on the other, had presented a certain dualism. But only Plato has put dualism into a real system in Greek thought. It is a dualism of the world, and a dualism of man. We freely admit that Plato conveyed to the Greeks a far more elevated conception of deity for instance, than their poets and mythologists had ever done. His God is the cause of good only. As for evil, which fills the greater part of human life, one has to seek elsewhere to find the causes for that. From his Republic onwards, Plato is particularly clear on that point. God is not the one responsible for sending all kinds of evil experiences to man. In his Theaitetos he maintains that conception quite strongly. Nevertheless, it seems impossible that evil should ever come to an end. For it is a necessary opposite to good. But fortunately it is limited to this world here below. That is just why we should be anxious to flee away from this abode of mortality and corruption as quickly as possible. That flight is realized in the same measure as we succeed in resembling God; that is, becoming just and holy and attaining that serenity of the spirit which is of the world above. Here the two great models appear: one divine and happy, the other godless and utterly unhappy.

In his Timaios, the great work of his last period, Plato describes how God has created the world of the senses as a beautiful image of the world of intelligence. All things, it is true, have not been produced by intelligence. Some have also been brought about by a more obscure force, called Necessity. In order to give a complete explanation of the genesis of things one has to take into account a cause which has nothing in common with the truly divine. In his last work, on the Laws, the expression of this dualism certainly does not become less accentuated by any means. The scale of values is that of a rather proud and pagan type of idealism, of course; but how could one possibly expect to meet here the scale of values we know, for instance, from the Christian Agape? This would be an anachronism and an absurd demand. Plato's tending upwards, towards the pinnacles of celestial things, is consistently pagan. It is consistently dualistic and abstracting.

Of all the things which man has, next to the gods, his soul is the most divine and most truly his own. Now, in every man there are two parts: the better and superior, which rules, and the worse and inferior, which serves, and the ruling part of him is always to be preferred to the subject. (Laws, V, 726)

The souls of individual men here actually seem to float into one universal Soul. Or perhaps it is wrong to speak about just one. In book X (896) he says:

We must not suppose that there are less than two-one author of good, and the other of evil.

Despite all the changes there may seem to be, from dialogue to dialogue, the great and decisive Platonic principle remains the same. It is the fundamental conception of the Idea that produces an inexorable distinction between two worlds, one good and eternal, the other evil, corruptible, and hopelessly material. And that duality embraces both cosmos and man. The cosmological dualism simply demands an anthropological one. The human soul becomes similar to the immortal Ideas. The body has the very opposite position. It is sadly ephemeral, whereas the soul is from eternity to eternity, just like the Idea. Accordingly, "the soul is prior to the body" (Ibid.), the latter being born solely to obey the former, the self-evident ruler. The body is composite and subject to eventual decomposition and total destruction. The soul is simple and accordingly indissoluble, precisely like the Idea. Through his body man is drawn irresistibly downwards, to the world of the senses. Thanks to his better part, the soul, he turns upwards, to the eternal realities.

There seems to be no doubt as to what part of man is the essential. It is certainly the soul. But in its splendid immaterial existence that soul must, indeed, have committed some terrible fault, resulting in that deplorable affair of a human birth. Through that fateful event of an indefinite past it has at least been condemned to the miserable lot of being linked to a body. This actually looks like an act of violence practiced against the human soul, and a thing entirely foreign to the divinity of its original nature. Anyway, the conclusion is very much the same at which Pythagoras had

obviously arrived: the body is a deplorable episode, a prison, a tomb.

Here we may already seem to have brought up an almost unnecessarily massive range of heavy artillery to launch a murderous broadside against any illusions the reader might be supposed to entertain regarding any trace of elementary totality in Platonic philosophy. But we want to be entirely fair. Therefore immediately after our first attack we hurry to add, with renewed insistence, that it would be very wrong to insinuate that Plato's idealism is devoid of sublime virtues, which ought to be equally conducive to totality in our spiritual conception of the term: It has no end of teleological optimism. It has a mighty incentive towards moral living. It even lays a considerable stress expressly on wholeness sometimes. Just listen to the stirring proclamation made to youth by the Athenian Stranger:

The ruler of the universe has ordered all things with a view to the excellence and preservation of the whole, and each part, as far as may be, has an action and passion appropriate to it. Over these, down to the least fraction of them, ministers have been appointed to preside, who have wrought out their perfection with infinitesimal exactitude. (Laws, X, 903)

Now, the suspicious individualist may have ample reason to consider this with caution. For that nice concern about a "preservation of the whole" might, after all, turn out to be nothing but the common mystic message about a survival of the "pure soul"

far out somewhere in that great harbour of a general species; so not at all a preservation of wholeness in the individual being, but rather some "felicitous" fusion of the individual with the endless ocean of a "World-Soul"; and obviously that is a type of wholeness, which a poor naive, the genuine Child of a living humanity, can hardly manage to consider as "meaningful" in his sense of the term. The deepest longings of his heart are simply forced to drown in the ethereal ocean of such a "totality".

One should notice, by the way, the author's context in the present case. We have to do with a message he is particularly concerned about bringing home to "the youth". You might say that a long life has taught him the Adult par excellence--that the spirit of those youthful minds distinguishes itself precisely by one thing: they are simply not "sufficiently adult" to grasp that mystical "peace" in which every passionate individualism ought to merge and lose itself completely. And when? Of course, at the very moment when their personal souls have the ineffable felicity of an absolutely impersonal survival, in fact, the only possible survival found to be compatible with the sublime theory of the pure Idea.

So, face to face with this naive public of his--this extremely childish public, indeed--Plato seems to feel the need of a cautious language, a language equally "childish", as it were; in other words, a language still somewhat "of this world". He is presently seen to condescend, in fact, to the very level of a downright human meaningfulness, a meaning filling even individual destinies with a core of reality in the deepest human sense. You might even be

tempted to speak about a meaningfulness of true religious depth and of genuine ethical excellence. The great Physician and Artist of this universe is described as "directing his effort toward the common good". If you are annoyed at this equitable and altruistic principle of "executing the part for the sake of the whole", then that happens only "because you are ignorant how what is best for you happens to you and to the universe". The goal is definitely a moral one. It tends towards perfect justice: "sending the better nature to the better place, and the worse to the worse, and so assigning to them their proper portion." (Laws, X, 903)

And what device is called upon in order to perpetrate this just retribution for personal deeds of good or evil? It is just metempsychosis. Or perhaps we rather ought to call it a metensomatosis. For in this transmigration it is precisely the body that is changed. The soul conserves its identity all the time. But of course the great hope of amelioration is always there. There is a fair chance of climbing upwards from incarnation to incarnation. This is obviously the great "general plan" by means of which the Eternal Being has devised to put in order all conditions that may have disordered themselves.

However, "the formation of qualities" has been "left to the wills of individuals". For "everyone of us is made pretty much that he is by the bent of his desires and the nature of his soul" (Ibid., 904).

One of the major problems we have faced in trying to understand and evaluate Plato with reference to a moral standard,

such as true meaningfulness in human life seems to demand it, is precisely his ambiguity with respect to the personal values. Does his system involve a total automatism or not? Could it be said that Plato leaves a real place open for volitional freedom in man? Is there in human existence a true choice between good and evil? Is there a place for personalism and true responsibility?

For our evaluation of Platonism's degree of spirituality in the Christian sense this is of course a particularly decisive point. To be a pagan--does that mean not to have any fixed attitude whatsoever towards the issues of personalism and responsibility? Anyway, with Plato we find a terrible ambiguity in these matters.

At moments we are prevailed upon to think that the great philosopher's universe is one governed by a principle of just retribution. In fact, a serious tone of the severest moral admonition is perceived where he turns to the young skeptic who might be tempted to draw unwarranted conclusions from the apparent impunity of some evil-doers; in fact, they seem to remain great and prosperous in spite of their wicked ways:

You fancied that from being miserable they had become happy, and in their action, as in a mirror, you seemed to see the universal neglect of the gods, not knowing how they make all things work together and contribute to the great whole. (Ibid. 905 b)

Nevertheless, the arm of retributive justice is long enough to catch any man in the end:

If you say: I am small and will creep into the depths of the earth, or I am high and will fly up to the heaven, you are not so small or so high but that you shall pay the fitting penalty, either here or in the world below, or in some still more savage place whither you shall be conveyed. (Ibid.)

All this might lead your thoughts towards a certain moral meaningfulness indicative of totality in the deepest sense. But does this apply to Plato's theoretical system in general? No one can deny that, in the Republic, Socrates makes the soul stand forth as an admirable unity in perfect conformity with the unity of the ideal realities. But he sees himself forced to make a distinction here which we cannot help qualifying as the very opposite of all moral and spiritual totality. For let us notice one thing: reason--the great governess--is not only considered as hostile to the so-called "inferior" passions. No, she is also considered as hostile to the so-called "generous" passions. The latter, you see, however "good" they may be, have the terrible drawback of being attached to the body. Consequently they are in reality evil. But here we should like to ask one little question: "How does it come to happen that a thing can be good and evil at the same time?"

The answer Plato would probably give us is that the emotions, even the most generous ones, are not worthy of survival. The purely intelligible part only, of the soul--be it ever so frigid and god-forsaken an element to some human beings--has the prerogative of surviving. So, clearly enough, the one who wants to immortalize

himself--and we are going to see that this is the great scramble peculiar to pagan self-sufficiency--should not choose to be good; he should choose to be intelligent, ingenious!

Chapter 18

The Genius of Platonism

The striking feature we shall still have to stress in the author of the dialogues is his ingeniousness. There is exceptional genius in the way the ideas about the Idea were conceived, and in the way they were expounded and passed on to the world. In an age of conflicting views on the authenticity of the historical tradition relative to fundamental facts about the dialogues, it may be hazardous to mention biographical items as circumstantial evidence of a similar exceptional character. But the traditional image handed down to posterity is that of an extraordinary personality. Mighty ambitions are at least visible from his earliest adolescence. He first seems to have made up his mind to become a great tragic poet, and this part of his life was intensely absorbed by the whole artistic environment so well known in Athens towards the middle of the fifth century. But then he met Socrates. And the encounter with this equally exceptional character obviously changed the whole trend of his ideas. Another most passionate ambition in Plato's life was not to leave him so quickly, however: throughout his life he was fascinated by the world of politics. Several times, it is said, he actually yielded to the temptation of entering a career as an active political leader. But outward circumstances do not appear to have been particularly favourable to his success here.

In another field, however, his genius was certainly destined to move the world. Professor Whitehead once formulated a saying which has become widely known:

The safest general characteristic of the European philosophical tradition is that it consists in a series of foot-notes to Plato.

A somewhat pointed statement, of course, but we have had to admit that there is a lot of truth in it.

But what shall we say, then, relative to current altercations on the authenticity of the whole Platonic tradition?

One of our professors one day asked us an apparently quite alarming question: "What would you say if some day it were actually proved that Plato wrote close to nothing of all the works traditionally attributed to him? Or worse still: that Plato never existed?"

There is no occasion for fear. The Plato with whom we must deal here, has certainly existed, no matter what the result of biographical studies may finally be. In fact, his life has visibly protracted itself from century to century. Perhaps he is more demonstratively alive today than he was in antiquity. So there is no reason whatsoever to despair of making out his identity, or pinpointing the very acts he has perpetrated during millennia. The master of Occidental idealism and spiritualism is not a mere dream that some sorcerer's trick would suffice to wipe away. The traces

this giant of philosophy has left behind him, as he made this mighty stride down through the history of our Western World, are too deep and significant, indeed, for that.

In the old Oriental civilizations even a long time before Plato there had been a mystic yearning for devices that might efficiently overcome the hard concreteness of individual humanity. This was achieved by gradually emptying one's individual consciousness in the blessed nothingness of Nirvana. With Plato, now, this pleasing practice of losing one's disturbingly personal soul in the soothingly impersonal waves of an ocean called the One, found its peculiar Western variety. Our Occidental World had never experienced anything similar to this magic before. Perhaps the persuasive call from the East had just been a little too distant and unfamiliar for European ears to hear it, up to now. Perhaps it took nothing less than a genius of Plato's calibre to have it interpreted in a convincing manner. At least, as Dean Inge puts it, "The call once heard, has never long been forgotten in Europe."

Of course Plato is not everything in this movement. There is also a passive reason. That enormous influence exerted by his ideas on the entire subsequent trend of Western culture is partly due to an undeniable natural receptivity--or rather a mighty urge--right in the minds of those whom he was to influence so decisively.

In Platonic idealism there certainly was a forceful appeal to some secret aspirations found at the bottom of all intensely burning human hearts. Some centuries later this same irrepressible yearning

for eternity was destined to be satisfied by the Christian message. So far, Plato's message must have been a tempting makeshift alternative. But Platonism is not Christianity. Particularly one element in Platonism makes it extremely different from Christianity. In the course of the Middle Ages a certain fusing together of the two was repeatedly attempted. Eiliv Skard says about the strange amalgamation which resulted, that it was perhaps the most important event in the entire history of our spiritual development ("vaar aandshistorie"). Personally we would insistently add that it is probably also the most fateful event of that history.

The element in Platonism which we have here referred to as entirely opposite to Christianity, and fateful to man's outlook on life, is just a certain "schizothyme" tendency of finding "real values" only in the mysterious depths of the inward. In the ruminative mind of the abstracting philosopher, the invisible things tend to present themselves as infinitely superior to anything that is visible. The next step is to actually despite all things which fall short of this invisible, general, theoretical nature, the things which have the bad chance of being just physical and outward. By and by, the world of the celestial Idea and the world of the terrestrial phenomenon become so distant from each other that no bridge can cover the gulf between them.

What is it, after all, that Plato has here introduced into Occidental thought? Lovejoy calls it otherworldliness (as distinguished from this-worldliness). We fear that an unqualified use of these terms may be highly misleading. Our Christian background

provides us with--or should provide us with--a conception of "otherworldliness" which happens to be fundamentally different from that of Platonic idealism. In fact, the difference is exactly as great as that between the proud chill of philosophical intellectualism and the humble warmth of Christian spirituality.

Just what does Plato praise so boundlessly in the otherworldliness his Ideas stand for? Above all its total self-sufficiency (autarkeia):

The being who possesses good, always and everywhere and in all things, has the most perfect sufficiency, and is never in need of anything else. (- a remark by Socrates in Philebus, 60.--Jowett's transl., Great Books of the Western World, Vol. 7, p. 635)

Certainly not only the disciples of Socrates (including the ideal cynic Diogenes), but Socrates himself obviously had an eminent degree of this pride of self-containment, a maximum independence of outward things. And, in a world otherwise losing itself in stupid materialism, there is certainly much to admire in that rare attitude, and much to find positively startling. We need only recall Socrates's proverbial exclamation in front of a market-stand, loaded down with all kinds of widely coveted goods: "What pleasure to see so many things I do not need!" We shall presently see what enormous stress even

Aristotle lays on self-sufficiency. Generally speaking, his attitude is, of course, far from otherworldly in a Platonic sense.

However, right on this world of empirical research and puzzling reality he has discovered something of "celestial sublimity"--the human soul! Nothing on earth can compare to the blissful superiority of a life in tranquil meditation! And where is the evidence of its crushing superiority? Just here: the intellectual man is the one most independent of material necessities for the carrying out of his splendid activity. He may even do without any assistants or associates:

One who is self-sufficient, can have no need of the service of others, nor of their affection, nor of social life, since he is capable of living alone. (Eth. Eudem., VII, 12b)

In fact, just this splendid self-sufficiency must be as close to the divine as anything can come. For notice what that sober-minded realist goes on to say in the same passage, venturing right into the field of theology, a realm in which he certainly lacks the prophetic rapture of his old teacher Plato:

This is especially evident in the case of God. Clearly, since he is in need of nothing, God cannot have need of friends, nor will he have any.

Of course, what strikes a reader from a Christian climate most of all in this text, is its rather inhuman impassibility. And in this respect the disciple's "theology" does not perhaps differ noticeably from that of his master. Plato, speaking about the person who has chosen the good life of thought and eternal wisdom, and praising the

strange emotional equanimity (some would probably rather say the "emotional deadness") of that admirable hero among men, quotes Socrates as saying:

Then he will live without pleasure; and who knows whether this may not be the most divine of all lives. (Philebus, 33)

To this Protarchus replies dryly:

"If so, then the gods, at any rate, cannot be supposed to have either joy or sorrow."

Generally speaking, this supermundane type of self-sufficiency seems to imply a serious--almost painful--obligation to disengage oneself, entirely and at all costs, from everything that might be suspected of having the remotest affinity to the human weakness called emotions. In other words: to the whole Platonic spirit of otherworldliness there is a peculiarly strained necessity of presenting every one of its values in the most flagrant negation of anything that is manifestly human, and, for that very reason, condemned as this-worldly. The constant refrain ringing in our ears is, most certainly, the monotonous one of the Sage of the Upanishad: "No-no, you miserable man of this evil world here below, such is not the true reality of that other world!"

The logical conclusion to be drawn from this spiritualistic theory of values should be inescapable: The creation of this world of ours here below must have been a terrible mistake. What else could ever

be inferred about a world so radically inferior--or downright antagonistic--to that other one, the eternally blessed world of the pure Idea. To create a world as hopelessly concrete as this one, must simply be an event of the utmost absurdity. Then, why was it created?

Here we must insert a little parenthesis about the Christian view-point, since Christian religion is the natural opposite to pagan philosophy: that the God of Christianity did proceed to that remarkable deed of creating things, is still fairly intelligible. For His main essence is not contained in self-sufficiency. According to the all-pervading spirit of the Gospel, God is precisely goodness--or Love.

To the frigidly rational spiritualism of Greek philosophy, however, that is of course a rather surprising quality in connection with gods. Love is a notorious passion, thus human rather than divine. But in the Bible there is nothing offensive in this as a capital epithet of God: God is good in the sense of loving. And His goodness is His greatness. But precisely that goodness of love makes creation a natural thing, an inevitable thing. To pour oneself out with unending lavishness--in favour of the other ones--this becomes a self-evident mode of expression to Inexhaustible Love, the welling source of eternal Life.

So not self-sufficiency, self-dependence, or self-seclusion, but rather self-diffusion becomes the appropriate quality to describe God's revelation of Himself. And to the Christian philosophers of

the Middle Ages the axiom of goodness is naturally this: omne bonum est diffusivum sui. (Every good is self-diffusive.)

The principle of alterocentricity is so basic to divine essence that self-transcending fecundity simply becomes identical with God's revelation of Himself. This self-transcendency is nothing but the fundamental élan altérocentrique on the divine level.

We may try to make our particular perspective of a diametrical opposition between Platonic spiritualism and Christian spirituality more clear, precisely with reference to that sensational auto-transcendence which so naturally bears a world of creation:

All characteristic traits of the pagan Eros converge in its egocentricity. That is precisely its monomania of self-dependence (or self-sufficiency).

Now, let us admit at once: the God of Agape, the God of the Christian Gospel, is self-dependent, too, in a most objective sense of the term. In fact, He stands out as the only really Self-Dependent Being ever known. God is the Self -Existent One, but here the Gospel suddenly surprises man with its peculiar message. That God of perfect Sovereignty, of total Independence, "thought it not a robbery" to be independent. No, He found His great joy, His supreme glory, in an extreme dependence.

His incredible idea was to make Himself dependent--dependent on the other ones. What other ones? The most deeply fallen. So

precisely those needing Him most. He had the incredible idea of needing them. Imagine: those who were most desperately dependent on Him--He takes it into His mind to make Himself dependent on them. This is the supreme peak of alterocentricity: the One who was not of this world, made Himself of this world. And He eternally insists on this remarkable "this-worldliness". The idea of divine incarnation, that is the extreme this-worldliness! It is the eternal mystery of a God who comes down to dwell among men. This is the truly spiritual wisdom of Agape--to the Greeks utter foolishness.

For what is the essence of Greek spiritualism at the apogée of Plato's philosophizing splendour? It is entirely different. Just consider the genius of that idealist prophet emerging to unfold the striking message of his most extraordinary theory. Of course, in reality that theory of the Idea--in a proper environment of pagan thought--is not so strikingly extraordinary at all. In fact, it is too fundamentally pagan, pagan through and through, to be really extraordinary. Plato only introduces into our World of the West what had existed for ages in more ancient civilizations of human history: that is, the inexorable extremism of a genuinely pagan "other-worldliness".

It is as a visionary portrayer of this "other world" that Plato has become exceedingly famous. But what, then, in Plato's theory of "the other world" is so outstanding as to merit such exceeding fame?

Historically it has its connections with theories in the past. Still it is an astonishingly new theory to the West. Subsequent centuries

here must have considered it with an ever new and ever increasing stupefaction. No intelligent historian could help being impressed by the transforming influence exerted by Plato's voice in our culture; that is a penetrating voice proclaiming the message of an "other-worldliness" more glacial in its essence than perhaps anything else devised by Occidental man at any time.

But if the Platonic take-off for an "other world" is stupefying, there is in the development of his philosophy a special maneuver, at a certain moment, that is almost more stupefying still. In fact, there is, in the history of Platonic authorship, a high-point to which rather few historians have paid due attention, in view of the equally heavy influence it has probably exerted on the European history of ideas. That was a sudden descent toward "this world here below", in fact, a descent just as glacial as the preceding ascent, and we would dare to say: hardly less devoid of sound human sense either fair.

Love-joy has mentioned the weird two-sidedness in Plato's formidable impact upon our world of thought in some clear and attention-stirring terms:

The most notable--and the least noted--fact about his historic influence is that he did not merely give to European otherworldliness its characteristic form and phraseology and dialectic, but that he also gave the characteristic form and phraseology and dialectic to precisely the contrary tendency--to a peculiarly exuberant kind of this-worldliness.[1]

We think it should immediately be added that it was probably very much in spite of himself that Plato came to exert any actual influence upon the future world in a genuinely this-worldly direction. The true character of that this-worldliness should be more closely studied.

But the mere fact that he even got to the point where he finally found he had better come "down to earth", is something so sensational that it would seem almost incredible how it could be by-passed comparatively unnoticed. One explanation may be, we think, that with Plato even this final "down-to-earth" diving is a feat performed with such originality that it may come pretty close to a sleight-of-hand movement. Moreover, the whole strange pageantry of dialogue partners opposing each other, as well as unexpected changes from myth to fact, and then back to myth again, would be likely to have a considerably bewildering effect on almost any reader.

Anyway, hardly has Plato climbed to the glorious summit of those dazzling Ideas, so radically different from anything we know in our shadowy regions here below (namely just that dismal Cave he describes with superb masterfulness in the Republic) when, suddenly, in the dialogue described as the natural continuation of the Republic--Timaios--he places us face to face with a highly incongruous train of ideas.

To the average modern reader this latter work must certainly appear, to a large extent, as dull, antiquated, superstitious "trash".

But we should notice that it was rather unanimously considered as one of the most influential of Plato's dialogues all the way up to quite modern times. And to the serious student of Platonism--we mean Platonism as a living, historical reality in the destiny of Occidental culture--it must still remain a document of the greatest interest.

What, then, do we find in this--from a modern viewpoint--most boring and nonsensical discourse on the creation of the world, delivered by a certain Timaios, a Roman official among the most wealthy and high-ranking in his community, and a man who has "scaled the heights of all philosophy" (Tim., 20)? Well, that discourse actually represents nothing less than Plato's compulsory "home journey" from the sublime heavens of the Idea down to that shadowy world of terrestrial concreteness and sordid temporality, which one might have thought completely ruled out and forgotten long ago.

Why on earth does the radically spiritualistic philosopher think it inevitable, after all, to face the painful facts of this dismal world? It is difficult to find more than one really sensible explanation. There must have been, in the secret depths of his heart, a sort of "this-worldly" realism left behind, and simply forcing him, by and by, to attempt a definitive account of the most unaccountable fact: there is a world of becoming. That world presents itself--shall we say: it presents itself ostentatiously and shamefacedly--side by side with the world of eternal ideas. Why is there such a world? How did it manage to come into existence? Sincerely, we are excitedly

anxious to hear what reason Plato can suggest for such an existence. What is the cause? For it certainly must have a cause.

That which is created must ... of necessity be created by a cause. (Tim., 28)

There is "a father and maker of all this universe," although his nature is "past finding out". Also the "patterns" which that "artificer" must have applied when he framed the world, confront us with serious questions. Just how did he do it? And, perhaps most important of all, why did he do it?

Well, here comes the great and stirring passage, in Timaios:

Let me tell you then why the creator made this world of generations. He was good, and the good can never have any jealousy of anything. And being free from jealousy, he desired that all things should be as like himself as they could be. (Tim., 29)

Here then something outstandingly remarkable, something epoch-making, has happened: the absolutely and eternally Self-Sufficient Idea stoops down to the radically irrational act of calling into existence things outside itself, things of which it does not have the slightest need, and to which it should not have the remotest relationship. And Plato sets about rationalizing that fundamentally irrational process. What "reason" does he find? He finds this one: the Supreme Being was good. That implies being free from passion of any kind, so also from the passion of envy. Consequently he was-

-shall we say--"defenceless" against the curious fact of this external world coming into existence!

Our question here becomes unavoidable. At least, we cannot see how it could ever be avoided: Has not Plato's God been changed by this from an absolutely self-sufficient God into a self-transcending God--in fact, something very close to the self-diffusive and actually self-sacrificing God of Christianity?

We would answer, yes and no, particularly no!

We admit that the sudden revisionary movement, undertaken here by Plato, on first view bears some striking resemblance to what we observed a moment ago in the core of Christian theology, in the Christian doctrine of God. A complete reversal in Plato's customary position, regarding his Idea, is demonstrable. The incongruous and irrational character of his "new theology" is indisputable. Plato himself implicitly--and in certain passages of Timaios even quite explicitly--admits the creation of this visible world; and notice, as an inevitable outcome of some quality of goodness in the Invisible One! Of course, we shall have to submit that "goodness" there to a somewhat closer examination.

Right away, however, we should be in a position to state what ought to be the full consequences of Plato's revision: if, now after this, he should still go on despising the world of creation as nothing but a vain shadow flickering miserably and ghostlike against the horizons of a higher and only reality,[2] then, indeed, that could

only happen through an incongruity and an irrationality of thought for which there is no excuse nor attenuation whatsoever.

But we should not be so quick to assume that any real change has taken place in Plato's position--nor in the position of Jesus Christ, as observed a moment ago, for that matter: Pagan spiritualism is unchangeable. And so is Christian spirituality. The type of "goodness" Timaios speaks about, in a desperate attempt to account for the existence of a visible world, remains eternally the same. And so does the type of "goodness" the Bible speaks about, with reference to its peculiar cosmogony. And, compared to each other, those "goodnesses" are as distant as the east is from the west. What is the difference between them?

We would say the "goodness", which, according to Timaios, prevented his god from having any sordid jealousy, distinguishes itself as being precisely automatic. The absence of passion ("passion" in the sense of suffering, the "most abominable" thing spiritualism has ever known) is nothing but sheer impassibility, the formidable ideal of frigid idealism, and equally of a paralyzing pessimism all the way from Buddha to Schopenhauer! We have called this frigidity automatism. How sensible minds can adore that total negation of life and liberty is incomprehensible. For it is an absurd yearning for a state of downright nothingness. It is the very opposite of the living person's active consciousness, involving personal conscience and personal responsibility.

The symptomatic fact, then, is this: with Plato, as with all other spiritualists, goodness (the "highest good") and automatism remain for ever synonyms. But of course "goodness" in this emaciated sense is a far cry from goodness in a Christian sense.

Notice, however, in Timaios, the causes alleged for the coming into existence of a material world: they are typically passive, glacially "permissive", barrenly automatic causes. The idea is unmistakable: God was without jealousy. He had no "passionate counter-arguments" available. So how could He prevent the creation of an external world-indeed a world "as similar as possible to himself, in all things?" (Tim., 29). The "green light" is given. God has no valid objection. The world can come into existence. The world must come into existence. Full stop.

The cosmogonic causes released by divine revelation in the biblical record are fundamentally different from this. They are typically active, heartily urgent, eminently personal causes: the heart of the great "I AM" was overflowing with goodness, goodness in a different sense, goodness in the sense of upwelling love, a love transcending the borders, a living love that no force can stop from exteriorizing itself. So it was nothing less than a dynamic passion of self-transcendence that urged the God of the Bible, irresistibly, towards the act of creation. And this creative dynamism is nothing but Jesus Christ Himself, the Master of generation and regeneration. In other words, what is the evidence that this Creator of new worlds is essentially identifiable with Agape, the élan altérocentrique par excellence on the divine plane? Simply His ineffable decision to

become flesh Himself. So ardent was His urge to come to the rescue of those dear "other ones", beings "outside Himself", whom He had voluntarily and spontaneously called into existence, that He went to the extreme of making Himself dependent on them--nothing less than that!

So this is, indeed, a diffusio sui which has nothing to do with any blind necessity, with any Godforsaken automatism in the sense of spiritualist impassibility. At every moment the God of Christianity maintains His inalienable quality of sovereign volitional freedom. What superior meaning would a creative intervention have if not that one?

The course that Plato takes to the creation of a visible world is devoid of meaning. For he endeavours to account for its existence through phrases inspired by "pure reason", a logical barrenness that would chill any living universe to death. That is, the nonsense of "pure being". On the contrary, it has to be ascribed to some kind of a most personal intervention--an intervention on the part of goodness, granted, but what kind of goodness? Certainly a very different one from that known by Plato.

But you need not be a sagacious philosopher to realize one sober fact: the concrete existence of a world your eyes can see and your hands can feel at any time; this is something that does not devolve "automatically" from any pre-existent cause of so-called "pure being".

The "creator" whom Plato knows is by no means the one who could be expected to create at all. He is not a God filled with irresistible yearnings outward, a yearning for other beings than himself, beings upon whom he can squander his infinite tenderness and fatherly care, a God whose essence is to give Himself, as only persons can give themselves; and divine Persons, above all.

No, indeed, precisely from Plato's point of view there ought to be every good reason why particular things (the "phenomenal counterparts") should not come into existence. His "god" ought to have most legitimate motives for just "begrudging", in his peculiar impassive way, the "shameless" emergency of any this-worldly things.

What he now actually states, however, is that the rise into existence of what our senses perceive around us was not only a logical event, but a necessary one. Perhaps this is not so strange after all, considering the philosopher's usual bent. The automatic is always necessity in its most fatal sense.

Of course, it would be most congenial with the idealist's deepest mood not to make any allowance at all for the existence of concrete things. But no man in the long run, could just explain them away, or bluntly deny them. He was bound to give some explanation of their being there. The logical theorist has the duty to explain things.

And that explanation was bound to be a rigidly logical one. So when the creator resorted to the--shall we say--strange business of

generation, then that too had to present itself as a logical necessity; in other words, something devolving--with usual stringent inevitability--from certain rigid principles of pure reason.

Anyway, Plato does make heroic efforts to lend maximal philosophical dignity and logical verisimilitude to his sensational new theory that the visible world is a logical and necessary derivative from the Ideal World.

This is no negligible event in the history of idealism. From now onwards the temporal world of becoming should certainly be invested with a definite "legitimate status". It has finally taken its legitimate place beside the World of Being--as nothing less than a logical and inexorable requirement. By whom was it so logically and inexorably required? By the eternal World of Pure Being!

We are not so much concerned about the confusion this ideological reversal was bound to cause in the minds of infatuated Plato admirers down through the generations, although the situation here must have been pregnant with the potency of most serious forthcoming "heresy". Just think of the theoretical implications: the celestial Idea, the only reality officially recognized heretofore, in some way begins to vindicate, as her legitimate and indispensable property, something awfully strange, namely her beloved terrestrial counterpart, the once miserable "shadow". What a sensational love story in the history of spiritualist metaphysics!

No wonder that uneasy disciples down through the centuries tended to get somewhat embarrassed and confused. Particularly in the brains of quite common mortals, the relations between "reality" on one hand, and "shadow" on the other, were liable to tend towards getting mixed up a little; and this is just what happened. Even to the high-brow elite of respectable dualist orthodoxy, a potential hotbed for heterodox viewpoints was here afforded. The alternative of "heretical" thinking, most temptingly left to work upon their minds, was this: What if rather the very abstraction (that most venerable Idea, Herself) should, in the end, turn out to be the pitiable "shadow"! Indeed, why not? In that case those concrete objects our senses perceive, here and now, would be the realities we can depend on. The Idea is a chimera of the brain, just representing, in a vague and symbolic way, the real world we have within the grasp of our hands.

Perhaps we shall never know in detail the serpentine trail of this section of the history of ideas. Who could ever tell the precise reason why serious heresy suddenly sprang up in the mind of such a pupil as Aristotle? What we do know, through the public testimony of Timaios, is the fact that obvious inconsistencies threatened to explode the logical coherence of Platonic spiritualism as a whole.

Would it be too daring to imagine that such inconsistencies may have been objects of oral teaching in the Academy at an early stage, or at least a combustible material for fiery discussions among groups of particularly combative disciples? This theory does not seem to be without merit.

Anyway, Timaios is an historical certainty. For good or for evil? That may be a matter of opinion, and of individual philosophical bent. Some may be inclined to ask: Why not rejoice wholeheartedly at this lucky inconsistency of Platonic thought? What could be wrong about an occasional side-leap, even right in the heart of weird Platonic speculation, into tracks of sober-minded, childlike realism? Would not that afford some reason to hope that spiritualist philosophy can still develop towards trends of genuine humanity--perhaps even a spirituality of the Christian type?

We seriously fear that an optimism of that magnitude is unwarranted and vain. What Plato adds in his Timaios is but a superstructure, artificial and more like a foreign body than anything else. It may simulate a certain integration of mind and matter. Nevertheless the general trend of the thinking remains substantially dualistic. Above all it remains too frigidly intellectualistic to make place for any true spirituality in the deepest human sense; that is, a spirituality of the Hebraic and Christian pattern.

Besides, any realistic outcome here is seriously endangered by a more or less fantastic mythological setting. The whole declaration tends to become mainly verbal. Its realism is not held in any firm terms of a serious commitment. It might at any moment be treacherously disavowed. With no more binding engagement than this, it is so easy for the author to back out. The whole thing may be explained away as merely some poetic symbol.

Moreover, Plato's "ideological reversal" here would still be limited to the cosmological realm. Would that suffice to bring about a genuine integration of mind and matter? What then about the anthropological realm, the most serious of all? We shall presently have a closer look at Plato's dualistic views on man. Without a profound "ideological reversal" here as well, there would be no hope anyway of any true synthesis. What is demanded is a thorough-going process of integration right in the core of everyday human life. That is what we call a genuinely spiritual trend towards wholeness and harmony in the world that really matters to man. Plato's "reconciliation" of the "two worlds" in Timaios is nothing but a half-hearted modus vivendi. It is merely a question of spirit and matter trying to get along together as best they can. There is no lasting and reliable improvement in the troubled relations previously conjured up between the two "antagonists". And what would be the true result of their recent "agreement of coexistence"? To a man so seriously affected by the fatal illness of spiritualism as Plato that would only mean the entry into a more chronic stage of his old and henceforth incurable nostalgia for the dreamland of Pure-Soulism, a Utopia far beyond any shores of our immediate mind-body reality.

We are more than anxious to make an inquiry into Plato's dualism of man. But then we must first have a still closer look at his dualism of the world.

Clearly enough, Plato's public profession in his Timaios is that of "bridge-builder". He professes to build reliable bridges across bottomless gulfs. But of course no one could be more efficient in

preventing bridges from being built than just a professional bridge-builder (or let us rather say a professing bridgebuilder). For he may say with a certain authority, "Take a warning from my experience, folks, I once tried to build a bridge in this place. It is an impossible task."

The elaborate account Plato has endeavoured to give of the legitimate existence of created things, was doomed to remain unconvincing, and for very good reasons. First, it was a creation which only seems to have one coldly premeditated, purely metaphysical purpose: namely that of producing the sad shadowlike counterpart, in this bleak world of nature here below, of the true and only worthwhile realities in the high heavens above. Such a creation is bound to remain a pitiable and highly enigmatic event, indeed, an unworthy event, both from an intellectual and from a spiritual point of view.

But what is particularly wrong about it--hopelessly wrong, with regard to meaningfulness--is this: in the last analysis the relation between Idea and World (between Creator and creation) here turns out to be a relation of the purest automatism, an absolutely inexorable automatism.

To us this is a capital objection. In fact, this automatism imposes itself upon our observation as an essential characteristic of Platonic philosophy all along. We would go still farther in our general statement: automatism is the essential characteristic of all philosophical idealism, of all spiritualism in this world. This reveals

itself in the distinctive features of all fundamental paganism: it is infallibly the conception of a most rigorous automatic function. (For a further and more detailed expose, see our Vol. III, Chapter II, a, The Concept of Order Versus Disorder.)

But is this automatism what really comes out in Plato's philosophy, even where he has the humanly sympathetic whim of introducing created things as an acceptable "reality", namely in Timaios?

Exactly so. According to Timaios, the existence of this phenomenal world here below can be justified in only one way: it must be explained in terms of the coldest logical necessity. There must be an imperative demand, an inflexibly binding law; to the invisible Ideas something must be constantly granted: their visible counterparts. Of course those counterparts are still infinitely inferior to the glorious reality above. They are still just the "shadow", but please notice: an indispensable shadow, an inevitably appearing shadow.

But now our pertinent little question: What sense could there be in a correspondence between world and Idea as mutually inflexible, and as fatally automatic, as that of one inexorably demanding the other all the time? We are obliged to confess that we have not been able to discover the sense of it, either spiritually or logically speaking. Let us keep to logic.

Here one thing must be remembered: the Ideas are from eternity. This is their tacit, self-evident prerogative in all consistent spiritualism. Their elementary dignity as Ideas would demand nothing less. The very opposite is the case with their phenomenal replicas in the lower world, the world of tangible things. These have an equally self-evident criterion: they take place in time.

So it must be legitimate for a poor naive to ask--out of sheer curiosity, or even sincere anxiety for that matter--how did those lonesome Ideas manage to exist without their respective temporal shadows prior to the incident of creation? Indeed, that must have been an endlessly long while to get along without one's beloved counterparts--one's absolutely necessary and logically devolving counterparts! (Here we have simply taken our point of departure in the assumption which must be taken for granted, from the moment of Timaios on: the shadows are no longer looked upon as a set of merely contingent accidents, but in fact as cold, logical necessities. The ideal realities of the higher world simply do not attain to their due perfection without them.)

One probable answer to our naive attack might be that Plato did not always envisage the relation between Idea and world in terms of a constant and logically ineluctable reciprocity.

Granted--but that rather amounts to saying that he did not always envisage it, short and sweet. More clearly expressed: for a long time he failed to face it. At the moment when he begins to face

it, really and seriously, he sees himself obliged to abandon himself just to that implacable rigidity of an automatic, unbreakable tie.

And in what other way would you expect any genuine idealist to consider the matter? Within the frame-work of idealism this is a consideration of the most reasonable, the most strictly logical.

Yet that nice logical consistency (as things may appear if viewed from the inside), does not save idealism itself. It is already at the very moment when the idealist enters his idealism that he finds himself in a blind alley. For no man can close himself off from his outside reality so completely that reality concerns him no more.

Let us open our mind to the dilemma facing the idealist reasoner in the present case. Let us sincerely try to understand it wholly and fully: by sheer virtue of his own logical consistency the idealist of Timaios has concluded that the world is just as indispensable to the Idea as the Idea is to the world. If, however, he thus admits that mutual relations as close and inexorable as these do exist between type and antitype, then it could only happen through an unpardonable lack of equal logical consistency that he refuses to admit that one is bound to be co-eternal with the other!

In other words: the most visible, most palpable things of this world would be supposed to have, according to the supreme triumph of Platonic automatism in Timaios, something essential in common with the invisible, impalpable things of the other world; they are viewed as being from eternity.

And, phénomène bizarre, that piece of logic does not astonish us so much after all. More or less "religious" varieties of Platonic idealism (making the human soul and its eternal destiny its particular topic of interest) have now for such a long time stressed the theory that "the essential part" of man is divine. So, if experts finish by discovering some day that "the other parts" of him, too, are actually divine, one is no longer so doctrinaire in one's resistance even against that "new progress" of anthropological science.

Do you see what famous kind of theory of God is here entering upon the scene? Pantheism!

The following is an empirical fact of the history of ideas, we may safely say: where the idealism and spiritualism of pagan philosophy have made their way for some time, there pantheism, as a sort of "religious" conviction, will faithfully follow their traces.

And what does this pantheism of pagan philosophy and pagan sham-religion represent, as regards the conservation of ideals of totality in our Western culture? We have entered upon a program of research in that field in our third volume of Man, the Indivisible. Here we shall limit ourselves to stating: pantheism represents not an integration of the ideal and the real, but a confusion of the two.

But what is the cause for this mere attempt at an integration, which only ends in sad confusion? In our opinion the cause is clear: it is just the great Automatism--automatism erected as the supreme

principle, an axiomatic principle. That is the "axiom" paralyzing every human endeavour from arriving at the synthesis, a sensible integration of all things seen and lived.

For that automatism, carried to its last "logical" consequence, constitutes the simple negation of all meaning, all perfection, all life--briefly all reality. Automatism is the ultimate blockage of all reasonable reasoning.

Notes:

1. Arthur O. Lovejoy: The Great Chain of Being, p. 45.
2. Anyone who has read the Republic will recall the weird atmosphere of that miserable den filled with lifelong human prisoners "having their legs and necks chained", so that they cannot turn their faces for one moment towards the real light streaming in from the opening behind them (Rep., 514) thus seeing only some vague shadows of reality fluttering across the innermost wall of the cave.

Chapter 19

Plato's Anthropology

And let us now consider the insurmountable theoretical difficulties presented by Plato's anthropology. In this field, too, Platonic dualism was destined to take, from now onwards, a firm hold on all philosophical reasoning in the Occidental world. It was bound to involve the philosophy of that world in problems which would hardly otherwise have presented themselves to thinking mankind, in that painfully disturbing way at least. We are mainly referring to a problem which has simply never been known to exist outside of dualism: the problem of a union between body and soul. How did Plato himself explain that "mysterious" union? For, as a philosopher, he certainly could not avoid it. In fact, it had to be faced as it had perhaps never been faced before.

To theologians the problem would not perhaps present itself in its full force. For they were more likely to discuss why such a union was necessary to man, rather then how it could take place at all.

However, that problem is automatically implied in all dualism, and true philosophers should certainly be the first to face it seriously. Nevertheless, those who had handed dualism over to the Pythagoreans--and even the Pythagoreans themselves--seemed to be mainly concerned with the question in its mythological and theological aspect, rather than in its philosophical aspect. But Plato was above all a genuine philosopher. So we may certainly expect

him to make some kind of effort in order to tackle the enigmatic question which is undeniably there.

Now one may of course first ask whether Plato fully admits a union between body and soul as an actual fact. In his opinion, the soul does not really need the body. It accompanies the body as a rather independent entity. Actually there is an abyss separating the two in spite of their apparently intimate union. They never melt together. On the other hand, he does own that the soul may be not only influenced by the body, but even badly polluted by it. In the Phaidon he shows to what extent the soul may be enthralled by the effects of the bodily senses "which are full of deception". In fact, "each pleasure and pain is a sort of nail which nails and rivets the soul to the body, until she becomes like the body". So long has she been "wallowing in the mire" of these bodily emotions and sense perceptions, that she has simply been "fastened and glued to the body" (Phai., 82-83).

After such expressions it would of course be difficult to deny a certain fairly close union of soul and body for the time being. And now, how is such a union between such absolutely heterogeneous elements to be explained in a rational way? A typically Platonic method is said to be that of dividing in order to unite. Anyway, his very first step here is to introduce a sort of dualism even into the realm of the soul herself. He distinguishes between two very different "parts" of the soul, one which is immortal and truly reasonable, having its seat in the head; another one mortal and ignorant, and actually so deeply affected by its closeness to the

polluting body that it has finished by adopting some downright corporeal attributes itself. In fact, it does not even have the dignity of living in the head, that superior part of the human body. The "corporeal" soul is located partly in the breast, partly in the abdomen. So here a further subdivision has proved necessary. Only such comparatively noble emotions as courage and anger have been deemed worthy of the honour of reaching as far up as to the bosom. More typically animal passions and clearly physical appetites have found their natural habitat in the lowest regions of the human body, the belly.

In his Timaios Plato informs us that the demiurgus himself has taken charge of creating the truly immortal soul of man, whereas it was left to some inferior gods to create the lower and essentially mortal parts (Tim.,).

One thing may here at once be stated concerning the essential question, the problem of a union of soul and body: Plato does not give any satisfactory explanation of how one superior part, for instance, exerts its influence on the nearest part inferior to it, or vice versa. And what other result could we have expected? With a dualism as radical as that of Plato, how could anyone be expected to explain the union between a human body and a human soul? Here his successors were bound to fail just as lamentably as he himself had failed.

That marvelous perfection of which Plato had had a vision in astronomical and mathematical order, as well as in the depths of his

own moral aspirations, was certainly sublime enough. And there is certainly much to admire in that ingenious system of Platonic idealism--particularly when we take into consideration at what stage of history this was achieved. In that idealism there is a wonderful stretching upwards, not only in a purely philosophical sense, but certainly also with regard to religious aspirations.

And nevertheless we cannot help feeling: here something very, very important is still lacking, considered from our special point of view something which childlike minds possess in environments of any religious creed and at any stage of cultural development. Plato has, not only an outspoken diffidence towards, but even a downright contempt for, a most important part of the world in which his Maker has been pleased to place him, as a human being. That contempt is directed against three things which we have considered essential to alterocentric totality: the physical, the particular, and the outward.

Of course there may seem to be something apparently unfair about comparing Plato's idealism to that of Christ. However, in the history of human ideals the two were bound to face each other sooner or later. And we think it ought to be possible not to forget the merits of the former, even while we consider the crushing superiority of the latter.

To Christianity the human body is a holy temple; that is, nothing less than a dwelling-place for the Spirit of the Most High. As the result of a fatal historical event, man has assumed the full responsibility for degrading and contaminating his body. With Jesus

Christ, however, it is God Himself who enters into human history, even to the point of becoming man. This mystery of the incarnation is the means by which man's shame is removed forever. And "man" here still means a perfect union of soul and body. The viewpoint of a "separation" is the great illusion, something entirely foreign to original Christianity, and rather the source of fateful errors.

It is in the light of this anthropology of Christian totality that one thing becomes particularly evident: in separating, as he did, the world of ideas and the world of things, assuming that these two worlds are, not only distinct from each other, but even irreconcilable entities, Plato has actually rendered the union of the ideal and the real impossible.

We would not hesitate to qualify as egocentric that one-sided method of introspection which led to Plato's exaggerated trend towards abstractions. This explains why he was taken entirely captive by the conceptualism of Socrates and by the geometry of Pythagoras, as Charles Werner points out (op. cit., p. 27). Plato finishes by imagining that beautiful things actually exist by virtue of their "beauty", and that strong things exist by virtue of their "strength". How could the theory of final causes help assuming a "purely verbal character", if things are presented in this way?

There is no doubt about it: after Plato a philosophy was needed which could overcome the dualism on which the theory of the Idea had remained hanging. We are not astonished to find that such a philosophy had to base itself on biology rather than on mathematics.

For how could an Idea, in terms of a vain abstraction, ever become a principle of real life? It would seem a most sound reaction now to start longing for a philosophy realizing a happy synthesis of the ideal and the real. Such a philosophy ought to be equally capable of realizing the happy synthesis of soul and body.

Chapter 20

Aristotle and Totality

From our point of view, there seems to be a considerable distance between Plato and Aristotle. Plato was a marked adherent of an introspective method in philosophy. "Only the soul herself can see the soul", that is his firm conviction. By the way, what can see anything at all? The physical eye certainly cannot. Only the soul can. Consequently, the analytical method, a method of close, internal observation, is considered the only one leading to a real knowledge of man. The soul must isolate herself from her physical abode, so to speak. To Platonism science is actually a process of purification. "And what is that purification if not the separation of the soul from the body?" In order to arrive at truth, in any form worth while, the soul has a tremendous effort of seclusion to perform "gathering and collecting herself into herself from all sides out of the body" (Phaidon, 67). Frankly speaking, nothing short of literal death can appear to Plato as the absolutely perfect outward condition really appropriate for a profound diving into the source of all knowledge which is the Soul Herself. For what really is death? Simply the one perfect "separation and release of the soul from the body". And nothing is more antagonistic to true knowledge or a greater hindrance from reaching it than the presence of the body. So Plato's conclusions, regarding scientific excellence, actually remind us of those which seem to prevail in some quite modern societies of popular spiritualism. He says:

The body is always breaking in upon us, causing turmoil and confusion in our inquiries, and so amazing us that we are prevented from seeing the truth. It has been proved to us by experience that if we would have pure knowledge of anything, we must be quit of the body the soul in herself must behold things in themselves: and then we shall attain the wisdom which we desire, and of which we say that we are lovers; not while we live, but after death; for if, while in company with the body, the soul cannot have pure knowledge, one of two things follows--either knowledge is not to be attained at all--if at all--after death.[1]

These are Plato's words, and we do not hesitate to call him the grandfather of modern spiritism.

It is against this radically spiritualistic conception of scientific research that Aristotle rises up in all the imposing historic grandeur of his empirical realism. To scientists today he may still seem sadly lacking in scientific method, and the first generation of scientists who turned with iconoclastic violence against the prejudice and superstition of antiquity and the Middle Ages despised him as a superannuated figure. But from Plato's spiritualism to Aristotle's comparatively well-balanced realism, in an almost modern sense of the term, there is an infinite distance. Aristotle has an approach in matters of research almost diametrically opposite to that of his teacher. We would say he used a method of "extro-spection", to a large extent. Not that he despises self-analysis entirely. On the contrary, he may resemble Descartes considerably when he states:

It is inconceivable that a person should, while perceiving himself or aught else in a continuous time, be at any instant unaware of his own existence. (De sensu 448 a,--J. I. Beare's transl. here quoted)

He has a clear preference, however, for observing others rather than himself. For that observation is superior, he thinks, and he does not understand investigators who limit their investigation to the soul only. Personally he is most vividly interested in all kinds of physical phenomena. And his method is essentially synthetic.

One reason, one vividly feels, why Aristotle is so fond of the study of nature, is the stimulating fact that nature is constantly in motion. He deeply enjoys, and implicitly believes in, this multifarious activity which his physical senses permit him to follow and intimately share with creatures and things all around him. And he is admirably able to grasp the aspect of perfect totality in this fascinating play of sense perception. He knows that not only those external objects perceived, but also the subject who perceives them must be in active motion. And these two phases of motions, inherent in the sense perception, although quite distinguishable, still form a perfect totality (De anima, 425 b, 25 to 426a).

In the Phaidon Plato established the Idea as the original cause and reason for everything coming into existence. But Aristotle prefers to look more prosaically at this phenomenon, which is, after all, an everyday event. "What is it, then, that is visibly seen to produce things now?" asks the sober-minded Aristotle. What

produces a man, for instance, such as everyone can see for himself in biological reality? Is it the Idea of a man (as a man)? No, it is another man, a man of flesh and bones, called a father.

Certainly, to a broad and versatile mind like that of Aristotle, ideas alone must necessarily appear somewhat too motionless and sterile. By the way, even Plato himself had admitted that "ideas are without motion". So how could his restless pupil look to them for a discovery of the actual causes of things in nature?

Above all one might discuss the question, what on earth the Forms contribute to sensible things, either to those that are eternal or to those that come into being, and cease to be? For they cause neither movement nor any change in them. (Metaphysica, I, 9, 9a, 8-- W. D. Ross" transl. Great Books, Vol. 8, p. 509)

His whole theory of being and becoming is also built upon the same sturdy principles. In fact, in his search for the true causes of being, Aristotle is inclined to go back to the old Ionian "materialists", rather than remain in the ethereal regions of Platonic idealism.

An important distinction he makes is that between potential being and actual being. All matter is susceptible of taking a certain form. In fact, its whole reality consists in that inherent aptitude it possesses of receiving its form.

The truth is that what desires the form is the matter, as the female desires the male, and the ugly the beautiful--only the ugly or the female not per se but per accidens. (Physica, 1a, 20)

Thanks to this constantly inherent possibility, matter is in a state of "potency". But only at the moment when a definite form has been realized in matter, one may speak of a state of real act:

Matter exists in a potential state, just because it may come to its form; and when it exists actually, then it is in its form. (Met. 1050a, 15)

Now, if we apply this to a human being, the soul is his form, as it were. But Aristotle does not speak of that form as something ethereal, nor as something superior to matter. He does not at all think of the two as separate in actual reality. The form is the substantial principle of all things. And as such it is immanent in matter:

The substance is the indwelling form, from which the matter, the so-called concrete substance, is derived. (Met., 1037 a, 25)

The real substance is the concrete substance, a composite entity of form and matter. The form is nothing but the being in actuality; that is, the only accomplished being that ever exists.

Applied to the human individual, who interests us above all things, this amounts to saying that the soul is not an entity separable

from the body. The soul is the act of the living body (the entelechy of the living body). It is that man, as far as he really exists at all--as a living being. It is, in fact--according to Aristotle--just the intimate union between form and matter which constitutes the concrete substance of things and makes up the reality of all beings, such as we know them in actual life. And in that reality the form (soul) is never separated from the matter (body).

In fact, even in making a sort of halt after the word "body"--or matter--we here feel that we are rendering ourselves guilty of an abstraction which does not agree with the living reality. A body without a soul is no body--no human, living body. A corpse is not a man, not even a part of a man. In Aristotle's mind there must have been very much of that sentiment characterizing the conception of unlimited human totality. His standpoint is unambiguous: a statement about from as the great principle of determination, the true cause deciding all reality. But this is no Platonic abstraction. For in that reality the form is always intimately united with matter. The form is the substantial principle of things and beings, but always immanent in matter. There is no entity, no absolute whole that can prove sufficient in itself unless it is composed in that way.

Considered from the viewpoint of perfect totality, this is, indeed, a philosophy that makes sense, quite unlike the philosophy of the Ideas versus the shadows. The form and the matter, the soul and the body, are one and the same being--the being "in potentia" and the being "in actu", respectively. Only together do they constitute a real unit, a substantial whole.

We do not want to overemphasize the distance between Plato and Aristotle. They certainly still had a lot of things in common. That applies to their philosophical ideas, and not less to the peculiar cast of their respective minds.

Professor Paulus Svendsen of Oslo University has obligingly called our attention to a statement by the Swedish author Anders Wedberg (1958), for which we are truly thankful as an appropriate reminder in this respect:

It has become a tradition to translate the same Greek word as "Idea" when it occurs in Plato, and as "Form" when it occurs in Aristotle. This logically rather arbitrary ("sakligt tämligen godtyckliga") tradition of translations has contributed towards obscuring the very essential agreements which do exist between Plato's and Aristotle's standpoints.[2]

We shall presently show also another side of Aristotle. We shall openly state his belief in "real universals", in the "immateriality of essences", in "God, the eternal and supernatural cause of changes even in the natural world". Above all, we shall not pass in silence his belief in "the immortality of our intelligent souls".

But so far it is permissible to stress the profound metaphysical divergences which exist between the two. We think Plato had some very good reasons to complain that his pupil spurned him "as colts do their mothers".

That "colt" had the boldness of stating for instance, straight against the dearest theories of his old master (whose memory he always continued to revere, by the way), that reality is not only far up there somewhere in the skies above, but also down here on this despised earth. Moreover, universals and forms--the one and the many--are certainly real in the platonic sense of the word (and in the sense cherished by all philosophical "realists" following Plato), but they are not separate realities!

And now back to our "problem" of a union between soul and body. Thanks to that remarkable Aristotelian "theory of wholeness", as we should like to call it, that whole problem simply seems to vanish into thin air. It is certainly not too much to say that Platonic dualism was triumphantly overcome by Aristotle. And it is not only regrettable, but, indeed, astonishing that the philosophy of subsequent centuries has, after all, been so poorly influenced by this part of Aristotelian thought. And what about the philosophers of Christianity? We do know, of course, to what extent they tried to base thinking upon the great Aristotle for centuries. But how, then, could they fail to draw the full consequences of this truly anti-dualistic interpretation of man's nature? What could have been more in keeping with the conception of man originally transmitted to them both by Judaism and Christianity? Here their highly respected master of philosophy is doing his best to bring back to them an anthropology which is their own venerable heritage from the very cradle of their sacred creed. But just on this point they meet him with an indifferent "No, thank you". And what do they do instead?

As we shall soon see, they make the most heroic efforts to adapt Christian anthropology to the postulates of Plato's dualism, so basically foreign to both Judaism and Christianity. Indeed, there must be a furiously strong fear in the hearts of men of losing their identity by suffering a sudden and total interruption of their conscious existences. At least there is obviously a frenetic scramble for immortality, leaving no peaceful moment for any sound deliberation as to the costs involved, or as to whether there might be another alternative, perhaps even more satisfactory, and perhaps infinitely more in accordance with both anthropological facts and scriptural revelation. No, "immortality" is the cry, immortality, regardless of the costs--in fact, even at the expense of the human body. We say, "even at the expense of", for we can still hardly believe that men in general have an actual preference for an immortality of that purely spiritualistic type.

Of course it must frankly be admitted: to religious minds not so familiar with the peculiar idea of a bodily resurrection (or rather a whole-man resurrection), as taught by the Christian Gospel, Aristotelian metaphysics might easily convey the impression of a certain "materialism", as compared to Plato's lofty idealism. In fact, viewed towards a pagan background, there would here seem to be little hope of any survival whatsoever for dying man--either immediately or "in due course". Aristotle simply denies--with "cynical, materialistic unconcern", some might allege, the existence of any soul separated from the body. He even openly states his opinions in a way clearly implying that he would deem the possibility of a resurrection simply absurd. In fact, how in the

worlds of wonders could the soul leave the body to enter it again at some later period? (De anima, 406 b, 3-5)

In the same way he polemicizes strongly against the Pythagoreans for their absurd theories of metempsychosis: how could a sensible person imagine the soul of one particular individual entering any kind of body presented to him for a new habitation? Take for instance the human soul: that soul is the form of the human body, isn't it? So how can it ever enter the body of another animal? That human soul is entirely different from any soul realizing the body of any brute. In fact, it assumes an activity called human thought. So have no fears! Such transmigration of human souls into animal bodies take place only in the Pythagorean myths.

We feel justified in taking this to apply not only to transmigration from species to species, but also from individual to individual within the same species. For Aristotle says, "Each body seems to have a form and shape of its own." So, "that any soul could be clothed upon with any body" is, indeed, an absurd view.

It is as absurd as to say that the art of carpentry could embody itself in flutes; each art must use its tools, each soul its body. (De anima, 407 b, 20)

Nowhere does the difference between Plato and Aristotle appear more clearly. According to Plato it was contrary to the nature of the soul that it should be "imprisoned" in a body. Aristotle's viewpoint is not necessarily "more materialistic". By no means. It sees the soul

as a supreme force of life. But the view is more wholistic, more realistic. For now that vital force called a human soul simply takes possession of the body, pervades it entirely. And what is the actual result? That "other thing" called matter no longer has any right to exist as matter exclusively ("pure matter"). For now the soul has organized it as a living body.

We believe that Aristotle has here touched the very core of an essential truth. That is the mystery of a more organic identity, as it reveals itself in a living being like man. The whole being is a unity of all the various organs constituting it. Thus it becomes an individual organism destined for the great functions of life. That organization, however, expresses itself above all in its form. (Of course this actually applies to all things. Take a river as an example: it remains identical to itself solely by virtue of its organization, its proper form. This is the thing remaining the same all the time, however rapid and radical may be the change of its matter--that hurrying water, gliding continually along the river bed.)

The form, as Aristotle conceives it, is the essence by which things are what they are. But the essence is of course determined by the function which the thing is to exert. Thus the form expresses the function. The human soul, for instance, is just the form by virtue of which the living human body is an organism able to accomplish the functions of human life.

"Suppose the eye were an animal, then sight would have been its soul", says Aristotle, "for sight is the substance or essence of the eye (we might also add: the function of the eye)."

When seeing is removed, the eye is no longer an eye, except in name. It is no more a real eye than the eye of a statue or a painted figure. (De anima, 4b, 15-25)

But if the soul is the form of the living body, in other words, the power of life by which the body is organized in its special way and able to perform its special functions, then it goes without saying that the soul and the living body can by no means be two separate things. To suppose them separate would be just as nonsensical as to imagine that the wax is a thing separate from the imprint whose form it has received.

We can wholly dismiss as unnecessary the question whether the soul and the body are one: it is as meaningless as to ask whether the wax and the shape given to it by the stamp are one, or generally the matter of a thing and that of which it is the matter. Unity has many sense ... but the most proper and fundamental sense ... is the relation of actuality to that of which it is the actuality. (De an., 212b, 5)

True enough, the brass, for instance, the matter contained in the statue, may exist independently of the form a sculptor is able to give it. It may have an existence as crude, unwrought matter, too. But that is just what does not take place in the case of a human body. For that body is already a living organism. In other words: it is

comparable to the statue as it exists only after the sculptor has done his work--or to the wax after it has received its peculiar imprint. The body cannot be considered at all without considering at the very same moment a soul constituting its deepest reality.

But does Aristotle conserve the simplicity of this monism all the way through? We have no intention of concealing the extent to which he was to disturb it in the further elaboration of his system. But first we feel that we should dwell precisely on various trends in his thoughts, and in his life, which cannot possibly be conceived without admitting a considerable degree of true totality.

Notes:

1. Plato: Parmenides, 130. The text in extensa runs:

> And could you make an idea of man apart from us and all other human creatures, or of fire and water?
>
> I am often undecided, Parmenides, as to whether I ought to include them or not.
>
> And would you feel equally undecided, Socrates, about things of which the mention may provoke a smile?--I mean such things as hair, mud, dirt, or anything else which is vile and paltry; would you suppose that each of these has an idea distinct from the actual objects with which we come in contact, or not?
>
> Certainly not, said Socrates; visible things like these are such as they appear to us, and I am afraid that there would be an

2. See Werner: La Philosophie grecque, 1938, p. 128.

absurdity in assuming any idea of them, although I sometimes get disturbed, and begin to think that there is nothing without an idea; but then again, when I have taken up this position, I run away, because I am afraid that I may fall into a bottomless pit of nonsense, and perish; and so I return to the ideas of which I was just now speaking, and occupy myself with them.

Yes, Socrates, said Parmenides; that is because you are still young; the time will come, if I am not mistaken, when philosophy will have a firmer grasp on you, and then you will not despise even the meanest things; at your age you are too much disposed to regard the opinion of men. (Op. cit., Vol. 7, p. 488)

We have been interested to see in Plotinus (Enneads, V, 7; the Volkmann text in the Teubner series II, 228) how much farther still this disciple in the third century A. D. goes than his teacher. Plotinus does not doubt that there are also ideas of each particular object:

If I and every man can trace ourselves back to the intelligible world, then each man has his separate origin there. And if Socrates and the soul of Socrates are eternal, there will exist, in the intelligible world, a Socrates in himself, as it is called, in so far as the souls of individuals are there. But if what was formerly Socrates in himself, as it is called, in so far as the souls like Pythagoras or someone else, then the particular idea of Socrates no longer exists in the intelligible world. Still, if the soul of the individual contains the seminal reasons of all those through whom it passes, all will be represented in

the intelligible world. For we say also that each soul possesses all the seminal reasons that are in the world. If now the world contains the seminal reasons, not only of man, but of particular animals, the soul will possess them too. There will then be an infinite number of seminal reasons, unless indeed they be periodically repeated in world-cycles, and in this way a limit set to their infinity, as often as they are re-exemplified.

However, if generally speaking there are more particulars produced than there are patterns, why need there be seminal reasons and patterns for everything produced within a single world-cycle? One archetypal man is enough for many men, just as a definite number of souls produce (in their incarnations) an indefinite number of human beings. Still, different things have not the same seminal reason, nor is a single man sufficient as a pattern for men who differ from one another, not only in point of matter, but in countless specific points. For such men are not related as the pictures of Socrates are related to the original, but their differences have to be regarded as due to different reasons or ideas. A world-cycle, however, in its entirety contains all the seminal reasons. And then (in the next world-cycle) the same world is repeated after the same ideas. Infinity in the intelligible world is not to be feared. For its infinity is all contained in the indivisible, and proceed from it, as it were, when the intelligible world exercises its proper activity.

Chapter 21

The Individual

We shall have many occasions to stress the importance of the individual, considered from the viewpoint of totality in human life. Sometimes our term is the particular, or the personal. But that seldom makes any essential difference to the general trend of our ideas.

Now we all know what quite special part the question of the individual versus the universal plays in Platonic idealism. The highest statement that can be allowed here, regarding the individual things, is that they become. Only somewhere far, far beyond all those many individuals the philosopher perceives the one real thing, the universal form, the general idea. Beyond--or rather above--the many beautiful individuals, for instance, is the one Beautiful. And this superior model is the only thing that really and indisputably is. The lower world of the senses and of the individual impressions is in a flowing state of changing and becoming. But as such it never has any chance of ever reaching the happy harbour of permanent being.

However, precisely because Plato thus obstinately denies the being of individual things, he is not able to pass beyond a stage of a problematic hypothesis affording no sure explanation of either being or truth or goodness. For outside those supernatural models of the natural individuals he is unable to see anything whatsoever. Here there is neither being nor truth nor goodness.

In this respect Aristotle goes defiantly against his teacher. To him all things have an existence as separate individuals. Each thing is an individual substance. That applies both to the natural, for instance the earth, and to the supernatural, for instance God. It cannot be denied, however: with the Aristotelians the point of gravity has definitely been moved down to the natural. With Platonism it had been more in the ethereal heights of the supernatural. With Aristotle the concrete has won a decisive battle over the abstract.

Chapter 22

The Role of Moderation

Another striking feature in much of Aristotle's attitude is a certain sense of moderation. Moderation is one of the qualities generally indicative of the deeper harmony we have termed "totally" in human life. Extremism is generally more characteristic of egocentric disruption.

In the name of justice and fairness, we shall here have to admit that the Ionian physiologues, from whom Aristotle may have inherited part of his peculiar "down-to-earth" tendency and a certain monism, did not always distinguish themselves as particularly moderate. We have pointed out that they were comparatively simple and monistic, it is true, in their general views. But sometimes, in their very simplicity and monism, they are seen to go to great extremes. In fact, we wonder if some of the first Greek philosophers were not so entirely possessed by the idea of unity that they pushed it to quite paradoxical extremes. We all know Zero's affirmation: if things could really be divided, one would never reach a term where the division would cease. Thus he tried to prove the impossibility of dividing things up at all. "How could anything be made up of parts?" he required. Such a thing would be at the same time infinitely small and infinitely big: infinitely small because of the smallness of the parts at which one would arrive if the dividing continued without end, and infinitely big because of the endless number of the resulting parts (See Zeno, Fragm. 1). Well known is also a similar

sophistic argument of all movements being impossible, because covering even the shortest distance would imply passing an infinite number of points. Aristotle, too, alludes to this in his Physica (223a, 20).

We may mention Parmenides, that most illustrious representative of the Eleate School (inaugurated by Xenophanes, by the way, who claimed an absolute unity of the being and its absolute permanence). Certainly we here have to admit a certain inexorability and extremism. It is the being and its absolute existence as eternally identical with itself, without any mixture of not-being. All the notions we form of the real, imagined as a multiple thing and subject to becoming, imply the existence of a not-being. But multiple things are different from each other. What one is, the other is not. And a thing which is only in the process of becoming, must be different from what it is to become by and by. A really capital problem is made out of this: can we admit the existence of the not-being? According to Parmenides, all philosophy depends on the solution one finds to this dilemma: the being is--the being is not. To be or not to be--that is, indeed, the question of the being. (Fragm. 4 and 8, V. 15-16)

In all this there may not seem to be too much of simplicity and moderation. Frankly speaking, even Aristotle was by no means any paragon of simplicity and moderation. But where is the typical theorist who distinguished himself as genuinely simple and moderate--in his theories? Nevertheless, we cannot help mentioning here a curious fact about Aristotle's attitude just towards the

question of moderation, considered from an ethical point of view. In this case, what we should call a definitely practical and well-balanced view, may here be pointed out. In book II of his Nicomachean Ethics his theory of virtue as the just medium is exposed in the following remarkable way.

Vice consists precisely in the excess. Of course, that is no unique or properly Aristotelian doctrine. But Aristotle has quite noteworthy formulations on the subject. First he warms us against a specific danger of deception: we should not think that "medium" here indicates a certain "mediocrity". Not at all!

It is rather the very opposite. The just medium is the perfect measure, the absolute top. And to reach that top is particularly difficult. For there are a thousand ways of falling into excess, and the various vices deriving from that. Therefore it is so easy to be vicious. But there is just one single way of attaining the right measure. Therefore nothing is more difficult to realize than virtue.

Of course the tendency itself of placing such infinite value on the virtue of moderation is just a popular Greek tendency. Moderation was, indeed, a virtue of nationwide culture in Greek antiquity. And perhaps something here may, at least partly, explain why the concept of "areté" in the Greek community had such a broad and firm position. Virtue was, in fact, a thing quite commonly accepted, at least to a far larger extent, we think, than in societies of typically modern civilization. It evidently did not have that immediate connotation of a certain demureness (Norw.

"dydsirethet") which we moderns seem almost unable to avoid when we speak about a "paragon" of virtue" ("dydsmönster"). Perhaps it is an inevitable characteristic of an environment of supercivilization to be rendered split and disharmonious by a certain sophistication of the adult, an actual panic lest one might appear somewhat childlike the naive. Especially young people in our culture seem to feel frightfully embarrassed at the thought that their environment might suspect them of being virtuous! (See our chapter, "The Renaissance, an Adolescence Period in the History of our Culture", Tot. in Christ. Anthr., III, 4.)

Both in antiquity and in the Middle Ages man in the Western world is still a child, and fairly undisturbed by his childishness. So he accepts even such an old-fashioned thing as virtue. But just as in the ancient Greek community one reason for the quite popular acceptance--among young and old--of what they conceived as essentially virtuous, may perhaps also be found in the very definition given to Greek virtue by some historians: areté is something highly active. It is the ideal, but also eminently practical, unfolding of good human qualities for the common benefit. The paramount virtue is the civic virtue. Another obvious reason, however, why "virtue" here succeeded in maintaining its nation-wide popularity, was presumably just that instinctive avoidance of all excessive strivings, of passing all decent limits which nature has clearly set for mortal human creatures.

We hope we are not ourselves passing the limits, as we are trying to show Aristotle's "down-to-earth" trend--as compared to his

most famous colleagues in the, for human totality, so dangerous trade called philosophy. But we must say we have been almost astonished to see the stress this philosopher places on the practical--at least theoretical!

Aristotle bluntly informs us in the same Ethica Nicomachea that we do not possess virtue until we have put it into practice. As it is with art, so it is with virtue. "Men become builders by building, and lyre-players by playing the lyre; so, too, we become just by doing just acts, temperate by doing temperate acts, brave by doing brave acts." (Eth. Nic., 1103 a, 30)

This may seem a truism and commonplace. For of course no man would be such a fool as to imagine that he can become an architect without constructing things, or a great musician without starting to make music. But many men seem to hope that they may be eminently just without making the slightest effort to practice justice. However, there is no other way invented by gods or by men. In order to become courageous anybody is bound to simply step down to the practical reality of accomplishing acts of courage. Virtue is formed through its practical application, or it is not formed at all.

And then please notice what follows. It is not a word of any exceptional philosophical profoundness perhaps. But it implies a noteworthy perspective of totality and monism right in the heart of human ethics, a perspective which has not at all proved to be a matter of self-evidence in the tradition of human ideas. We have

touched the question in our first chapter, and shall give it special attention in our Vol. III (part IV, "Is the Christian Anthropology Radically Dualist in Ethical Respect?"). The trend of Aristotle's principle is simple enough: by performing a vicious act one becomes vicious. By performing a virtuous act one becomes virtuous.

Is Aristotle so radical in his monism that he immediately conceives the "performing of virtuous acts" and the "being a virtuous person" as inseparable sides of one single reality? No, he obviously sees the two as consecutive rather than as concomitant events. "We get the virtues by first exercising them," he says. And the whole tenor of the passage is that of practical moralism, more than that of speculative philosophy. The idea is mainly that a habitual repetition of certain actions eventually causes a certain character to be formed: "In a word, the moral dispositions hang together with (Tricot translates: proviennent de) actions which resemble them. That is why we should orient our activities in a certain direction, for the diversities characterizing them, draw along ("entraine") corresponding differences in our dispositions. So it is not a negligible work to contract, from our tenderest youth, such or such a habit. On the contrary, this is of major importance, nay of total importance." (Eth. Nic. 1103 z, 20- Tricot)

Anyway, the stress is laid on the practical side. Aristotle is, so far, astonishingly practical. But now we are also bound to come to a point where a different Aristotle makes his appearance. We come to features in his total "Lebensauschauung", his general view on the values of life, where we must openly admit that he entirely leaves

the path of alterocentric wisdom. And perhaps nobody could expect a philosopher--particularly a philosopher in Aristotle's time--not to leave it.

Chapter 23

Theory Versus Practice, Seen with the Eyes of the More Genuine Theorist

Aristotle is, at the bottom of his heart, convinced of the total superiority of the theoretical over the practical. (In fact, to him, the theoretical is elevated above any other sphere of life, even that of the moral.)

Practical wisdom must content itself with having for its object just things judged in relation to man, whereas theoretical wisdom is fortunate enough to have for its object things as they exist "in themselves"--in other words, that "immutable, incorruptible truth" with which philosophers of all ages have fallen in love. This is where the absolutely safe and the truly eternal is to be found.

It goes without saying that we can hardly grant Aristotle so much credit for a perfectly well-balanced human personality as far as his views on these things are concerned.

On the other hand, it would be quite wrong to see him as a typical representative of indolent meditation, staring fixedly at his own navel. In fact, history shows him in quite a different light. Aristotle was a diligent plodder, busying himself with a thousand different things. "As busy as a bee, collecting his empirical fragments of knowledge", says one historian,[1] "characterized by briskness and vivacity", says another.[2] Nevertheless, the clear

testimony from his own pen, with its open profession of his personal views, shows him as a very great admirer of passive contemplation. According to his solemn ethical credo, contemplative life possesses just those wonderful characteristics which he regards as conducive to the highest degree of human happiness: it is not dependent on anything outside itself!

The context is that he has, from the outset, described happiness as the absolute good. That is--to Aristotle as to Plato--the perfect self-sufficiency (autarkeia). And we should remember the definition of the perfectly self-sufficient, as given in the Eudem. Ethics: the one who is "capable of living alone", the supreme attribute of the truly divine, which caused Aristotle to call out in admiration, "God cannot have need of friends, nor will he have any." But presumably most blessed of all (that comes out clearly in his Nicomachean Ethics): God has no need of action--nor of production:

Now if you take away from a living being action, and still more production, what is left but contemplation? Therefore the activity of God, which surpasses all others in blessedness, must be contemplative. (1178 b, 20)

We have previously expressed our wonder at the reputation Plato was destined to enjoy among men for his "eminently spiritual leadership". But this prestige of Platonism as an authority even in matters of religion and theology is not half as curious as the fact that leading personalities of the Christian Church for centuries turned to Aristotle, not only to see what he had to say about man and nature,

but also what precious information he could give about God! But one thing should be as clear as crystal: hardly ever have two Gods had less in common than the God of Christ and the God of Aristotle.

According to Aristotle, man will have the happiness of resembling God in the same measure as he, too, is independent enough to give himself up to similar contemplation. Only the philosopher can have any hope of approaching a realization of this ideal. The wise man is the only relatively happy man. All others are constantly in need. "The just man needs people towards whom he shall act justly." (1177a, 30) "The liberal man will need money for the doing of his liberal deeds." (1178 a, 25) "The brave man needs some adversaries against whom he may manifest his bravery."

But what about the speculative man? Oh blissful creature--he can simply give himself up to his speculations right in his splendid isolation.

Admittedly, the philosopher, too, has some absolute necessities of material life. To be quite sincere, although he may do splendidly all alone, he might do still better perhaps in the pleasant company of a few fellow workers who have given themselves up to the same exercises of philosophical speculation. But one thing remains sure: of all men he is certainly the most self-sufficient one.

Above all, the exterior goods demanded by thought are, indeed, very few--as compared to those required by practical activities of all kinds!

Of course this consistent emphasis on the superiority of calm contemplation over any kind of productive work, especially manual labour, must be considered in a definite historical perspective. Let us not forget that the highest culture of all antiquity, that of Greece, was still based upon slavery as an almost self-evident social feature. In view of this fact, we may well ask ourselves the question: Would that boundless admiration and esteem for inactive rumination be imaginable--in Aristotle as well as his contemporaries--if cultural patterns in this particular respect had been, for instance, more comparable to those of the Western World at the present moment? To our deeper evaluation of peculiar attitudes--in individuals as well as in entire ages--such points may be of momentous importance. The abolition of slavery, and the tacit agreement to consider all slavery as a shameful phenomenon incompatible with the true dignity of real culture, certainly means an enormous step from morbid compartmentalization to sound spiritual integration, considered on the social plane. And it is our culture as a whole which has made this step. If an individual belonging to ancient culture is judged without taking the environmental factors of his peculiar world into account, the judgment will of course be correspondingly falsified. In fact, Aristotle's attitude towards physical activity on one hand and passive philosophical contemplation on the other may reveal a lot more about Aristotle's times and his native society than about Aristotle himself.

And the same may hold good for the curious excursions his philosophical musings occasionally take into the realms of theology.

For instance, by way of manifest proof of his thesis that all real happiness consists in pure contemplation, he refers us just to the example of the august inhabitants of Olympus. The gods, he argues, are universally assumed to be perfectly happy. But how could anyone imagine them as abandoning themselves to any lower activity than that of pure thought? Would anybody think of the gods as performing "acts of justice"?

Will not the gods seem absurd if they make contracts and return deposits, and so on? (Eth. Nic., 11 b, 10)

Some might perhaps even have the curious idea of a god giving himself up to such exercise as "acts of bravery". As though we could ever reasonably imagine a god actually exposed to danger, and consequently obliged to valiantly confront such danger! Or a god stooping down to acts of liberality? Ridiculous. Towards whom should he be liberal? On whom should gods spend their money, if any such thing exists at all in the heavenly abodes? Likewise, no god could be supposed to exercise acts of temperance. That would almost be a downright shameful insinuation. Of course the gods have no bad appetites. So what could be the use of temperance? We all agree, nonetheless, that the gods do exist. So what actions do they perform? The actions performed by men in general are, indeed, too base and trivial to be worthy of the gods. Only one thing can be imagined sufficiently worthy: contemplation.

Notes:

1. Aschehougs Verdenshistorie, p. 267.
2. William Smith: History of Greece, 1891, p. 598.

Chapter 24

Simplicity and Wholeness Threatened Once More

But the really serious event still remains to be registered: that is when Aristotle, in the subtle depths of his very ontology, proceeds to manipulations placing the whole simplicity of his original anthropology in fearful jeopardy. Somehow he felt induced to add a certain ingredient to his basic system. I would say a foreign element, which is on the verge of causing a complete reversal of his theory of the human soul. Presumably the purpose was to give a better and more comprehensive explanation of the intimate relations between body and soul. And the characteristic thing is that he is here concerned about those relations, not so much from a biological point of view, but we might say from a "purely" psychological point of view. The all-inclusive science of Life turns into a subtle specialized science of the Soul. And here the term soul acquires, as it were, a new meaning. It is no longer the psyche of primitive, pre-platonic ages (the ages when views of naive totality were vigorous among men, the nephesh haia of the old Hebrews, penetrating the human being as a living unit, the anima of biological Aristotelianism as a principle of animation, pertaining indiscriminately to every single portion of the whole). Aristotle has found it necessary to supplement his synthetic method with an analytical one (De anima, 402 b, ff.). He decides to see how far the soul is bound to be divided up into parts.

To what extent was that decision dictated by those fixed ideas we have just described--about an endless superiority of contemplation, of a pure intellect, over certain "lower" faculties of the human being? Obviously, to the tradition-bound philosopher, the distance here seems too great, indeed, for any bridge to be built over the chasm, except that subtle one which he now undertakes to manufacture, in the following way.

From that soul which was described as the form of the living body Aristotle has deemed it indispensable to distinguish a "soul by itself". That is, the intelligence. So, in the last round, he, too, establishes a difference between "pure thought" on one hand, and an infinitely lower--physiological--soul, as it were, on the other.

This "lower" soul is still considered as a soul real enough and important enough, of course. For it is still nothing less than the principle of life. Of "animal" life that is! (The eager students of Aristotle during the Middle Ages, availing themselves of the important Latin versions of his works, no doubt had a natural feeling of the close connection between the adjective animalis and the noun anima. The soul is of course precisely what animates, gives life.)

So still there is, in Aristotle's mind, a perfect and most intimate union between the body and that "biological" soul which is the principle of life. And he cannot doubt that such mental phenomena as anger, fear, etc. directly affect the body. In fact, everybody can see that. For as soon as the soul experiences those emotions, or passions, the body undergoes corresponding changes. On the whole,

such states of the mind are certainly not purely immaterial states, he concludes, for they are conditions realized in matter.

Aristotle, obviously enough, has serious hesitations in recognizing these "passions"--so clearly belonging to the body and the "physical" soul--as constituting part of the soul herself. We might as well write Soul with a capital S in this latter case. For what is meant by the philosopher is something on a very different plane: how do the "passions" mentioned compare to this? They are obviously just movements. But the Soul, in that higher sense, according to Aristotle's terminology, is not subject to any such thing as movement. For--naturally enough--movements take place in space, and of course space is something entirely foreign to the essence of the Soul.

In fact, the Soul herself is above suffering any passions. To say that the Soul is irritated, would be as bad as to say that she spins wool or builds houses. It is not the Soul by herself who spins or builds. It is man, i.e. the compound unit of body and soul. Similarly, it is not the Soul that is subject to anger. It is man--man in his concrete reality (De anima, 408 b, 10).

So Aristotle is leading us into "new realms of reality". We have passed the stage of that body-soul compound which we have in common with all living beings, for instance animals--and even plants. We have risen above the subject matter of physics and physiology. We are entering the sublime regions of psychology, regions peculiar to man only. Here, however, the "problem" presents

itself. We still mean the problem of a union between body and soul. The painful search for a possible bridge across the abyss arises again with traditional force. The necessity of solving the unsolvable imposes itself once more upon the sagacity of a philosopher.

How can material things engender psychical reactions? And conversely, how can psychical conditions produce material phenomena? Aristotle has not made the bridge-building task too easy for himself.

His verdict is also quite merciless. One part of man has to be decomposed and disappear forever. And that part is frightfully comprehensive. It includes not only his passions and sensations, but even his memory and all discursive thought. And what, then, is saved over to the other side of the bottomless pit? What belongs to the blessed sphere of the truly eternal? Only one thing: pure reason. When the human being has been destroyed, his memories and his moods, his fondnesses and his friendships, have also been destroyed with him. Nothing but pure intellect, impersonal contemplation, goes on existing, imperishable and divine. (De an., 408 b, 25; Met., 1070a, 25)

As far as we can see, there must be one main reason why even so realistic a thinker as Aristotle has left called upon to abandon his first principle of monistic simplicity, elaborating a curious distinction between "two widely different souls": he is, after all, a most genuine philosopher, an incurable schizothyme. We mean a man who has fallen hopelessly in love with "wisdom" in the Greek

and pagan sense of the term. Somewhere in his luggage he carries along with him, as his philosophical heritage, all that boundless admiration for the purely intellectual which was in his great teacher's heart. This means--if not all, at least an inevitable amount of--the traditional depreciation of anything that is not pure intellectuality, of emotions and bodily properties of any kind.

True totality, the perfect ability to embrace with equal admiration both sides of the human reality, is a sign of harmony which we shall describe as more particularly religious than philosophical. In this sense, religion has exactly the same distance from philosophy as spirituality has from spiritualism.

In other words: even in Aristotle's intellectualism there is something of the hardness, coldness, and one-sidedness which inevitably characterize the spiritualistic tendency, as contradistinguished from what we here consider typical of true spirituality, warmth, well-balanced humanity.

Of course it is touching enough to see with what naiveté and docility even a most intellectualistic Greek philosopher will quote the statements of the poets, at the same time the "theologians" of the times. But the mythology they refer to has a very peculiar God. There is the idea of a Supreme Being. And that Supreme Being is a Creator. But he is not commonly conceived as the one who has created bodies. So, if the philosophers have reverence for the representatives of religion in their environment, how could they at the same time have any real reverence for bodies, we mean a

religious reverence, as manifested in Judaism, and later in Christianity?

It would be more than bold to say, "Aristotle has no longing for survival." At least, he does make a sincere inquiry into the theoretical possibilities of survival.

"We must examine whether any form also survives," he says earnestly. He even arrives at the conclusion, "In some cases there is nothing to prevent this; e.g., the soul may be of this sort--not all souled, but the reason, for presumably it is impossible that all soul should survive." (Metaphysica, 1070a, 25)

In other words, what "part" of the soul cannot be assumed to be able to survive? Of course the one which must be suspected of having too close an alliance with the body. This "inferior" soul, with its personally coloured memories, its highly human emotions, and its touching details of everyday experience--briefly, anything that marks a human being as an individual person--this is not capable of surviving. Or let us try and grasp the very spirit of philosophical spiritualism and what we will call the "worship of the species" from Plato to Schopenhauer: the individual simply is not worthy of survival!

Aristotle has not managed to disengage himself from the Platonic spiritualism. He constantly isolates a certain phantom of "pure thinking" as something quite exceptional in the soul, a sanctuary apart from all its other misery.

Here Aristotle's problem arises: What are the "affections" of the soul?

Are they all affections of the complex of body and soul, or is there any one among them peculiar to the soul by itself? To determine this is indispensable but difficult. If we consider the majority of them, there seems to be no case in which the soul can act or be acted upon without involving the body, e.g. anger, courage, appetite, and sensation generally. Thinking seems to be the most probable exception. But if this, too, proves to be a form of imagination, or to be impossible without imagination, it, too, requires a body as a condition of its existence.

In other words, even thinking must be very "pure", indeed. if it is to have a chance of freeing itself from a general dependence on the body, and thus really survive. Otherwise it seems that all the affections of soul involve a body--passion, gentleness, fear, pity, courage, joy, loving and hating; in all these there is concurrent affection of the body. (De an., 403a, 15)

Notice particularly--against a background of what we call the truly religious in human life:

Memory and love cease; they are activities not of mind, but of the composite which has perished. (De an., 408b, 25)

The case of "pure mind" is entirely different:

It seems to be an independent substance implanted within the soul and to be incapable of being destroyed. (Ibid., 15)

There is no possible doubt: Aristotle has arrived at a point where he coincides fairly well with Plato. In Book II, Chapter 2, of De anima he says:

We have no evidence as yet about mind or the power to think; it seems to be a widely different kind of soul, differing as what is eternal from what is perishable; it alone is capable of existence in isolation from all other psychic power. (413b, 25)

Infallibly corroborating passages are found in Book III, Ch. 4:

While the faculty of sensation is dependent upon the body, mind is separable from it. (429b, 4) When mind is set free from its present conditions, it appears as just what it is and nothing more: this alone is immortal and eternal (we do not, however, remember its former activity, because, while mind in this sense is impassible, mind as passive is destructible), and without it nothing thinks. (430a. Parentheses Aristotle's.)

So we see that Aristotle, too, in the last round, arrives at a sort of Platonic conception regarding the immortality of the human soul, but only in his own peculiar way. His idea of a survival, however, is certainly not less cold or less inhuman than that of Plato.

For the purpose of bridging the vast, icy gulf which he has here opened in man, he endeavours to establish some intermediaries between the material and the immaterial. Thus he distinguishes between a passive intelligence liable to perish with the body, and--on the other hand--an active intelligence superbly independent of the body. Nevertheless, the psycho-physical relations, in a man so deeply disrupted, remain a constant mystery and a terrible dilemma to metaphysical logic. Some of his disciples found the theoretical difficulties here so discouraging that they finished by seeing only two alternatives open to them: either that of an open Platonic dualism or that of downright materialism.

What remains in front of us, after this, seems to be an Aristotle who, himself, is split into two incompatible parts. One is the monistic psycho-physiologist, keeping soberly to the simple data of nature and seeking no artifice whatsoever in order to solve a "problem" of a union between body and soul. The other is the dualistic metaphysician who forges the doctrine of an intelligent, insubstantial, and divine Soul, joining the human soul (or animal soul). But just how it manages to join it, without being fused into it in any way, cannot possibly be grasped by any sharp and sober intellectual logic. It must be relegated to the realms of mythological fancy. And its origin is also, historically, to be sought just in mythology, and in certain forms of pagan survival mysticism.

By that we do not mean to say that it is necessarily a confused urge of self-preservation, which, through the undergrowth of religious dogma, has driven Aristotle, like so many other men in

ages of ignorance and despair, towards philosophical conclusions permitting a certain degree of survival after all. In fact, it may just as well be the impersonal delight some frigidly intellectual minds seem to find in the solitary superiority of pure intellect and purposeless contemplation. In the latter case the element of self-centered introversion need not be less prevailing than in the former.

However, the main motive may also be that of a genuinely human mind, restlessly seeking truth, the truth that liberates and has meaning.

If one can look away from the vain superstructures which some kind of irrepressible reminiscences from contemporary spiritualism have added to Aristotle's original philosophical creation, there seems to be every reason to think that the ancient world would have presented a sufficient foundation here upon which posterity's elite of soberminded thinkers might have built a solid edifice constituting a redoubtable match for the mighty and splendid-looking tower of dualism which was destined to eclipse all other philosophical constructions during coming ages.

Even as it is now, "the system of Aristotle marks the apogee of Greek philosophy," says Charles Werner.[1] Only at the beginning of modern times did he begin to be severely fought. And still his philosophy is seen to form an integral part of the systems of such great thinkers as Hegel and Leibniz.

In spite of all that Aristotle has in common with Plato, he was the man who, to an admirable extent, made the Idea descend from its high heavens of the absolute down upon the firm ground of concrete realities. The Form of Aristotle is still the Idea of Plato, one may perhaps say. But it is now an Idea immanent in things. Dualism and idealistic spiritualism had received their first serious blow.

And nevertheless, the dualist conception of man may be said to have reigned with almost sovereign power in our world during the more than two millennia which have passed since the days of the highlight of Greek philosophy.

This is a trend which was never confronted by any entirely worthy match in reality. Professor Werner may very well say about the system of Aristotle something which seems to place Plato in the shade:

It joins in a vast synthesis all the currents of thought that had been produced before him, and it gives forever the model of true philosophical research.(40)

But whether that statement about the vast synthesis is a real eulogy, that may be a great question. For there are things which should never be synthesized. There are things which never can be synthesized.

What we must face unflinchingly is the situation, barely and squarely, such as it was in general likely to present itself to the

vision of serious anthropologists, after the two giants of Greek philosophy, Plato and Aristotle, had thrown their weights into the balance of the history of ideas in our Western culture.

Verily, verily, the image of man which they have handed down to posterity is rather that of a hybrid creature, composed of a body too low to be worthy of true esteem and true salvation, and on the other hand a soul too high to be actually human.

Notes:

1. Werner: La Philosophie grecque, p. 192.

Chapter 25

What the Individual Means in Human Life

Here we must first point out the real significance of the individual to the concept of totality, with which we are most vividly concerned.

The opposition between the particular and the general is probably as old as philosophy herself. And many philosophers, it must be admitted, have held the individual in far higher esteem than Plato did. Some have even considered "general truths" with a good deal more suspicion than they considered "particular truths".

Of course we are here not speaking about the obviously nonsensical caricatures of generalizations contained in the current example of chauvinism, for instance: "Helmut Schmidt is a scoundrel. Helmut Schmidt is also a German. Accordingly, Germans are scoundrels". Quod erat demonstrandum!

No, we are speaking about "general truth" and acknowledged scientific methods of deduction. What abstract reasoning deals with, is precisely general truths. But the question arising is sometimes whether "general truths" exist at all. We mean, do they have an existence of their own, separated from, and quite independent of particular truths?

We do not of course intend to engage in a fruitless strife similar to that between "realists" and "nominalists" way back in the Middle Ages. Whether the general concept in abstract reasoning is a vain breath (flatus vocis) or a higher and eternal reality behind and above the passing phenomena of concrete things, that is not here the essential question.

We are not so much concerned either about John Stuart Mill's criticism of classical deductions, although it may appear to be a pretty hard attack both against Plato's boundless faith in the general reality and against Aristotle's infallible system of logic. Let us have just a look at the object of Mill's criticism.

The classical schema looked like this:

I. All men are mortal.

II. Socrates is a man.

III. Conclusion: Socrates is mortal.

Here one started with the general statement, "All men are mortal". From this point, then, one passed on to the next, in accordance with the Aristotelian pattern of logic. And nobody ever doubted that the end of the road was an equally logical conclusion, namely the particular fact: "Socrates is mortal."

But what is that first general sentence (I) really based upon? Does it not actually assume already that the conclusion (III) is an accepted fact? For how can you even start by saying, in the first place, that all men are mortal, if you have not, in advance, made sure of the empirical fact that the individual Socrates, also, is mortal? In other words, that general idea of mortality for all men, which was credulously--believed to be the point of departure, and a sure point of departure, a sort of independent initial fact--that now turns out to be a most conditional fact, in reality. It depends on what? Well, just on the truth of--among other things--that blessed "conclusion" you hoped to arrive at in the end! That is to say, you find yourself moving backwards rather than forwards. Or expressed in a slightly different way: it is the particular fact of your own personal experience in practical life which actually becomes both alpha and omega in this speculative game.

If we are to believe our contemporary philosopher Bertrand Russell, by the way, things do not look much more encouraging if you want to move in the opposite direction either. According to him, it is just as impossible to arrive at any general conclusion by proceeding from particular facts exclusively.[1]

The general impression may be somewhat disconcerting, to put it mildly. Who could blame you for thinking that there must be an actual gulf between those empirical facts immediately grasped by the sound senses of any man on the street on one hand, and those general ideas belonging to the abstract sciences on the other. The

general impression is far from apt to strengthen the common man's belief in the transactions of philosophy.

We seem forced to consider truth from two different angles; or shall we say, from two entirely incongruous angles. In the first place, we do seem to have in front of us a sort of Platonic interiority; that is, Truth with a capital T: you might say a kind of Super-Truth, rising majestically above common lot--abstracted from time and space, from all concrete modes and particular manifestations. In the second place, we have the category of truths with which common folk are familiar in everyday life; obviously they still have their plebeian pleasure of bumping into these peculiar phenomena--truths of a "cheaper order", as it were--truths grasped by almost any simpleton, since such truths have the naive habit of happening at a particular moment, in a particular place, and in a particular manner.

As defenders of these representatives of a certain rustic naiveté making itself felt in everyday human life, we want to treat ourselves to the pleasure, for a brief second, of having that old distinction between Truth and truth quite graphically portrayed, as it happens to be in Clutton-Brock's little book, Essays on Religion (1926, p. 19). He points out the different ways in which we may regard things and people: on one hand they are individuals, on the other they are members of some class.

Our question now would be: Which of those two angles of perception is the more valid? Which is the truer way of considering the persons surrounding us?

The scientist is supposed to be looking for just one thing, truth. But he has a notorious trend towards classification. To the scientific analysis all objects, whether persons or things, tend to become just members of a class, numbers in a series.

Now you and I may not distinguish ourselves as particularly "scientific" in our approach. On the contrary, we may seem to have a delicious weakness for all that is human, all that can be touched and seen, loved or hated. Still, sometimes, we too may have a remarkable tendency to classify our fellow men.

I said sometimes. But just when are we tempted to consider them in that dispassionate, objective manner of "true science"? Just whom among them do we invariably consider in this dignified "scientific" way, this frigidly inhuman way?

Characteristically enough, precisely those whom we do not personally know. So our failure is due to a deplorable lack of knowledge; we are speaking about knowledge in a highly alterocentric sense, to be sure. So do not be surprised if here we imply a most morally serious connotation of the word "failure". A trend of egocentricity causes us to fail miserably. And the result follows immediately: we proceed to operate in terms of barren classification. We have recourse to the impersonal schema, the rigidly scientific schema.

What, on the contrary, actually happens from the very moment when we really learn to know the individuals concerned? Then they suddenly cease to be mere numbers in a system. They become persons to us.

But is that not also exactly the moment when the full truth about those fellow creatures begins to dawn upon our minds? Is not that the moment when dynamic totality in human destiny is allowed to unfold?

Compare to this integrated realism the dumb attitude of apathy we had, the other day, towards a bunch of Chinese, 10,000 in fact, who miserably lost their lives in a natural catastrophe. Was there not a certain "incompleteness" in our registration of that truth there? Of course we did read a small notice in our local paper about these unfortunate ones. But were they real human beings to us? I mean real to our minds and to our hearts? No. To register 10,000 agonized human beings as a mere mass of shadowy greyness is not realism. Something essential must have been lacking in our sense of reality. The totality of living fellowship was lacking. Our personal engagement was practically nil. The living force of integration in human lives which we call inter-human solidarity was inoperative.

Of course, personal feelings are not always preferable to scientific impassibility, that is true. But sometimes--we would say most of the time--they represent a crushing superiority. It requires nothing less than personal feelings, human solidarity, sympathy, and affection--briefly, every little parcel of which vital reality is

composed--it requires all this in order to have any chance whatsoever of simply perceiving essential facts in our surrounding world. Among these facts are the living individuals of a suffering humanity. They can only be perceived as individuals. And that demands a personal knowledge of living particulars.

Clutton-Brock shows us man's superiority over the scientist in a few well-chosen words:

While a mathematician cannot value an isosceles triangle in itself, however much he may value the discovery of mathematical truth, we value individuals, in themselves, and as individuals.[2]

He is right. The scientific abstraction falls piteously short in real life. Classifications, however important they may be, become almost a foolery, in cases where the simple wisdom of pulsating everyday life turns out to be of paramount value.

For instance, what is a wife to her husband? Is she a member of the class of wives? Of course not. Even the dryest scientist would probably have much difficulty in considering his wife exclusively--or even essentially--in that very scientific way. And if he managed to do so, he certainly ought not to inform her that this was the way he had come to consider her. She would be mortified, and not without reason.

Of course any husband may, for a moment, give himself up to such fancies just for the sake of some playful experiment--or say, in

a report to the municipal authorities. He may consider his dear consort as a member of the class of wives--that is: abstractly, scientifically--or "ideally" (to include Plato's viewpoint). At the same moment, however, he has inevitably emptied her of all the particular qualities she used to have in his personal estimation. His own mind has also been emptied of all the peculiar and precious values it used to possess when he looked upon her as an individual--delightfully different from all other individuals. Now she has suddenly sunk down into the hazy greyness of a desert called the "class of wives". In our mind that once more evokes the Hades of the ancient Greeks, a land of shadows where no human happiness can survive.

By the way, could it be possible to find any better illustration of what a typical woman could hardly ever be suspected of doing? To her a similar abstraction would appear downright disgusting. If a man intends to humiliate a genuine woman (whom we have once shown to be remarkably related to the genuine child), then just let him consider her from that angle of "objective classification", as a member of a category. As far as her own attitude in such matters is concerned, we doubt that she would ever be found guilty of any corresponding tearing asunder of particular values--no, not even when she considers the wash-tubs of her scullery would she commit such a felony against life.

Notes:

1. Bertrand Russell: Our Knowledge of the External World, 1962.
2. Clutton-Brock: Essays on Religion, 1926, p. 25.

Chapter 26

Symbols and General Concepts

How Are These Abstractions Compatible with Totality in Human Life?

Does not the ability to form symbols help every intelligent human being to "liberate" himself from the narrow viewpoint of the particular and the individual? Yes, yes! Let us admit as much as can ever be admitted. In fact, let us now be teachable and look at abstractions from the most favourable viewpoint we can possibly imagine.

Of course we cannot be blind to the enormous part played by symbolic representations, not only in modern science and in the whole development of our present culture, but also for a most practical orientation in the everyday life of homo sapiens.

Let us prepare the very relevant theme of our discussion here, simply by repeating first some things Professor Harald Schjelderup of the University of Oslo says about the symbol function.

As an illustrative example he chooses the Norwegian word for ball or sphere: kule (corresponding to the German "Kugel"). To a person who has perhaps heard that word only on one single occasion, when a particular ball of a certain material and a certain colour happened to appear, it may yet have a rather limited sense.

However, to you and me it means all bodies of a special shape. So to us it has acquired the function of a symbol.[1]

It would be absurd to deny that this abstracting activity is both very practical and very human. Cassirer regards the symbol function as a trait so peculiarly human that he simply calls man "animal symbolicum".[2] In other words, a distinctive feature--if not the distinctive feature--of man's intellectual superiority, as compared to "other animals", lies in his ability to make use of generalizing symbols, to orient himself in life. At least we must assume this to be the tacit implication.

In other words, very much depends upon what we regard as essential in the symbol. Suppose now that this is just its function of abstraction. What will then be the consistent conclusion we shall have to arrive at? It will be to simply admit the abstracting faculty in man as the culture-creating factor par excellence in his history. Can we accept this as our personal view of human history? Can we accept it as consistent with our essential conception of the abstracting trend in Occidental culture?

Is it a truth of general validity that the human faculty of abstraction takes this place in this hierarchy of intellectual values? Here we must face the pertinent facts unflinchingly. It would be treacherous to oppose ourselves to the reliable data of psychology, or any other modern science, providing sober information about man as he unfolds himself in the living context of his destiny as a man. If, for instance, those irrefutable data prove his capacity of making

abstractions to constitute the main factor of his cultural creativity, then we must not hesitate to draw the full consequences of this, relative to our special study here.

For instance, it would be absurd then to persist in an over-enthusiastic and one-sided eulogy of concrete thinking as the royal highway towards the pinnacles of human fulfillment. At least no shadow of implicit depreciation should ever be thrown over the trend towards abstract speculation in human minds, a quality so immensely favourable to the progress of culture and spiritual achievement. Such depreciation would be a direct crime against modern science.

Our call for caution is serious. And that applies to our concern about spirituality, even in the deepest sense that word involves in our specific terminology. For that is exactly the sphere of life currently evoked whenever we envision the capital role filled by the human faculty of forming adequate symbols. In a moment we shall refer to an eloquent report by Kurt Goldstein on the findings resulting from an examination in an American hospital, suggestive of the capital part played by the symbol function for the deepest spiritual phases of human life; but let us first try to give general expression to some important perspectives presenting themselves as relevant to our investigation.

We have duly focused our attention on a famous category of abstractions, those of spiritualist philosophy in general, and of Platonic idealism in particular. Now those "abstractions of Plato"

should have an opportunity to "aver themselves" (reveal their proper nature): are they just as favourable to human totality, in our sense of the term, as certain other abstractions, "everyday abstractions", seem to be? We are of course speaking just about symbols here--and we understand symbols as the empirical investigations of our times have revealed them to us.

If they are of the same nature, then what would it really mean to depreciate Platonic idealism, as we have had a deliberate tendency here to depreciate it? It would mean either ignorance or downright villainy. In other words, we should either have to revise our ideas or improve our acts. In any case the moral obligation is incumbent upon us to evaluate with caution and sincerity all relevant discoveries of modern science regarding the significance of symbols in human life. That will, in the first place, necessitate an impartial and sufficiently complete presentation of the principal arguments. Let us then examine the conception Cassirer has formed of the symbol function.

Even the most intelligent animals have no truly symbol-forming and symbol-interpreting faculty. It was previously believed that they do have such faculties. But that belief may be ascribed to misunderstandings. Signals were taken for symbols. In Pavlov's famous experiment, for instance, the bell has been considered by some as a symbol for the food which comes to the animal at the moment when it starts ringing. But to that animal it is actually something very different. It is a simple signal. The signal announces what will happen in the near future, whereas the symbol tells what

something means--regardless of time or space or particular modes. So we see how much more general it is, how much more abstract it is. That is to our topic really worth noticing.

Take the example of an animal which has learned to stop when the word "stop" is called. This piece of learning, like all training of animals, is, as we know, the result of a so-called conditioned reaction. In the experience of that animal the pronouncing of the word "stop" has repeatedly been accompanied by some kind of inhibition, more or less painful to it. This pain has eventually been so closely associated with the sound of the word "stop" that, by and by, such reaction in the behaviour follows automatically.

In other words, that animal need not have the remotest conception that the word "stop" means the cessation of movement, i.e. as a more general representation. No, the word of command becomes just a signal, a forewarning of the rather painful thing which will happen if the movement does not cease. The beast has finally found it most propitious--or least disagreeable--according to its practical experience, just to stop on such occasions.

With a human being this is quite different. To him the word "stop" has become a real symbol. It means the cessation of movement in a general way, whatever the particular situation or the practical connection may be.

Of course this is a wonderful and inestimable achievement of the human intellect. And we do not for a moment doubt that just this

places at our disposal possibilities for human unfolding and for the tackling of problems in human destiny so decisive that it is hard to imagine how any other faculty of the human mind could ever replace it.

And when the great life experience of Helen Keller is produced, as an example of what it means to a human being to be led into the secrets of those wonderful symbols called words, then that is certainly an example appealing to both the reason and the feeling of living human beings in our generation: while the water was running down over one hand of that blind and deaf little child, her patient teacher Miss Sullivan kept spelling into the other hand the word "water". Up to that moment such writing in the hand had meant very little to the poor girl. What had not yet dawned upon her unexperienced mind, was just that mysterious function of words, words as symbols. She did not even know that any such thing as a word existed. The movement of her fingers had been just an ape-like imitation of meaningless actions observed in other persons. And then suddenly the whole function of words as symbols burst upon her eager mind with dramatic force. Probably only her autobiographical description can give you an approximately adequate appreciation of what happened to a human life that day.

But let us then resume our discussion of our most crucial point here. In fact, if anyone ever had the evil intention of dealing an annihilating blow against the traditional prestige of the faculty of abstraction in our culture, then this certainly does not--on first views, at least--look too encouraging. And still more failing perhaps

would his moral courage be to carry on his "holy" war against the "tyranny" of abstractions in human life, if he could hear the reports contained in a series of lectures given at Harvard University in 1938-39. Here Kurt Goldstein produced the results of his investigations regarding certain "concrete" versus "abstract" attitudes of the human mind, as revealed through psycho-pathological cases, resulting from lesions of the brain.[3] Let us note the cases in evidence:

The sense of concrete realities was seen to remain unimpaired here in some cases where the "abstract attitude" had been considerably injured. The difference that had taken place in such persons was clearly visible as soon as they were placed face to face with certain problems of quite everyday human situations. What kind of problems? Conserving Plato's formulation, one might say problems demanding the "liberation" of the mind from the concrete situation of the particular case. For instance, the patient in question might be perfectly able to drink water out of a glass when asked to do so. But given an empty glass, and asked to show how drinking is done "in general", he suddenly becomes helpless. Another patient is given a hammer and a piece of wood. Then he is asked how he would drive in a nail--if he had one. But alas, in the concrete situation of the moment he does not have one. That is sufficient to make the whole performance impossible to the poor fellow.

Now suppose we were quite hopelessly hardened denunciators of abstractions of any kind in our culture, and equally biased glorifiers of the sense of the concrete in human lives. Then we might

still be audacious enough to object in the present case, "Well, the loss is not so serious. I am really far more sorry for the so-called normal persons who drink imaginary water and drive in nails which have never existed. They must be the real silly-billies, and should be duly pitied. Goldstein's patients are the true realists."

This would not testify in favour of our sober-minded reasoning. For here there is no running away from the sensible facts. Illness and anomaly can certainly not bring any person closer to the ideal of sound totality in human life. The damage caused to those unfortunate patients was fatefully real. And so were the resulting deficiencies.

We may still pay Plato the honour and the acknowledgement of having provided an adequate formulation to this evil: these poor patients were simply no more able "to raise themselves above" the realms of the concrete and the particular. Their minds were precluded from stretching themselves up towards the regions of the abstract and the general. And let us not reduce the extent of this misfortune. To these men's lives it meant a serious loss of something in their deepest humanity.

In fact, Goldstein will make that painfully clear to us through another example of the most pathetic implications, and therefore demanding our particular consideration and serious discussion.

One patient observed by the investigator never appeared to be concerned about his family. He never spoke about his wife or his

children. The wardens would sometimes suggest that he write a letter home. His response was one of total indifference. In fact his feelings on the subject seemed to be absolutely obtuse.

From time to time, however, he was sent home to visit his family and was allowed to stay at home for a few days. On such occasions he invariably behaved like a normal husband at the family hearth. He was kind and affectionate to his wife and children, and as much interested in their affairs as his mental abilities would allow.

But after such a visit, as soon as he had returned to the hospital--and was asked about his "dear ones" at home--he once more stood there with just a confused smile on his face and evasive answers to all questions. He seemed a perfect stranger to his own family situation. But obviously there was no actual habitation of the man's feelings. No, he simply could not imagine the situation of his home life if he was not literally there. According the corresponding feelings were not aroused either.

Goldstein was particularly struck by a total change taking place in such a patient's attitude towards the language--that teeming multitude of symbols. The words those patients had once learned would still be used in concrete connections. However, they had ceased to be symbols for ideas. They had almost completely lost their abstract significance. They were no longer used as signs for concepts, but only to denote the qualities of concrete things.

And now comes the great question which we cannot avoid, concerning that admirable symbol function in a human mind, as a medium of meaningful integration. One should keep in mind here the unique importance we have ascribed just to a person's orientation towards the reality surrounding him. This tacitly suggests an opposite alternative, a potential enclosure. And this is where the faculty of symbolic generalization comes to the aid of a human spirit, otherwise doomed to hopeless confinement and obstruction. It mysteriously widens the horizon of a living orientation in intellectual life. In fact, a sort of global enlargement of the panorama has taken place. If alterocentricity means spirituality, then this new orientation towards the exterior is certainly spiritual.

Our reader's surprise at our "conversion" may be understandable. What is this unexpected attitude we are taking here towards abstractions?

We have only held it necessary to consider the matter from all possible points of view, even the least promising one to our theory. So let us finally strike some sort of summary balance, a provisory balance.

It is simply every normal human being who seems to manifest a striking resemblance here with the idealist philosopher. That "miniature Plato" (namely, you or I) suddenly seizes those glorious wings of his inward being, rising majestically beyond the narrow boundaries in time and space, otherwise depressingly imposed upon

every pitiable spirit of a purely concrete intelligence. Is that not a definitely praiseworthy thing?

Not that the present moment, so dear and indispensable to the sober realists, is bound to suffer any fatal reduction of its usual significance. Nor do the immediate surroundings of his native environment thereby become any less decisive for his orientation and his happiness as an individual among other individuals. The only thing is that certain new regions, or dimensions, have been added to the old ones. And the noticeable fact about those dimensions is that they have been added precisely for the purpose of facilitating an alterocentric type of flight. That flight is exterior and interior at the same time. It is total.

And, of course, one capital fact should henceforth be admitted frankly and never be insidiously bypassed: an abstraction, of some sort or other, is indispensable for man's realization of his deepest values.

So it becomes imperative to ask with renewed seriousness an old question: What are, after all, those "prison walls" of the concrete and the particular that manage to keep a human soul in bondage, at least in cases of illness and abnormal functioning? And what is the real nature of that sublime flight that liberates man from such bondage?

Have we arrived at this extremity then, in the end, that a Platonic liberation becomes our only way out? Is that time-honoured philosophical type of "liberation" after all our imperative necessity,

our only avenue towards a totality enabling man to realize the fulness of his humanity?

To us, of course, it has been an axiom that this totality must needs include the spiritual values, spiritual precisely in our far-reaching sense of the term. But it was precisely here--let us admit it frankly--that a certain liberation proved to be the one great prerequisite. And how was that liberation realized in the minds of human beings? Solely through the blessed gift of the symbol! The abstracting activity inherent in the symbolical function revealed itself as a conditio sine qua non for the spiritual value!

How could the testimony of empirical data be more convincing! We certainly recall the tragic consequences provoked just by the absence of a certain "faculty of abstraction" in the life of a mentally sick husband and father: Nothing less than his sense of duty towards his wife and children was at stake. How could a deficiency of that magnitude be regarded as anything less than a tragedy in the spiritual sense!

And what is that tragic thing which is here seen to have happened to the wholeness of a normal man? A mutilation--simply a brutal cutting of the wings--the wings of the spirit! A whole world had suddenly and treacherously been taken away from that man. What world? His world out there and up there in the blue skies of his everyday human roamings, a world he had so recently been able to enjoy to the full. Now it was gone.

To be sure, he still had another world, his world down here, the world where his feet meet their ground. That too is a good world an indispensable world, a spiritual world, as well. For notice, we have all due respect for the realm of man's immediate obligations, his deeds and duties among things and people he may, at a given moment, see with his concrete vision, right in front of his own nose, the things and people he could not fail to perceive with all his literal senses, because he actually keeps stumbling right into them every minute of his busy day. This is to us an extremely real world, a definitely spiritual world, as we understand spirituality. Or how could there ever exist such a thing as "un-spiritual obligations" for a human being?

But should that prevent us from knowing the reality of a more distant world at the same time? Does not man have an existential need of a sense of obligation that may raise his vision far above that limited sphere of the things and people he keeps literally and corporeally "stumbling into"? Suppose his sense of duty stopped at this point! Suppose it did not extend beyond the door of his own little house, or beyond a community of fellow men he has to "bump into", in a quite literal sense, in order to see them! Then his moral world would, indeed, be a pitiably limited one. Fortunately this is not the normal case. Man is a moral being called upon to take his full responsibility in an infinitely extended world, a world of internal vision. He has sacred obligations towards a family numbering millions of men. So his gaze is bound to go out to an invisible crowd of anonymous beings: Humanity. For who are the men who need his personal aid most desperately? Perhaps just those

who, for the time being, happen to exist in his thoughts only--as "numbers in a series", as "members of a class". So what if his human vision does not include those invisible, but still frightfully real ones? Alas, what a tragic failure!

And above all, of course, he is obligated towards God, the eternally Invisible One. How could he count, and concretely perceive, the blessings, and the "counter-services", he owes to Him. How could he reach the moral spheres of this wonderful God without the highest faculties that God has given him? We are speaking, with admiration and awe, in terms of some mighty "wings" of the human mind.

To be sure, the human spirit has need of wings. How else should man even start fulfilling the sacred engagements, immeasurable in grandeur and infinite in number, which he really has, far beyond the limited sphere of his immediate concrete perception.

Man's mind needs wings quite particularly, we would say, in order to realize that total penitence (metanoia) which the Christian religion, with its unique spirituality, demands as an elementary attitude on the part of man, for every justification and every salvation. Of course we do not, there either, deny the primordial importance of the concrete and the immediate. Man must definitely give evidence of a spirit of true repentance right in the face of those evil actions of which he has rendered himself guilty here and now. But his sense of culpability ought to reach infinitely farther than that. It ought to encompass even the most secret offenses of his total

past. It ought to tremble in front of the dreadful eventualities of their remotest repercussions in an equally realistic future.

In short, everything keeps building up towards that looming tower of an inwardly searching tribunal trying the very honest--intellectual and otherwise--of our present thesis: How can we make all these new considerations compatible with the general trend of our previous view-point regarding abstractions? After this, just how should abstractions really be valued in a spiritual world, a world of human totality? In view of the simplest empirical facts brought out by modern science, can we defend our old theory and still remain consistent?

Yes, we sincerely believe that a course of perfect consistency can be maintained all the way along. And the solution is easy to find. To some it may seem too easy. But we definitely do not think it is either superficial or farfetched in any way.

Well, we have simply come to the conclusion that there must be two very different forms of abstraction.

Is this "dichotomy" we suddenly recommend here, in our turn, simply the old pattern of philosophical history as we have hitherto described it, and condemned it? Is it the common trick of cunning demagogues, that is, of history, by and large: divide et impera!

We believe not. In fact, the insidious peril, demonstrated by the history of ideas, consists not only in the temptation to force apart

what naturally belongs together, but also the temptation to force together what naturally falls apart. So sometimes particular efforts should be made precisely in order to separate, to make realistic distinctions.

But abstraction is abstraction, one may object; and symbol is symbol. How can anything there "naturally fall apart"?

Let us try to explain why we feel pretty convinced that abstraction and abstraction--as one commonly, and sometimes rather carelessly, tends to use the term--have the curious lot of being, at least, two fairly different things.

Already that clinical study undertaken by Goldstein gave us some intimations pointing definitely in this direction. For please consult your own sound sense of human values: What is the real nature of an "abstracting faculty" anyone would expect to find in a husband and a father? What mental image, or "winged idea" do we think that even that father in the hospital ought to have had, of his dear ones at home, if he had been mentally well? Is it some fantastic, ingenious perspicacity we demand here? No, it is just the simple degree of imagination that could have been expected in any typically naive and normally outward-oriented mind! Notice this: it is nothing but the image-forming faculty we expect in the mind of any genuine child! I would even venture to say: quite particularly in such childlike minds. For please keep this simple fact in mind: here there is no question at all of any rare introspective faculty in man, some theoretical idea, elaborately concocted through the subtle

detours of an exceptional ruminative type of intelligence. No, no. What was demanded was nothing but the simple instinct of an ordinary parent or mate. And, as far as we know, this has never assumed the presence of any particular genius of abstract thinking as an indispensable prerequisite.

If you need any piece of special evidence for that, then here is one that ought to convince you: even an "unintelligent" animal, separated from its special mate and its young ones, will feel visibly miserable until it has finally been reunited with those congenial ones to whom it is so strongly attached. And it does reach them, in the end, sometimes even over vast distances and through a maze of serious hindrances. So vivid, then, is the "vision of the invisible" even in a dumb beast; but notice, a beast remaining harmonious with the totality of its being, exactly as living nature has provided it!

And now to another case of that same experimental evidence with which we think our theory ought to find its adequate trial and its possible corrective. What about that imaginary nail which some patients were asked to drive into a piece of wood? Well, even that is not, obviously enough, really comparable to any degree of philosophical rumination of the Platonic or Aristotelian type! In fact, that game has nothing to do at all with the philosophizing trend. It is miles away from abstraction, in terms of that typical endowment which constitutes the fundamental prerequisite for a mind of the properly speculative bent--or of the properly scientific bent; we mean a bent towards pure speculation--or a bent towards pure science.

On the contrary, the most un-philosophical and un-scientific being we know, namely a little child, would grasp immediately that idea there which Goldstein's patients completely failed to grasp. To tell the truth, he would simply love to play that wonderfully childlike play of some make-believe nail being there all the time. In fact, where in the world would you find a sound and normal boy who would not put his whole soul into the task of "driving in" any number you might ask of imaginary nails, even into an entirely imaginary piece of wood, and with nothing but an entirely imaginary hammer also!

And as for drinking water out of that empty glass we mentioned, or even no glass at all, just he would prove a past expert in any such practice. In fact, the more soundly childlike he happened to be, the better would he be at it.

Therefore such a child is also infinitely better qualified for seeing certain types of an invisible world. We say "certain types"; for to be sure, this must be a world definitely different from that of the professor in mathematics. Above all, it must be a world infinitely more true to life. That is: the world of the heart. And we do not hesitate to add: the world of the spirit; that is, a world extending its realms even unto God--to some the most real, to others the most un-real of all things!

According to our theory the most "spiritually seeing" is the one who is able to see the Highest (God)--or the hand of God--in the most lowly things.

In short, our conviction remains unwaveringly the same: the spiritual world is infinitely more related to the world of the concrete than most people believe; and infinitely less related to the abstract than most people believe. Of course, we are here thinking of abstraction in the traditional sense of a purely theoretical and a more or less ruminative tendency. And we are thinking of spirituality in the sense of the Christian Gospel. If the real, intimate relationship were rather one between true spirituality and learned speculation, then how on earth could Christianity ever, from its earliest beginnings, have appointed just the Child as the model among men with respect to spiritual excellence?

And now the symbol again: Why is religious life and religious literature simply teeming with symbols?

Symbols may be the most graphic and the most naive thing of the world. We cannot help thinking of the extensive use Christ made of symbols in His religious ministry. The Saviour Himself, by the way, is symbolized as a Lamb. That is certainly a symbolism destined to appeal to the imaginative faculties of the most simple minds.

But please pass now to mathematics, for instance, with its symbols of x, y, and z. Those are, indeed, very different symbols,

appealing to very different types of minds. In the former case the aim was a more graphical, a more popular, a more immediately understandable representation--in fact, even a certain concretization of the idea one might wish to convey. In the latter case, there is, on the contrary, a generalizing and truly abstracting method, serving the aims of pure scientific speculation.

At the same time it may not be irrelevant to remind the reader that there is a "symbolism" presenting itself in some schools of art today. This symbolism certainly does not always appear to be made for the sake of the "poor in spirit"; its heartfelt concern can hardly be that they may thus obtain an immediate vision of the values which their childlike minds might not otherwise be sufficiently subtle to grasp. On the contrary, one should think that the point is to make things more complicated--for the sake of complication as a goal in itself.

Indeed, the student of totality in human life will soon enough discover that what man calls "symbolism" is a rather multifarious phenomenon.

Notes:

1. Harald K. Schjelderup: Innforing i psykologi, 1958, p. 148.
2. Ernst Cassirer: An Essay on Man, 1944.
3. Published in 19under title: Human Nature in the Light of Psychopathology.

Chapter 27

Is There an "Epistemological Duality" Even in the Child's Mind?

Let us call the reader's attention to another case in which we find an essential difference between "two kinds of abstraction". That they simply must be different is once more evidenced by this: one of them is wonderfully compatible with the simplicity of a child's mind. Thus it proves to be immediate and natural. The other is farfetched and artificial, rather than naive and natural. Therefore no genuine child has ever wasted a minute of his time trying to catch hold of it.

We have been struck by the failure in some of the most acute and eminent reviewers of philosophical history to pay any attention to this essential distinction.

Love-joy, after his masterful historical description of what one might almost be tempted to call the breakdown of the "Revolt against Dualism" in our century (discussed later in this work), gives a brief discussion, at the end of his book, about memory as an evidence of epistemological dualism in almost any man's mind.

In all kinds of retrospective mental activity there is obviously a conscious and intrinsic reference to a reality other than the content given.

Of course, merely to perceive a thing does not necessarily imply that the perceiver must be conscious of a duality between what is actually perceived by the senses and what--objectively, as the scientific phrase goes--should have been perceived, if the perceiver in question had been able to reach the underlying "scientific reality" of his perception. At least we definitely know the ordinary child to be perfectly undisturbed by any philosophical troubles of that order.

And now what about simple remembrance--when you call back to your mind in the present what really happened in the past? Well, Lovejoy claims that this is a case of "dualism", affecting even the child's mind. In fact, in his opinion, a certain epistemological dualism is inevitable to any man in this case.

Let us accept his suggestion so far: a person brings to mind the look of a dog he owned way back in his childhood. Here there is something of a "canine sort" immediately present to--and therefore compresent with--his consciousness. But that is certainly not the dog of flesh and blood which, in those bygone days, used to stand right in front of him, and has since caused that very picture in his memory. In fact, any kind of retrospection is a "case in which the duality of the (concrete) datum and the thing (imaginatively) known is immediately manifest". And everyone who says "I remember", using those words in their natural familiar sense, is "bearing witness to the possibility of a mediate and representative knowledge".[1] The grown-up man who looks back at this childhood memories is perfectly aware of the fact that it is a matter of "two different dogs" as it were.

In other words, Lovejoy points out nothing less than a sort of common human "dualism" here between the actually existent object and the imaginal object of memory!

But, from the viewpoint of totality in human life, there must certainly be an infinite distance from that dualism (if one insists upon calling it dualism) to the classical epistemological dualism (between the socalled "real" object of science and the immediately perceived object of our everyday experience). The latter is a dualism we have qualified as disruptive, whereas we would never venture to apply any such negative epithet to the former. Are we right or wrong in treating the two so differently?

Once more the child's reaction becomes, to us, the most reliable criterion available to us. Does the child's behaviour indicate that his mind undergoes some kind of disruption at the moment of that mysterious transition--from, on one hand, a "diving down" into the "dreamland" of memories, to, on the other hand, a "merging up" into the "realistic country" of objective knowledge and historical facts? Or also, of course, is it not possible that he may travel in the opposite direction?

Now, in children there is obviously no lack of vivid imaginary pictures of past events they have experienced. The child actually portrays, right in front of him, the cute dog he happened to meet some time ago. But our question should be, of course: How does he react at the moment when you have the pedantic sternness of

"calling his mind back to order"; that is of cutting short his "dreams", saying, "Come here, my boy, you do realize, after all, that no dog is actually standing right there in front of you any longer--excitedly barking and wagging his tail as you describe him. That dog has been dead for two years now!

Will that boy be scandalized at your sudden intervention as a representative of sober-minded realism and stern historicity? Not in the least. You may haul him out from his "mood of memories" without any risk of being looked upon as a pedant for that matter, or as in any way an unreasonable person, or as a downright nuisance. No--no, for you see that boy is a passionate realist in spite of his dreams. In fact, reality has an appeal to him just as strong as his "dreams". So he is prepared at any moment to render a spontaneous account of his "duplicity". He will inform you that he does distinguish, himself already, perfectly well between "two dogs": on one hand the dog in flesh and blood he saw with his real eyes two years ago, and, on the other, the dog he sees with his "mnemonic eye" today. We said, "He distinguishes": to be sure, in his moments of stern realism he does. For although the "play mood" part of him has a dog still, whom his prolific memory, or daydream, loves to fondle as being there right now, he can merge into the realms of reality at a moment's notice, and without any visible pain. In fact, there is astonishingly little of either painful resentment or stubborn refutation in his attitude towards the sudden call back to the realms of an "outward reality", the glaring world of "daylight facts".

But now please pass on to a very different experiment with the same child: put into the arsenal of your attack against his sound mind, the epistemological doubts of subtle philosophy. Just try to insinuate into his thinking the weird idea, devised by speculative philosophy and pure science, that the dog he sees right in front of him, the dog in flesh and blood--"is not, perhaps, the real dog at all"!

What will be your boy's immediate reaction to that onslaught? The most probable bet is that the same child will then look at you with an air of sincere surprise, maybe active disapproval, also. Perhaps some real confusion will be the final sum of his reaction, as he asks himself the following question: Is this serious-looking adult, standing in front of me, just making a good joke? Or is he somewhat "off the beam"? Or, is he just wickedly planning to make a fool of me?

We have brought in the matter of epistemological dualism just in order to point out what the child's playful deviation from the realms of stern realism is not like. If this is the weird way grown-up persons "play", when they feel like taking some moments off from the greyness of everyday truth, then what is the play of the real player, the little child, like? In fact, the images his mind produces in his play, properly speaking, are not greatly different from those produced in his memories. Of course, one may call the process taking place in either case an "abstraction". But then one must not forget that this abstraction differs widely from that of the philosopher or of the pure scientist in one important respect: it has the property of completing (complementing) the person's totality. It

never tended to break that totality up. The deepest spirit of the child's play is hardly ever at war with his spirit of reality. One is rather just a complement to the other, and the transitions are remarkable in their gentleness.

One peculiarity seems to stand out particularly in the viability "mechanism" of soundly childlike minds, or "naive" minds, regardless of sex and age: their fancies and peculiar type of "day-dreams" will often help them wonderfully to just "play the game"; in this we do not fail to include "the game of life", which does not, otherwise, have the reputation of being just a "child's play", does it? Occasionally that "second department" of the childlike person's world (his "world of the play") may be seen to include the strangest "stuff", or what natural science would call "strange stuff" anyway. It may be peopled with personae in the original sense of "actors on the scene", for instance a beloved relative, perhaps one that has been dead for years; but in the sublunary world of memories he is still wonderfully alive. According to the elementary rules of the "game", he is right there. And mystery of mysteries: the influence this imaginary person exerts in the authentic life of the "player", or "dreamer", may be of an impressive realism, indeed.

But notice, above all, this little detail, which does not apply to any type of spiritualism: in spite of all those phantasms, put on the stage by an adult who has never ceased to play his childlike game, this eternally youthful player will still keep at abeyance, for full presentation at a moment's notice, the perfect awareness of "another

reality". The relative who died, is really dead, after all, with all that death actually implies to any unshakable realist!

The same "duplicity" obviously holds true for the fancy games of the little child, properly speaking, in that he too keeps at constant abeyance--in some "other layer" of his consciousness, as it were--"another world", a real world, and real in a different way. And that "differently real" world proves to be there, at the very outskirts of his world of dream or play. It actually seems to keep bordering on the world of dream and play all along. In all events, at the briefest delay, he can plunge himself into the cold waters of the "more real" reality. The change (or waking up) is perpetrated without the slightest hesitation, nor the slightest confusion, for that young "jongleur of the two worlds" never mistakes one for the other. On the contrary he wanders with the sure step of a somnambulist back and forth between them. His passing from one to the other happens with the masterfulness, or rather the nonchalance with which other people change their shirts. Briefly stated, as far as we can see, there is not much in that "dualism" there that betrays any serious disintegration. There is not the faintest risk of any fateful disruption.

So let us rather speak about a perfectly natural human duality, strikingly integrated in the basic structure of every sound totality characterizing the Child. And let us particularly notice: simply nowhere, even in the deepest recesses of this childish mind, will the researcher find any place for a perturbing doubt about man's ability to grasp the essential reality of the world surrounding him, to grasp it with his common senses here and now.

Note:

1. Arthur O. Lovejoy: The Revolt against Dualism, 1930, p. 306.

Chapter 28

A Remarkable Attitude Towards the Individual in Medieval Thought

Let us now--with this preparation--resume our discussion on totality in the Middle Ages. Individualism and personalism is here a topic of capital interest to our study.

On first view, that topic may seem to present very serious problems and considerable ambiguity. But we shall soon see how the problematic and the ambiguous dissolve in a most striking way.

We have recently considered the extreme universality of medieval standards and a forceful trend towards unity. There was an almost fabulous capacity of fitting everything into the same roomy framework. Scholasticism is not the least eloquent example here. Thomas Aquinas and Averroes were certainly strong antagonists. But that does not prevent them from entering the same great system of thought.

One explanation of this extraordinary universality and roominess, however, is just the following: there exists a strange impersonalism in medieval philosophy. Of course, that does not sound too promising for the prospects of the individual, does it? But notice, also, our adjective strange in front of the word impersonalism. Of what does the strangeness consist?

A certain anonymity seems to have been the unwritten law of scholastic philosophy. In fact, this is a characteristic of the Middle Ages by and large. For instance, autobiographical disclosures of the secret depth of personal life experiences are practically unknown. Here you may of course throw up the cases of Augustine and Abelard. But they are sensational exceptions in medieval literature. The great rule is the strictly impersonal (anonymous).

What connection can there be between this and the genuinely naive? For, in fact, the only thing the child loves is the personal. The only thing he understands at all is the personal.

Well, here too we must make an appropriate distinction: there is more than one kind of impersonalism. There is more than one kind of personalism also. Moreover, the "child" about whom we are speaking, in connection with the Middle Ages--and in connection with totality in its supreme flowering--that is the Christian child. Naiveté here implies a certain self-deletion. Such self-deletion was still fairly common to the Middle Ages. It has to do with a wonderful ability in medieval man, the ability to incorporate oneself into a larger entity--falling into line and subserving the purposes of the entire social frame--to forget oneself in the others! If we may ever speak about an alterocentric type of impersonalism, then this is it.

Here one striking feature should be noticed. Medieval philosophy has its own original conception of the way Truth is acquired and built up: to reveal Truth is a gigantic affair of co-

operation. Truth is too enormous and too universal a phenomenon to be acquired by individuals first and foremost. It is conceived as a vast edifice built up gradually and co-operatively. If any participant in this gigantic task of co-operation should manifest a spirit of exaggerated and misunderstood individualism or independence, he is useless in the great Corporation of Truth-seeking.

And now please decide for yourself: is it a spirit of narrow-minded, egoistic isolation or a spirit of generosity and active fellowship that manifests itself in this idea, "The truth and the knowledge that expresses it, is not considered--by the Middle Ages--as the personal property of him who finds it. It is a great common patrimony, which passes from one generation to the other."

We should think that this is the genuine co-operativeness of the enthusiastic child! Or should we say, of a mother, wonderfully endowed with the strongest generic feelings. There is, in this, a humble consciousness of the sacred efforts of innumerable predecessors. Thanks to their conscientious and faithful endeavour, the stock was made a little larger every day--and a little more perfect every day. Indeed, that ought to be a very sound and a very noble means of human progress. Roger Bacon describes it thus:

For always the followers added something to the works of their predecessors. Many things they corrected, and still more things they changed, as that clearly appears through Aristotle, who extensively discussed all the statements of preceding authors. Further, Avicenna and Averroes, in their turn, corrected several of his statements.[1]

What could be more descriptive of the conscientious, self-forgetting labour of medieval scholars? Right in the midst of a restless urge to change and correct all the time, there is an admirable modesty and docility. No place is left for a desire to outshine the others, or to bask in the sunbeams reflected back from a world of spectators (a world of "fans"). The individual investigator in the Middle Ages had to be satisfied with living and dying in obscurity. He is an anonymous number in the great multitude that counts.

But is there not in this, you might ask, a sad lack of personalism, a lack which must be highly detrimental to any fresh unfolding of the truly human?

Well, if by personalism one insists on meaning the tendency to throw one's own person into relief on every possible occasion, then we can hardly believe that this constitutes any serious loss. We would dare to characterize it as a dubious modern form of personalism. It is probably not a feature which has meant any enviable increase of human totality in the intellectual world of Occidental culture since the days of the Middle Ages.

Or do we mean by personalism the spirit of negation? Yes, there is a conspicuous lack of that, as well, in scholastic philosophy. In fact, what a striking contrast to what was to take place in modern times! Obviously philosophers of a very different mood were destined here to enter upon the scene. For frankly, where is now the childlike eagerness to contribute one's little part, we mean that great medieval eagerness to continue building on the foundation laid by

one's honourable predecessors? The student of modern philosophy has, on the contrary, been obliged to accustom himself to a very opposite trait as an almost self-evident and inevitable one: every new god on the throne of wisdom starts his reign by simply tearing down every possible trace of an earlier philosophical foundation. His primary concern is obviously to find place for his own quite original and entirely independent theories. His irreverent greeting to his predecessors seems to be something like the colloquial French saying, "Get out of there so I can do it." If this is personalism in the modern sense, then medieval philosophy may have been fortunate not to have known it.

The method of the medieval thinker, it is true, may appear considerably less exciting or captivating. In fact, it is a very slow and very inconspicuous method. But, in return, it gives witness that this humble builder had the calm, confident feeling, at the bottom of his heart, of building for eternity, and for the common benefit of a whole world.

And, by the way, where is the sensible spectator who turns his curious eyes towards the theatre of speculative thinking if he is anxious to find just exciting sensations? Speculative philosophy has never and nowhere been a gold mine for fascinating studies in the strange reactions of internal human life. The historian who is heading for the fascinating examples of psychological intimacy in medieval life, should look for that in the mystics rather than in the representatives of speculative thought.

Nevertheless, just in that thought, we shall, in our next chapter, focus our attention on some most convincing features of the individual and the personal in the Middle Ages. But, first of all, we have found it necessary to connect the idea of the individual with the idea of the meaningful. What then, makes this connection inevitable?

As we go forward through the history of totality in human life, we shall ever realize this more clearly: a confident belief in the reality of the human value of the particular (or the individual)--as an essential value besides the general--makes for totality in the deepest sense. Conversely, a belief in the reality of the general (here also called the species)--as the only and exclusive value--makes for disruption of the most radical and the most hopeless type.

Note:

1. Bacon: Opus Majus, pars. I, c. 6.: Nam semper posteriores addiderunt ad opera priorum, et multa correxerunt, et plura mutaverunt, sicut patet per Aristotelem, maxine qui omnes sententias praetercedentium discussit. Et etiam Avicenna et Averroes plura de dictis ejus correxerunt.

Chapter 29

Radiant Glimpses of Alterocentric Personalism in the Middle Ages

What is then, profoundly considered, the over-all attitude of the Middle Ages towards the individual? Is there a poor appreciation of the alterocentric value we have found to be inseparable from personalism and individuality?

No. We think such a statement would be a gross misrepresentation of the actual facts of the history of medieval thought. Sincerely, how could the immediate forefathers of the Renaissance heroes be poor individualists? We would rather say, it was that bud of a definite individualism inherent right in the Middle Ages which was finally to burst out into full blossom in the Renaissance.

The problem of individuation, we know, has a very peculiar significance in the philosophy of scholasticism. The scholastics were quite conscious of the problem. By the way, the very fact that one envisaged it from a problematic angle, is not a sign of natural individualism; at least, however, it could be the sign of an aspiration towards individualism.

Anyway, the schoolmen were vividly conscious of the question of why there are such an infinite number of individual oaks, for instance. All those oaks have exactly the same substantial

perfection. They have the substantial perfection of the one forma querci. Is it then necessary--nay, is it reasonable even--that all those distinct individualities should exist? In fact, the existence of just one single representative of each form would mean a very great simplicity. Not of any single kind would there then be two corporeal beings. And still there would be a differing scale of perfection. One thing would differ from another thing as all forms differ; that is, for instance, as the number 3 differs from the number 4.

This is of course an experiment of thought which provides a rather startling conception of the world, seen with the eyes of common men. Every man is not a Thomas Aquinas or a Leibniz (inventors of the monad theory); fortunately not, we are tempted to say.

We are of course greatly interested in knowing what solution the great Christian philosopher in the Middle Ages, Thomas Aquinas, provided for that problem of individuation. But let us first point out a general fact, which certainly has to be admitted: there is, in the thinking of these ages as a whole, a tremendous consciousness of the value and importance of just species. We do not doubt that this stems from pagan philosophy, rather than from Christian wisdom. One thing about it, nevertheless, actually has its origin in Christianity: namely, the special interpretation which is given to the idea that the greater the variety of essences populating this universe, the more weighty is the evidence of the inherent perfection of it all, and also the perfection of God, its Creator. This is a constant refrain

down through the history of ideas, reaching its climax in the famous theodicies of philosophers in modern times. The importance of the individual is not emphasized nearly as much. He must content himself, poor creature, with living in the shadow of that primordial admiration for species!

The goodness of the species transcends the goodness of the individual, as form transcends matter; therefore the multiplication of species is a greater addition to the good of the universe than the multiplication of individuals of a single species. (Thomas Aquinas, Summa contra gentiles, I, 81)

We have a misgiving that here the influence upon the great Doctor Angelicus is more from Aristotle than from the Gospel. His conviction regarding the total transcendence and superiority of the Form leads him to statements which might startle many an unphilosophical Christian. "An angel is better than a stone," he admits. But that is no reason why one should believe that "two angels are better than one angel and a stone". For, he argues, "although an angel, considered absolutely, is better than a stone, nevertheless two natures are better than one only" (Ibid., III, 71).

But let us go somewhat more deeply into the attitude of the great Dominican philosopher towards the individual, and, first of all, his theory of individuation. As a disciple of Aristotle he certainly does not have any serious prejudice against matter. And what is the principle of individuation? It is just signate matter. Only if there had been no matter (that is: no quality of extension), there would have

been no reason for several individuals of the same kind to exist in this world.

For the substantial form, in itself, is not only indifferent to the reduplication of individual beings, but even foreign to it. "Forma irrecepta est illimitata." But we know what happens to that unlimited form, when the individual comes into existence: the individual means a limitation. The form is "forced" to unite with matter in order to exist (that is, to take on extended existence). At the same moment its unlimited quality is gone. It has limited itself--instead of retaining eternally, within itself, all its capacities of realization.

However, that limitation which has taken place is by no means unfavorable to totality, in our human and alterocentric sense of the term. For just where the line of limitation of one oak--or of one human individual--goes, that is exactly where there is made place for another oak--or another man!

The vast difference it then makes whether a being has corporeal character or no corporeal character becomes obvious; and we must sincerely wonder how an Aristotelian, and an Aristotelian with such a theory of individuation, could really manage to assimilate the dogma of an immortal human soul, a dogma firmly established in the Church at that time.

If any created beings should exist at all without corporeal attributes (that is, beings who are pure forms, for instance "pure

intelligences"), then the possibility of a duplication in the case of such beings must absolutely be excluded.

Let us take an example: the angels were often conceived of as incorporeal, as sort of pure spirits. Theoretically, then, there should be no possibility whatsoever for two such beings to exist side by side as "two individuals of the same form", or shall we say two "brothers of the same family", as we think of "brothers" and "families". In fact, in order to exist at all those two angels would have to differ from each other as, for instance, forma querci differs from forma betulae, or as forma hominis differs from forma simiae, if you don"t mind the choice of example.

Not that there need be any lack of individuality in those pure forms, as far as Thomas's theory goes. Matter was described as the principle of individuation, it is true. But it is not the condition of individuality. For the problem of individuality is not the same as the problem of individuation.

It is not true that the separate substance is not one single being and a certain individual; otherwise it would not have a certain function.[1]

Only individuation--which is a restriction of individuality--implies that limitation known by all normal individual beings.

But what now is Thomas's conception of the individual being we call man, the real object of our anthropological study? Concerning

that being he is clear and does not waver: man finds his reality and his life in one thing only; that is the perfect union of a body and a soul, the most intimate combination of primary matter and substantial form. The soul and the body complete each other and permeate each other. Thomas is very close here to Aristotle, and very far from Plato. To him, a human soul united with a human body is the most natural thing in the world.

There is no reason whatsoever to represent that union of the soul with physical matter as an unnatural or in any way undignified state, as Plato had tended to do. Thomas's vision of the destiny of the human soul here below is not the sad one which Plato in the Republic could only compare to that of the sea god Glaucus, whose dignified figure could hardly be recognized any longer under the grimy accretions of seaweed and hideous reptiles. No, to Thomas it is not necessarily the body that mars the beauty of the soul. According to his anthropology, the soul certainly does not resent its union with the body. On the contrary, it could not perform a single one of its activities without the precious aid it receives every moment from that body.

So that blessed "principle of individuation"--the materia signata--seen with the Dominican philosopher's eyes is far from being an unworthy thing. The existence of a full human being is willed by God. The individual is in accordance with the Creator's original plan.

On the other hand, the human individual is certainly not sufficient in himself. He, too, must find his greater unit. Social life is God's perfect plan for the realization of human happiness. A solitary individual will soon find himself cut off from both the material and the spiritual blessings necessary in order that he may reach the goal his Creator has set for him.

But, above all, do not believe that Thomas is likely to let the individual be swallowed up by the society, find his only goal in it, the individual existing merely for the sake of the society. Notice rather the interesting viewpoint this, shall we say, medieval individualist adopts, when he evaluates those two units, one placed beside the other:

Man naturally becomes member of a group (pars multitudinis), and the purpose is that he may be assured the means of living well. He needs this assistance for two reasons: First, in order that he may obtain the elementary necessities of life. This he does in the domestic circle of which he is a part. Every man receives from his parents life, nourishment, and education. And the reciprocal aid of the family members facilitates the mutual provision of the necessities of life. But there is also a second reason why the individual is helped by the group of which he is a part, and in which alone he finds his adequate well-being, and this is that he may not only live, but live the good life, which he is enabled to do by the opportunities of social intercourse. Thus civil society aids the individual in obtaining the material necessities, by uniting, in the

same city, a great number of crafts, which could not be so united in the same family. And civil society also assists him in the moral.[2]

It is an old and very important question in the history of ideas, "Does the individual exist for the sake of his community, or does the community exist for the sake of the individual?" In the passage above, Thomas does not leave much doubt as to which of the two primarily serves and which is primarily being served.

But does he really mean that all those various functions carried out by the community have just one aim, the well-being of the individual? And one more pointed question: Is this idea of a definite priority of the individual over the community a principle which has been generally accepted by scholasticism? Is it even a characteristic of the Middle Ages as a whole? If that is true--or at least partially true--then something new must have developed in the consciousness of mankind.

If Thomas has such ideas, they are hardly part of the patrimony handed directly down to him from his master Aristotle. For to Aristotle the state is still an end in itself. The end of the individual is simply subordinated to that higher end. In other words, Aristotle is still an ancient Greek. In his opinion, the virtue above all virtues is the civic virtue. To increase that and to be first and foremost a good citizen, is the prime duty of man.

But let us again quote Thomas Aquinas:

The purpose of the larger group should be the same as that of the individual man.[3]

That does not seem to be far from Dante's direct statement:

For the citizens do not exist for the sake of their consuls. And the people does not exist for the sake of the king.[4]

On the contrary, those representatives of the great community exist for the purpose of administering to the individuals of which that community is composed!

In the ethics of scholastic philosophy this principle is taken to apply to all collective groups. The same sacred duty rests upon the family (domus), the village (vicus), the city (civitas), and the province (provincia)--or the kingdom (regnum), if we keep to Dante's terms. They must know that every man has an inviolable individuality and a personal destiny. The collective group is there simply to help him realize his happiness as an individual. And this rule is not different for the religious groups: the parish, the church, the bishopric, and finally the whole Catholic Church. They all have one raison d"être. Whether or not they are to be justified in their existence depends on the answer to this question: Do they accomplish any good for their members?

This previously unheard-of prestige of the individual is something very legitimate. But it has come to the Middle Ages from one single source: Christianity. For it is only in Christianity that

each intelligent creature possesses a position of unique responsibility towards its Creator. In fact, creation--an unknown phenomenon to philosophical paganism of any kind--is always a creation of the individual. Nothing whatsoever in the collective unit (even in its most sacred position before God) could ever be compared to that sanctuary of a unique dialogue which the individual consciousness is privileged to enjoy with the Father.

Notes:

1. De unitate intellectus contra Averroistas, edit. Parme, 1865, Vol. XVI, p. 221: Non est verum quod substantia separata non sit singularis et individuum aliquod; alioquin non haberet aliquam operationem.
2. Comments on Ethica Nicom., Lib. I.
3. De Regimine Principum, Lib. I, cap, 14. The original text says: Opportet eundem finem esse multitudinis humanae qui est hominis unius.
4. De Monarchia, Lib. I: Non enim cives propter consules, nec gens propter regem, sed e converso.

Chapter 30

Thomas's Remarkable Attitude Towards a Forceful Myth

We are referring to a myth which certainly had its source in Platonic philosophy. But this does not necessarily mean that it is mainly an "ancient" myth. It may have come to a position of true "honour" and "dignity" only in modern times. That would seem a natural evolution. For ideas, too, have their "evolution". Anyway, we are speaking about the myth of "the individual as the illusory value".

Today of course we need not climb to the top of the high masts of philosophy in order to feel the reverberations of that dogma. We may just stay on the "firm" ground of our sturdy men of science. And even the "man in the street" will eagerly nod his approval to them. For is not this today an unshakable "axiom"? Has it not been an unshakable axiom for millennia that "Nature is concerned about one thing: the well-being and survival of the species. It does not care one bit about the survival of the individual."

Here it should be remembered that "Nature", in our environment, often means "God". Not that, in our contemplation of nature, we necessarily have the habit of winding ourselves up to the sublime heights of a religious devotion. No, what happens to every one of us in this culture is that we say Nature because we are ashamed of saying God. For it is obviously nothing less than a shame in our tough Western milieu to "be religious". So, when we

come across something marvelous we want to describe from our sense experience, we carefully measure down our "excessive religiousness" to a tolerable level by using the "euphemistic" term "Nature".

In the present case, however, what ordinary men think they perceive so unmistakably in nature, hardly fills them with any ecstatic feelings of religiousness they need to "jack down".

Our "man in the street" is a convinced individualist (in his own peculiar way). He is not tempted to see any particular virtue in the assumed fact that Nature spurns him as an individual; he is instead sincerely sorry about this. He is not so much in love with the species that he admires nature for considering the survival of the species as the "only thing worthwhile".

But what about the "axiomatic certainty" of that conclusion as such? The historian of ideas can hardly help being impressed by the way that idea has managed to establish itself in the general thinking of this world. How did it come to happen that the species was to be hailed as the grand thing?

It must be permissible to consider this trend in terms of an inveterate dualism. For here there is a clear insistance upon separating two things whose separation is not at all a self-evident fact of empirical reality. On one hand we have the general idea of the species, on the other the specific reality of the individual

belonging to it. And, of these two, the species is immediately crowned as the "obviously superior"!

With what right is that done? Is it with the right of philosophy or with the right of natural science?

Let us see what attitude the great philosopher of the Middle Ages takes towards this crucial question. If he had been a disciple of Plato, we should hardly have been justified in entertaining any hope whatsoever that Thomas would have represented any element of a harmonious balance here. On the contrary, then we could hardly have expected him to possess any greater evaluation of the individual than did Plotinus. But Thomas is not the disciple of a spiritualist. He is the disciple of a biologist (moreover, he is of course above all a disciple of Christ). Anyway, his attitude is remarkable, as may be seen in the following synopsis.

Who can verify that nature's whole intention is set on the species? One might rather say that nature's intention is directed towards something higher than both the species and the individual; that is, something including both of them. In fact, her goal is nothing less than life itself. Thomas calls it "Incorruptibility". But undoubtedly this is one and the same thing.

Now, of course, in the pursuit of the lofty aim, it may easily appear--in a given case--as if nature had made the survival of the species her primary object. Everybody knows the very special case we are referring to. Everybody knows the conditions existing as far

as life is concerned--we mean life in our world at the present moment: individuals are corruptible!

Yet, there does remain one "hope", one little "consolation". To the biologist, that even appears as a considerable boon of consolation. There is one chance for a certain amount of incorruptibility--or for biological continuation--still left: the species has a fair possibility of being maintained. At least it has succeeded in maintaining itself so far. So nature eagerly seizes the one chance open to her [what else could she do?]: she saves the species.

But to pretend that this is her preference--and that it gives her full satisfaction--that is certainly a bold conclusion, as far as we can see. In fact, would not that be tantamount to making a postulate which we think no one but an obstinate Platonist would be inclined to make: "The highest form of life towards which any biology, under any circumstances, can be presumed to aspire, is, not the individual one, but most decidedly the generic one!"

Of course it is a fact that survival--here, today reaches no higher point than that of the species. But is that equal to proving that no higher point has ever been reached--or that no higher point can ever be reached in the future? This is a pagan assumption, an assumption just excluding the God of Christianity, the God of Creation and Redemption, the God of miraculous personal intervention in man's world. Thomas Aquinas, basing himself not only on the biological principle of Aristotle but also on those known to the Christian religion, as well as upon his own profound reasoning as an

independent philosopher, seems to have a very firm conviction, as far as nature's attitude towards the individual is concerned:

"Etiam ipsa individua sunt de principali intentione naturae"! (Even the individuals themselves are intended by nature.)

To be sure, Thomas is a man profoundly influenced by ancient philosophy. And we have shown that, in the last analysis, even Aristotle's philosophy is not so very far from Plato's dualism. Survival is reserved for the only thing really worthy of survival, namely, pure Soul, intellect in the sense of some perfect abstraction; this is not so very remote from Plato's Idea. And the closest our biological scientist has ever come to this is evidently the "species".

So we are not at all astonished that Thomas, disciple and great admirer of the biologist-philosopher Aristotle, states, a few lines above the one we have already quoted, that:

The chief purpose of nature is the good of the species. (Summa theologica I, 98, 1c, English transl. Benziger Brothers edit. 1947, Vol. I. pp. 492-493)

This is in perfect harmony with a preceding statement (Summa, I, 85,3):

Intentio naturae est ad speciem, non autem ad individuum, nec ad genus.

More extensively quoted: "Thus it is that the ultimate intention of nature is to the species, and not to the individual or the genus: because the form is the end of the generation, while matter is for the sake of the form" (Op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 492-493).

It is not difficult to see that this is the philosopher speaking.

But we must also listen to the "other" Thomas; that is, the Thomas so profoundly influenced by Christianity, the man who has learned to know the tremendous momentum of the individual. And no sooner has he started to speak than the following message comes through, a message which would have amazed Plato, and even Aristotle:

On the other hand, incorruptible substances survive, not only in the species, but also in the individual; wherefore even the individuals are included in the chief purpose of nature. (Etiam ipsa individua sunt de principali intentione nature.)

This was the original plan of the Creator Jesus Christ for his creatures, so Thomas's words express the triumphant victory, not only of a redemptive spirituality inherent in Christianity (carrying us all the way to the majestic eschatological act of the resurrection), but also at the same time, an equally triumphant victory of a simple everyday human realism, a realism of the ingenuous child: that is, the victory, in sound human minds, of the concrete individual, short and sweet, over the "species" as a theoretical abstraction: that is, the victory of a humble, human, commonsense recognition of individual

things as worthy realities, over some vain intellectualistic exclusiveness, recognizing abstract categories, only, as perfectly worthy.

To the Christian schoolman Thomas there existed, of course, only one solution, hitherto discovered, to the following problem: "How can life on this planet be truly perpetuated?" And that was the solution offered by biblical revelation, namely a resurrection. But where should he ever have heard about any such thing as a "Resurrection of whole species"? Excuse the absurdity of that question. The resurrection proclaimed by the Gospel was a resurrection of the individual, of course. For, just as human birth and human death, human sin and human redemption, are no collective matter, but an individual matter; thus resurrection, too, is a highly individual matter.

To be sure, the value and importance of the individual is not an invention of the Renaissance, as some seem to believe. A full appreciation of the individual is rather exactly as old as Christianity.

But is this pervading individualism a true characteristic of the Middle Ages? Has it pressed its stamp upon the whole period, upon its general history of ideas? You might as well ask, "Has Christianity pressed its stamp upon that period, upon the trend of its ideas?" Yes and no. As compared to modern times, definitely yes.

In his forceful description of "Le Personalisme Chrétien", a chapter of his Esprit de la Philosophie Médiévale, Etienne Gilson

has shown how it becomes an essential characteristic of the spirit of Christian philosophy in the Middle Ages to accentuate the value and prime importance of individual personality--both in the conception of the Godhead and in the conception of man in his relation to that Godhead.

One point is bound to receive principal emphasis in our study at this stage. What is the deeper attitude towards a spirit of alterocentricity and true totality in the Middle Ages, as compared to other epochs of human history?

Here we have come to the conclusion that Thomas, for instance, had something which may safely be taken as a genuine medieval characteristic in comparison with the increasing tendencies of more modern times. That brilliant genius of speculative intellect still had an implicit belief, of a veritable child, in something outside himself and higher than himself--something absolutely dependable, something absolutely perfect, something filling human life with true meaning.

We have mentioned the "individualist" Thomas and the "biologist" Thomas.

"Not much to boast of, that individualism there!" might be the sneering objection from some particularly independent spirit of the following period. The Renaissance, we know, despised almost everything in those preceding "dark" and "uncultivated" inter-regnum centuries, which they called the "Middle Ages".

"Not much to boast of that biology either!" might be the sneering objection of some advanced evolutionist of superior scientific training in the universities of hypermodern times.

Indeed, how could we leave Thomas Aquinas, the "mediocre individualist" and the "mediocre biologist" of the Middle Ages, without first comparing not his learning, but rather just his spirit to that of a much later period?

Of course, we could not expect the Middle Ages to have a learning approximately as elevated as that of modern times. But we could expect modern times to have a spirit approximately as elevated as that of the Middle Ages. Or should those values necessarily be in inverse ratio to each other?

Chapter 31

Human Totality Demands a Meaning in Life

This seems to be the right moment to give special discussion to the enlarged sense we have felt compelled to assume for totality in its human context--that is, a humanity inevitably determined by alterocentricity and spirituality.

In other words, we are envisioning the ideal of a man with the fullest implications of some self-transcendence on the human plane. That man, with the self-evident spiritual element that his God-given freedom implies, could never be imagined as contenting himself with a life devoid of meaning. Such confinement would be the diametrical opposite of totality. If we are at all to admit a certain self-transcendence as an essential endowment of the human being, then we are bound to include in that being the following fundamentals of the alterocentric trend: every single thing in the world of his choice, I mean the world he may choose to accept or reject, the world surrounding him and towards which he stretches himself out, is obliged to have a definite aim, a fullness of meaning. And it has that aim, that meaning, not in itself, but outside itself.

Would it then appear as something astonishing that life itself--the most far-reaching thing ever experienced--that this, too, is envisioned as necessarily having a definite meaning?

And now the important historical question, "What has been, in the turmoil of human ideas, the destiny history was seen to have in store for such a reaching out for meaningfulness in human life?" We might answer that the ideal of meaningfulness has had a history coinciding very much with that of the naiveté we have described as the spirit of the genuine child.

Of course naivete has never distinguished itself as particularly philosophical. It is rather fundamentally non-philosophical. So it is not precisely what one should expect to bump into in speculative thought, in any age of human history. But as we pass from century to century there is a visible trend for human ideas to grow harder, more "adult", more destitute of naive idealism. We shall have an opportunity to put the finger on specific manifestations of that development in history only by and by. But we may, already now, in recapitulating the past, foreshadow the future.

We have previously called attention to many a feature, in the philosophy of Aristotle, for instance, which we were obliged to characterize as simply alterocentric. And if we look quite openly at the philosophy of Plato, we shall have to admit one thing: even that famous idealism of his, however disrupted from the concrete realities of practical life--and however high-strung and exaggerated it may have been--to tell the truth, there is still something heartily and inspiringly naive about it, or, at least, comparatively naive. (A really hardened materialist of our advanced world today would probably say that it is ridiculously naive.) In fact, it is simply overflowing with a certain generosity of the human heart. We

imagine that this generosity is a feature every philosophy is bound to display, almost in spite of itself, in those special zones where it borders on religion. For Plato certainly had, even in the last analysis--and right in the midst of that theoretical abstractness of his elaborate idealism--some really spiritual elements. We mean spiritual even in a religious and truly human sense. That alterocentric spirituality may have been derived from a most personal contact with his great teacher Socrates, who certainly impressed him indelibly, both through his engaging life and through his pathetic death.

Now there are similar good things, of course, to be said about the great thinkers of the Middle Ages. Most of them seem to have a particularly strong confidence in the reliability of the higher forces governing human destinies and cosmic events. They also show an unwavering attachment to the established authorities of religious life in their age.

And we are not astonished at the relative ease with which they were able to conserve an admirable degree of childlikeness, so far. For here there has really entered, upon the scene of human thought, a gigantic rival who could hardly fail to put a temporary check upon the general spirit of increasing impersonalism and frigidity. We are referring to the angelic giant of Christian faith, a wonderful "intruder", making his "inroads" even right into the realms of professional thinking, and forcing thinkers, in some degree, to modify their thoughts, thus delaying, at least, an otherwise unbridled course towards an increasingly inclement spiritual climate.

So, in view of the special environment out of which medieval philosophy had the good fortune to grow, it is easy to understand its relatively humanizing and personalizing currents.

But it is understandable, also, that this more naive form of spiritual thought could not last forever. The mild vision of meaningfulness and totality was doomed to be tragically obscured in the minds of the men who were to constitute the elite in Western intelligentsia through subsequent ages. This could be foreseen. Only the degree of that obscuration could hardly be foreseen--particularly not as an inevitable consequence of progressing knowledge exclusively, even the most rigorous scientific knowledge.

Let us leave out of account the deeper reasons for such a development, so far, however. Our first step may be to consider the development itself. The historical facts are clear enough. The general trends are indisputable: the ideas of Perfection and Meaningfulness soon reach a stage where they seem to be fighting a losing battle. The tendency of human thinking keeps growing harder and harder, or colder and colder. Those are the adjectives we have repeatedly used as synonyms for egocentric.

Probably the hardest and most frigidly cruel attack ever directed against the naive idea of a true meaning in life was kept in reserve for the nineteenth century. In order to have a vivid demonstration through contrast, just let us, for a rapid moment, go all the way up from the Middle Ages to that distant period. In the latter half of the

nineteenth century something burst upon the consciousness of the Western world which we call evolutionism.

But what, then, was the attitude, of this new theory of evolution, towards perfection and finality? Of course it would be wrong to say that it was always so openly and demonstratively negative. As a matter of fact, evolutionism, in its own way, often appears to be most eagerly concerned with a forward-pressing tendency. It sets a goal for the forces of life. It presents an end of the most impressive magnitude, a lofty aim of "meaningfulness" right in the realm of biological science.

Paulus Svendsen's comprehensive treatment of the idea of human progress in his work Gullalderdröm og utviklingstro,[1] shows to what extent that idea of a purely biological evolution was intimately correlated even with ideas of social progress, and, we may certainly add, of spiritual progress.

For instance, in Spencer's mind, evolution had become almost synonymous with an increase in all values in our world. A universal law of blessed necessity was supposed to direct everything towards a wonderful perfection. Even the heart of man could not fail to be lifted up towards increasing altitudes on the surging waves of universal progress. Just as Auguste Comte's stern positivism did not seem to hinder him in any way from including even such sublime values as altruism in his peculiar system of human progress, so Spencer gave prophetic glimpses of a new and better type of

humanity, evoking passages of the Gospel rather than of hard natural philosophy.

However, the question we cannot help asking ourselves immediately, is this: How could that universal law of progress lead so inevitably right up to the highest summits of human perfection, in mind and spirit, as well as in body, when it still remains so utterly imperfect itself--imperfect above all in the means it uses in order to reach that end of marvelous perfection?

For one thing should here be pointed out with unmistakable clarity: if this is finality, it is a finality so cold and unfeeling that it certainly has very little in common with that meaningfulness in human lives which is tacitly implied of our terminology.

Could we ever imagine Thomas Aquinas, or any other true exponent of the Middle Ages, as the discoverer (if we do not want to say the inventor) of such a finality; we mean, of course, under equal conditions of scientific knowledge?

We all know the terrible clash which came--and was bound to come--between orthodox Christianity and that new "religion" in the nineteenth century. The simple record of the creation of life, as found in the first chapters of the Holy Writ, was now, more than ever before in the history of natural science, looked upon as a myth exhibiting a naiveté bordering on the ridiculous.

Here we are not, of course, concerned with any proper evaluation of the arguments launched on this occasion by dogmatic Christian theology. We are not concerned with any proper evaluation of the arguments launched by dogmatic biology either. Our task is in no wise to show who was right in the oncoming strife regarding biological and cosmological facts. Was it the evolutionist? Was it the Christian fundamentalist (or special creationist, as he is technically termed in ideological nomenclature today)? Or was it a third group--that of the theological bridge-builders now rising up and trying to reconcile the two extremes? These questions are outside the scope of our examination.

Another question, however, is bound to be of enormous interest to us: In what spirit was the battle fought? Or let us rather go back to the time when there was no open battle at all: In what spirit were those ideas reached which were liable to cause the battle sooner or later? Is it with a heavy heart that the intellectual elite of Occidental culture has arrived at the conclusion that the old opinions, so confidently held by the Christian scholars of "darker ages", must be abandoned as untenable myths? No, often it is with iconoclastic joy, and very seldom with any serious concern about any possible consequences of spiritual tragedy, automatically implied.

What possible tragedy are we speaking about? We are speaking about the tragic fate of the idea of finality, the historic decline of the last hope that human life has a real meaning. For if certain of those new ideas of a boundless evolution were to prove themselves the truth, what would then be the destiny of the ideas of perfection and

meaningfulness in the deepest human and the deepest spiritual sense?

Not only to Christianity, but to anything that is worthy of the name of humanism, the idea of personal life and personal meaning is of prime importance. Our Ch. IV discusses Schopenhauer. So far, just a word for contrast: Schopenhauer's pessimism is known to have revealed itself precisely in a total failure to believe in an individual preservation of human life. By the way, as we have seen, it has been a lugubrious idea brooding over this earth, and weighing heavily on the minds of thinking men a long time before either Schopenhauer or Darwin saw the light of the world, that nature seems bent on preserving the species only. Now, however, it is an ever-increasing band of systematically investigating scientists who repeat the proclamation with emphatic force: "Nature is concerned about one thing: the survival of the species. She does not care one brass farthing about the survival of the individual being? For once, laymen and scholars alike seem determined to accept the immediate testimony that appears to their senses. We have already seen how Thomas Aquinas simply refuses to succumb to that same appearance. Why? How could he manage? Was it because he lacked the knowledge added to biological science in the nineteenth century? We believe not. For as far as that conclusion is concerned, he had exactly the same knowledge, or the same appearances, upon which a later generation found sufficient reason to base its public inculpation against nature (or rather against the God who made nature; for if something deficient is made, the Maker is to blame; if, on the contrary, some exquisite properly is discovered in nature,

then its Author is so easily forgotten, left entirely out of the picture). No, we believe it was mainly because, in Thomas and in his whole environment, there was a very different determination, a spiritual determination to keep one's faith in a true meaning in human life.

Besides, he had, over Schopenhauer for instance, another great advantage in a sobering direction: he was an Aristotelian, and fairly well protected against Platonic spiritualism.

Spiritualism? Was Schopenhauer a spiritualist?

In a very important respect, yes. In Schopenhauer's mind that general thing called the species is most closely associated with what Plato had called the Idea. The duality of "Wille und Vorstellung"--or the duality of the Idea versus the phenomenal world--inevitably becomes a disruptive dualism of the general versus the individual.

And which of these two is once more immediately considered as the illusory? "Of course" the individual!

Unfortunately, however, the truly meaningful in human life cannot, in any possible way, do without that individual person, whom nature is said to consider as unworthy of being preserved. But notice, this individual, personal life of the human being is the only life that means anything to us at all. It is the only life which has any meaning or any importance in the sense of alterocentric finality.

So any alterocentric philosopher--assuming that such a being exists at all--would simply be bound to pass beyond what was empirically given in the field of biology even long before Darwin's age. Otherwise he would actually have no chance whatever of finding any deeper sense in man's existence.

And then, what happens in the age of modern evolutionism? In fact, the triumph of the species is, all of a sudden, solemnly proclaimed as the eternal law of the universe. And that proclamation is made with the most cynical disrespect for the individual.

One may of course also call it a simple ignoring of the individual. One may even call it idealism. So it was called in ancient Greece. So it was also called in modern Germany. With Hegel the same principle which Darwin applied to biology, is unscrupulously applied to history.

"All individuals, all peoples and states are only instruments in the hand of universal intelligence, and they are pushed aside as soon as they are of no use any longer. Here there is not much room for any consideration of the temporal happiness of the individual. Regarded from a human point of view, history resembles a large slaughter-house more than anything else. Hegel's Weltgeist is a profuse spirit; it uses many souls." Or, as Kierkegaard, Hegel's irreconcilable enemy, put it: "The history of mankind thus becomes an enormous school of herrings in which the individual herring is not worth one whit."[2]

It is most relevant to our study to obtain some reliable notion of the way influential men and historical movements affected the ideas of perfection and meaningfulness in human life. What chances, however, did those ideas have to assert themselves at all within the realms of the theories of evolution?

Professor H.A. Overstreet, in his Enduring Quest (1931), seems to express wonder at the sentimentality of such who make evolution synonymous with something grim and bloody. "They have been impressed by a single phrase, the struggle for survival" (p. 68).

Frankly, is there no justification for associating modern evolutionism with grimness and bloodiness? Of course, very much here depends on one's point of departure, the standard of perfection and finality to which one's moral consciousness and religious aspirations have been accustomed. Through antiquity and the Middle Ages a Christian community had accustomed itself to the idea of a divine Creator who was absolutely perfect. Of course then the method used by that Creator, in bringing about His creation, is not quite a negligible matter. The God of the medieval Church, as well as the God of primitive Christianity, is a God of Love. But is it "love" that manifests itself in the creative method of modern evolution? When did love's specialty become just fighting? In the medieval conception love is still expressed precisely through God's lovingkindness towards individuals. But if the creative principle of modern evolution is inconsiderate hardness and a continual slaughter, for the blessed purpose of making the species survive and reach its ever new peaks of perfection, then evolutionistic

creativeness must indeed be a travesty of Christian ideals. It must be very far from medieval humanity's conception of progress and perfection.

And what was bound to be the pedagogical effect of this new teaching which tried to explain the coming into existence of the cosmological and biological wonders presenting themselves to our senses today? It hardly demands any exceptional wickedness and inhumanity in a human observer to be somewhat influenced by the example of a Moloch-Creator as cruel as that. So why should not man, in that type of creation, seek and find a certain "justification" of his own "competitive way of life"? To grow strong, to fight hard, to put the foe out of the running--that is "nature's way". And notice, it has always been, according to modern evolutionism. So that must also be "man's way". Not softness, but hardness. Not giving, but taking. Not compassion, but power. "Strong armies, strong nations, strong business. Nature's way--and man's way."

The really fantastic reaction to such teaching, as far as we can see--and therefore, indeed, admirable enough--must be the one that manages to read beyond the phrase "struggle for survival", perhaps even reaching the ideal heights of Kropotkin's conception of a "mutual aid" as the essential trait of evolution, just one great and continual "process of symbiosis and co-operation"--"nature's great way of love".

Anyway, with the point of view we have here fundamentally adopted as our own, it would be a stroke of almost ingenious

inconsistency simply to close our eyes to some oppressive problems automatically conjured up by the evolutionist interpretation of empirical facts in modern natural science. To any man making serious efforts to save his belief in the perfect and the meaningful, as we understand it, this interpretation is bound to be suggestive, first and foremost, of the most cruel meaningfulness. So without any lustre of the faintest excuse or sense-saving explanation--just that whole nauseating panorama of a "creative" climbing up by trampling down, "ichthyosauri and swordfish, the fierce fight of the roaming wolf pack, the cruel leap of the cunning tiger, the sudden dart of the bird of prey"--and intriguing atrocities even far more difficult to integrate into a pattern of true finality than these.

Let us, just for a moment, try to imagine the God of the universe as a God in the greatest possible accordance with the evolutionist explanation of world movements. We are here not so much concerned about evolution on a cosmological level--that aeonian emergence of planetary system out of star dust. We are concerned with evolution on the biological level--the human level.

In order to press forward the degree of perfection we see today in the realms of life on this earth, the great God of evolutionistic creation has based Himself on one unfailing principle. It is called "struggle for life" and "survival of the fittest" through "natural selection". But some have felt that it could be more briefly and more adequately expressed through the old phrase: bellum omnium contra omnes (everybody's war against everybody). And we cannot blame them for thinking that this is "everybody's war against everybody".

Let us even assume the eventuality that the ultimate goal reached by this long carnage is a certain perfection. Still the human observer to that fearful drama would have every right--morally and theoretically--to object with solemn dignity, "Finality to me means something more than a perfect goal. It also means a perfect way towards that goal! Is this a perfect way?"

It is often said, with an awe-inspired divine righteousness, a righteousness, reaching out for the guilty in the last round: the mill stones of God grind slowly. But what a cruel slowness this would have to be. Just think of the streams of blood running from the "mill" of evolutionist creation--down into the sands of eternity. How could any creature with the secret longing for a meaningful life--or any creature with any trace of decent feelings left in his mind at all--discern anything reminding him even remotely of perfection and finality in this process of "natural selection"?

Admittedly, the creationist biologist (or the fundamentalist theologian), too, has to face the facts of a fearful amount of cruelty and suffering in this present world. But as a childish believer in the God of Christianity, and in the revelation handed over to the human race by that God, he may at least refer to the historical accident of the introduction of SIN into this world. Here the responsibility is consistently presented as falling upon the shoulders of man himself, a being with sufficient intelligence and choice between original good and derived perversion.

However, in that mighty slaughter-house of modern evolutionism there is no more room for any tenable theory of moral substance, nor any human argument in favour of a living and loving God. For how could any noble soul, despite his sincere thirst for perfect righteousness, manage to account for the infinite grimness and cruelty and suffering in such an institution of systematic slaughter? One speaks to us about stages in that illustrious race towards "final perfection". But on what "stage", as the modern evolutionist has envisioned it, would the serious theologian here manage to introduce his explanatory historical event of a fall into sin? Was it perhaps the primeval molluscus who fell into sin? Or was it some naughty amoeba, way back at the dawn of the oeons, who brought this guilt and misery over our world in secula seculorum?

This is not a sarcastic joke. It is rather the desperately serious question of that fairly noble creature whom Kant describes as still harbouring an endless yearning for justice and perfection in his human breast. How is he expected to find a trace of divine respectability in such perennial trampling down of individuals--individuals more or less provided with senses and feelings? What a truly inhuman carnage through millions and billions of years, for the purpose of paving a road towards eventual "perfection"!

There may be any amount of ingenious philosophical elucubration in such a theory. There may be other admirable things also. But one thing there is not: meaning- not the faintest trace of it; so there is no trace of Christianity in it either, for Christianity cannot

exist without meaning. It requires something which consistently can fill human lives.

Christianity could never be imagined at all in terms of "stages" through a desert of chance, called "Creative Automatism"--or however you might like to "christen" that phenomenon.

Small wonder that a hitherto unheard-of wave of de-Christianization was destined to follow in the wake of evolutionist theories in every territory where they came to be taught with force of persuasion. How could Christian theologians hope to "integrate" this crudest paganism ever devised into Christianity? How could they connive in reducing God to a Creator who creates in that way, and still blame a new generation of parishioners for ceasing to come to church? Young people of the common stock are not that dishonest and inconsistent. At the bottom of their hearts all intelligent children of this new age discern, after all, the inexorable pointedness of the issue: either the Christian meaningfulness of special creationism, or the frankly pagan absurdity of modern evolutionism; either the individual or the species; either Christ or Plato; you cannot have both.

As far as we can see, this relentless "scientific" attack against the individual, launched from the second half of the nineteenth century, is the most cunning and cruel one ever registered throughout the history of the giant battle.

More profoundly considered, it is man's Value among values that is here being torn into shreds. It is his vital connection with the supreme reality of his whole environment: God. And one more question: What has been most conducive towards preparing the territory for a general acceptance of a theory so fatefully laden with tragic disruption in a human civilization, and even in the very heart of an elite called the spiritually-minded?

That soil-preparing fermentation has been nothing but the cold and inhuman spirit of a stunning impersonalism, inherent in idealist philosophy.

The one who has once discovered the intimate relationship between modern evolutionism and age-old spiritualism is not so easily deceived by bold and boisterous claims that the theory of evolution is the very crown of realism. Consider the boldness with which the proponent of this theory have managed to obscure the fact that it is still just a theory. Consciously or unconsciously suggestions are being made to make it appear as an empirical datum rather than a tentative theory. The truth still remains that evolutionism is a theory, a special interpretation, tentatively applied to a number of empirical facts in nature, so it is no more than an alternative which may be chosen among those presenting themselves. And one thing is well known regarding the choice between alternative interpretations, whether the problem seriously presenting itself is one in the natural sciences or in another field of human learning: the theoretical alternative chosen by such and such a man, to account for such and such a fact objectively given, will

often tend to be more dependent on subjective conditions inherent in the mind of that special individual, than on the inherent objective superiority of the alternative.

And now what about the most varying attitudes adopted by individual men to the Supreme Reality of their environment, God? Just in that most existential field of problematic decision, they are seen to give evidence of their respective degree of totality (or lack of totality), their respective degree of spirituality (or lack of spirituality). Here a really significant difference of essential attitudes comes out, not only from one individual to the other, or from one group of individuals to the other, but also--remarkable phenomenon!--from one historical era to the other. So there may be various aspects to the significance attached to the distance we observe between the God of Thomas Aquinas and the God of Hegel. Anyway, that distance happens to correspond fairly well to the notorious distance between medieval peace (harmonious human totality) and modern unrest (inward human disruption).

Hegel's God, obviously enough, is a God who, in Himself, suffers from a fatal lack of elementary totality. So how, then, could He be supposed to bring any amount of true totality and inward composure into the lives of human creatures? It appears rather symptomatic to us that Hegel's God finds His only means of realizing Himself in a sort of alienation (ein Sich-unterscheiden). He becomes "another to Himself". And what, exactly, is that "Entfremdung des göttlichen Wesens"? Is it in any way related to

the peculiar self-transcendence we have described as alterocentricity? I am afraid not.

Now, first of all, what does Entfremdung actually mean? It means alienation. So it is literally the process of making oneself alien, a real stranger. A stranger to whom? In this case just to oneself. We do not find it surprising that the word "alienation" in French, for instance, has become a psychopathological term. In the "asyle d"aliénés" you must expect to meet people who are not in any way "at home with themselves". They are estranged from themselves, estranged from that peculiar centre of refuge where they could otherwise have a sacred rendezvous with themselves, and with their Maker at the same time, thus becoming a sanctuary in the most proper sense (the sanctuary of human conscience, and of human consciousness).

Anyway, it is precisely at the moment when one becomes a stranger to oneself that the situation becomes precarious for the internal equilibrium of man. The war with oneself (an inward turmoil we have termed disruption) reaches fateful depths which finish by precipitating a human life down into the dark night of madness--"l"aliénation mentale".

However, when Hegel wants to give an account of this strange phenomenon we call creation, what he starts speaking about is just "eine Entfremdung des göttlichen Wesens". That is, God becomes, in some manner, a "stranger to Himself". In other words, "creation" becomes identical with a downright disruption, so to speak. We do

not see how we could more closely translate into our own nomenclature what we feel to be characteristic of Hegel's "divine estrangement". Of course, hardly any one could tell what this mysterious "dementia divina" actually stands for. What we do learn about that "Sich-unterscheiden", however, is pathetic enough: it has to be followed by an In-sich-zuruck-gehen". So if God's movement of creation (obviously a rather "improper" phase of His essence) may be regarded as one in which He "loses Himself", as it were, then that is followed by an opposite movement. "Das In-sich-zurück-gehen" is a sort of homeward journey in which God "finds Himself again".

So the more proper thing for God is not to create, it seems. We hardly expected, in a true spiritualist, any view different from that; creation is envisaged as a "rather inferior" business. It is the alienating movement of a certain painful "Sich-unterscheiden". Characteristically enough, the individual consciousness is viewed as a moment of that strange alienation.

Still, these "improper", this-worldly "passages" in God's life are something that cannot be avoided, it appears. The creation of a world of particular beings is a necessity for God. It is even the only way He can become God. In fact, we can see Hegel's God as nothing but a sad split between two necessities.

He only gains his truth by finding himself in absolute conflict.[3]

Tresmontant calls this movement tragical. And we are convinced that his qualification is no exaggeration. Probably to a much larger extent than with Plotinus and Spinoza, this cyclical movement in Hegel's case is a definitely tragic one. If our own negative terms have ever been appropriate, it must be here. Hegel's God has the characteristic of splitting Himself, lacerating His very essence. That is: his God is a living God only in a disruptive movement of constant pendulating between "Entfremdung" and "Sich-wielder-finden".[4]

And most characteristic of all, in terms of spiritualistic automatism (the tragedy of tragedies): this eternal disruption asserts itself as a cold necessity. The relation between Creator and creation is conceived in terms of an automatic rigidity or constraint, a definitely God-forsaken fatality, as compared to the never failing autonomy of Christ's agape.

Plato's curious cosmogony in Timaios repeats itself in the spiritualism of his "Urenkel" Hegel of modern Germany. And it goes on repeating itself in the Occidental children of the great Greek master spiritualist until the end of time, always at an ever-accelerating pace.

Seen from this point of view the Middle Ages actually represented a certain lull in the progressive movement, thanks to the still working effects of original Christianity. Of course even in medieval philosophy we do find definitely non-Christian ideas, of God and creation, arising from time to time. But they are most often

rapidly rejected as heresies. In fact, Plotinus and the gnostic teachers have ideas about God (and his relation to the world) resembling Hegel's ideas very much. Baur, in his work Die christliche Gnosis has clearly pointed this out:

The Gnostic systems are also based on the presupposition that God is only in this process (of differentiation) a living God, the absolute spirit, the thinking reason, because life is not without movement, thinking is not without mediating activity.[5]

To be sure, Thomas's conception of divinity and world is infinitely far from this. And so is the theology of scholastic philosophy in a general way. Is this because Thomas, for instance, bases his philosophy on Aristotle rather than on Plato, on a certain realism and totality, rather than on idealism and disruption?

We would prefer to express it as follows (although this too may be a seriously modified truth). The Christian philosophers of the Middle Ages base themselves on Christianity. Their conscience is to a large extent bound, even at this late date, by Christian orthodoxy, for their thinking and for the way they express it. The great pattern governing this thinking--and its expression, too--may be given in one word, lowliness. What then is the thing striking us as curious and significant--or symptomatic--in the way idealist "theology" expresses its views on God as a Creator? It is not so much that the idealist sees a God who has felt an urge to "separate Himself" from what is "properly His". For that might be a selftranscendence in a really Christian sense. No, it is rather the way he insists on

qualifying and evaluating that "separation" which amounts to saying, the way he evaluates creation by and large. In that "movement" of God he sees something rather inferior, a sort of divine mistake or waywardness in other words, a breach which should be repaired as soon as possible. So God's "extravagant" act of creation is immediately bound to be followed by a sort of self-resorbing movement in which He "returns to Himself" and "finds Himself". This is assumed to be the only "proper" movement of God, the "reparation" through which He saves His dignity, as it were!

So the successors to the throne of Plato--even in the most distant outskirts of his kingdom, and towards the evening of its age--have conserved all Plato's distrust in the concreteness of a created world. The surest evidence of that distrust is found in this fact: creation cannot be accepted as properly divine except to the degree that it may accommodate itself to being regarded as an automatic necessity, just another triumph of blind determinism. At the very moment when it has the volitional boldness to break out from the framework of that automatism, it runs the risk of being classified among events that are nondivine, or "improperly" divine. It seems an indecent idea to the spiritualist philosopher that a Creator should take it into his mind to cherish any personal and spontaneously rising motives for the coming into existence of a material world.

No wonder that the "problem" of the very existence of a material and visible world affects the conscientious idealist as something of a

nightmare. It evokes in his mind the distressing suspicion of some kind of metaphysical "faux pas" committed by the gods themselves.

Does Thomas Aquinas appear to have this uneasy feeling that all things could not have happened quite decently, since God has had a certain movement "away from Himself", that is, into the act of creation?

No, the conception Thomas Aquinas has of divinity is infinitely far from this. And so is the theology of scholastic philosophy in a general way. The Christian philosophers of the Middle Ages certainly feel much more dependent upon orthodox Christianity in all their thinking. That dependence and childlike docility is a principal point here.

By the way, as far as Thomas is concerned, he would obviously have serious hesitations in speaking about a movement in the Supreme Being at all. His reasoning is, "Quidquid movetur, ab ablio movetur." And God is precisely the Being who is not moved by anything outside Himself. He is the eternally Unchangeable One. According to the doctrine of efficient causality, change is a sort of oscillation, a passage from one state to another, during which the real in potency becomes the real in act. But that same principle of efficient causality claims that some outside influence is absolutely necessary for any change in any being. In nature such efficient causes are found everywhere. In fact, nature is an inextricable tissue of those passages from potency to act.

What then about God? According to Thomas, God is precisely the Being who has no potentiality in Himself.

He is absolute perfection, the Infinite One. To Thomas, then, it would certainly be an absurd thought that God should in any way depend upon creation for His own realization. Thomas has the Bible's elevated vision of God's relation to creation. Not for one moment was God forced to create simply in order to be God. His freedom here was rather the one expressed by a Norwegian hymn: "Gud er Gud om alle land lå øde. Gud er Gud om alle mann var døde." (God is God though all lands be a desert. God is God though all men be dead.) Compare the idea that material things exist only as phenomena dependent on the presence of an observing mind--a spirit perceiving them; this is spiritualism, and not at all biblical realism.

Creation is, on the contrary, the entirely free gift of God's love. God is perfectly able to maintain peace with Himself, and at the same time peace with the world which He calls into existence. Disruption is by no means any inevitable condition of this universe.

The real disruption is always exclusively in the mind of the pagan philosopher himself. His idealistic and spiritualistic radicalism constantly makes that convulsive effort to press things "all the way up". After that, "the way down"--which he is forced to admit as a fait accompli, an inevitable reality--becomes to him nothing less than a tragedy. Hence the interminable rupture and oscillation between two opposites.

On one hand, God is the Good (philosophically speaking), i.e. the perfect apotheosis of selfsufficiency, quietude, the undisturbed unity where He finds Himself, nothing more.

On the other hand, God is goodness (more humanly speaking); i.e. He makes His incredible descent into the world of generation--and re-generation, as Christianity adds.

The only way intelligible to the pure speculative philosophy is the proud way up. But the way of the Christian religion was above all just the humble way down--even the way of the Incarnation and the Cross. This is a way not of the rational, but rather of the irrational. In fact, "pure" human reason has invariably led away from the Cross. It has also led away from the truth, sometimes even the plainest truths of objective and properly scientific order.

Notes:

1. Paulus Svendsen: Gullalderdrom og utviklingstro, 1940.
2. Skard, Svendsen, and Wisnes: Tider og Tanker, 1952, p. 77.
3. Hegel: Phanomenologie, p. 30.
4. Op. cit., p. 738.
5. F. Baur: Die christiliche Gnosis, 1835.

Chapter 32

Conflicting Trends in Medieval Philosophy

Why have we made this excursion into modern times? Simply in order to throw into relief the relatively admirable totality still present in the spirit of the Middle Ages. But to be quite fair we must then also admit openly some tendencies of increasing impact towards a Platonic dualism even right in the core of the medieval Church. The plain truth of the matter is that fundamentally disruptive anthropological doctrines were about to penetrate the Christian congregation. At times the dualism here entering upon the scene becomes a feature so dominating that one might soon be tempted to lose sight completely of the original trends in favour of totality. Nevertheless that totality does remain as an invincible force, a secretly operative element, under the surface, all through medieval times.

Its action is particularly noticeable in the honourable status maintained by the human body in medieval views on man. This is a fact which the historians of ideas do not always seem to realize fully. But it is one of the most remarkable facts. The bodily reality of the human being is both recognized and quite highly respected, not only by the medieval Church, but also by essential circles of medieval philosophy.

Not only the great Dominican Thomas, but also the honourable Franciscans Bonaventura and Duns Scotus--equally famous for their

erudition and for their piety--are seen to hold the human body in high esteem. And of course quite non-philosophical members of the medieval Church show the same attitude here. Gilson even ventures to mention Francis of Assisi among the men of the Middle Ages who "cherished matter, respected their body, elevated its dignity, never wishing to separate its destiny from that of their soul".[1]

We do admit that there must have been some natural temptation for the first Christian philosophers to consider Platonism, rather than Aristotelianism, as the philosophy best adapted to their highly spiritual outlook on life and on the world. For philosophers have constantly been confused here, mistaking spiritualism for spirituality. So, although Plato need not have a jot more of spirituality than Aristotle has, he decidedly has a lot more spiritualism, and, with idealist philosophers, one may note a very common tendency to evaluate that latter element very highly.

So we, in a way, understand Gilson's puzzled question:

How is it that after following the Platonic tradition for so long, Christian philosophers gradually yielded to the growing influence of Aristotle?

Well, let us point out one very good, but not commonly realized reason why Aristotle gradually won a position as the leading philosophical authority in the Church of the Middle Ages: his philosophy was infinitely closer than Plato's to the views of totality prevailing in the anthropology of fundamental Christian beliefs. And

it is not impossible, of course, that a certain regulating influence on the part of original revelation has been permitted to guide Christian philosophy "from within", as it were.

On the other hand, more often than not, that "infallible interior guide" may appear astonishingly deficient in the development of a Christian philosophy in the Middle Ages. True, Aristotle did possess a vision of psychophysical unity in man which was almost a prodigy in his philosophical environment, but we are very much afraid that the actual influence, in the Middle Ages, of that part of his philosophical teachings may easily be exaggerated by historians.

However, the fact remains, Aristotelian philosophy did, by and by, get the upper hand. And that fact, in itself, was bound to result in a growing tendency to define the soul as nothing but the form of the body. But it is no use trying to slur over one essential fact: the belief in a congenital immortality of the human soul is also growing stronger and stronger from century to century in the medieval Church. That belief could not be made to harmonize with the truly monistic part of Aristotelian philosophy.

We should not forget that Plato had had great followers in the world of philosophy in the first centuries of the Christian era. Plotinus, we might almost venture to say, is more Platonic than Plato himself. Where would you ever expect to find a more outspokenly dualistic message than in the Enneads? That applies to the dualism of mind and matter, and also to the radical dualism of good and evil. What is a human soul?

That the soul is akin to the diviner and eternal nature is made clear by the facts that she has been proven to be incorporeal, has neither form nor colour, and is intangible... Let us take then a soul--not one sunk in the body which has laid hold of irrational desires and emotions and received into herself other passions, but one which has sloughed these off and has as little commerce as possible with the body. Such a one shows clearly that evil is a foreign accretion on the soul, and that in the purified soul everything that is best, wisdom and every other virtue, inheres and is native. (Enneads, IV, 14, 4a)

And what makes this soul dirty and evil?

The vicious soul is not outside of matter and is not wholly herself... for she is mingled with the body which is material... Her vision is hindered both by her affections, and by being darkened by matter and inclined toward matter, and in general by looking not toward existence but toward generation. And of transition and generation the nature of matter is the source, a nature so evil that the soul which even looks toward it, is filled with evil. For since matter is wholly without part in the good and is the privation thereof, and pure lack, it makes like to itself anything whatsoever that touches it. (Ibid., I, 8, 4, 470)

Here, then, we have a heathen dualism in the Western World not perceptibly weakened by two centuries of intense Christianity. Its

choice among values in human life is not very much in favour of the concrete:

The most abstract thoughts are of things in every respect pure of the corporeal.. There is, for instance, no residuum of flesh or of matter of any sort in the abstractions of a circle, a triangle, a line, or a point. The soul then, when at such work, must of necessity abstract herself from the body. It follows that she herself cannot be body... Virtue, then, must belong to the eternal and abiding, as do geometrical entities. But if it belongs to the eternal and abiding, it is not corporeal. (Ibid., IV, 7, 8)

We have cited at random some of the influential sentences of Plotinus which were to keep ringing in the ears of the generations of the Middle Ages.

The main idea in it all, left to work its way into the minds of the multitudes, was this one: there is in man a separable divine element which has had no beginning, and will have no end. That is the immortal human soul.

At the same time, it is true, there is the remaining influence of very opposite teaching, for instance the famous passage found in Enchiridion patristicum:

For God has called flesh itself to be resurrected. To the flesh he promises eternal life. To announce the good news of salvation actually implies announcing it to the flesh also. For what is man if

not an intelligent being consisting of a soul and a body? Is the soul by itself man? No, but the soul of man. Would the body be called man? No, but it is called the body of man. If then neither of these is by itself man, but that which is made up of the two together is called man, and God has called man to life and resurrection, he has called not a part, but a whole, which is the soul and the body.[2]

The linguistic expression of the Christian hope contained in this passage, may not be entirely free from a certain dualism. We shall return to that later on. But the fundamental idea is one of psychophysical unity and the most admirable totality. Gilson, too, has been struck by the same fact. What surprises him most, however, is that such a passage is found "even as early as at the end of the second or at the beginning of the third century". Here we cannot entirely agree with his formulation. From our sad experience, we feel more reason to be astonished that such a passage still occurs as late as that!

For already during the first centuries of the Christian era something very strange and very decisive happened: a new idea--we mean new in the sense that it had been entirely unknown to Judaism, as well as to the Gospel--began to develop in Christendom: "A human soul cannot die." This idea of a natural immortality was obviously introduced into Christianity from pagan philosophy. Our main concern in this book, regarding that curious mixture of Christianity and paganism, is limited to the philosophical problems it brought about. Those problems presented themselves immediately in all their tremendous force. And they did not grow less tremendous

as the centuries of the Middle Ages passed. Why not? The reason is simple enough: in order to get rid of the problem, only one measure would do. That is: a resolute giving up of the idea of innate immortality. But that idea was never given up. On the contrary, the medieval Church canonized it and made it the foundation for some of its strongest dogmas. We mean "strong" for the consolidation of the power of the Church over the minds of the multitude. We mean "power" in the political sense. That is a very egocentric sense. But that is also outside the scope of our present discussion.

Let us keep this point, however: the Platonic idea of immortality was not abandoned during the passing centuries of the Middle Ages. So the problem it had introduced into Christian thinking could not so easily let go its grip on the minds of medieval thinkers either.

As far as we can see, the main change here in the course of those centuries is the following: philosophical speculations within the framework of the Christian Church become gradually stronger. With the increasingly conscious intellectual fixation of the problems, those problems themselves become increasingly conscious, increasingly painful, and simply crying for some kind of intellectual solution. That is what characterizes the new attitude towards these things in the last centuries of the Middle Ages. Such a development towards pure speculation was bound to be in favour of Platonic viewpoints.

The idea Plato had established with axiomatic cocksureness in his Phaidon was this: an unbroken continuation of life is something

the human soul possesses quite naturally and automatically. That idea, of course, is not an easy one for the Church fathers to appropriate. It is too foreign to their proper Christian patrimony. By and by, however, they accept the word "immortality". Some of them even star using it to describe a quality inherent in the human soul. But just to know what they really mean--how much of actual dualist vision they put into their expressions--is a problem which has to be dealt with quite carefully. We have tried to do that in our investigations on patristic anthropology.

But let it be noted as a general historical fact: the Fathers of the Church during the very first centuries are far from anxious to espouse ideas of Platonic immortality. Personally they are not at all, as a rule, consciously troubled by such ideas. Accordingly, they are not consciously troubled by the philosophical problems involved in them either. That consciousness of a painful problem--for the Christian theologian as well as for the Christian philosopher--is a phenomenon springing up only by and by. In fact, it springs up only in connection with an increasingly conscious belief in "natural human immortality".

However, that belief is seen to spread at an accelerating pace, as century by century rolls over the Christian Church.

By the way, non-Christian philosophers seem doomed to wrestle with the same invincible enemy. Avicenna, in his mighty efforts to reconcile Aristotle with Mohammed, actually returns to the problem of reconciling Aristotle with Plato. He "solves" the problem by

considering the soul from two different points of view. A person you happen to meet, may, also, be considered from two different points of view, says Avicenna. He may be a worker, but first of all he is a man. He is a man by his essence, and a worker by his function. Something similar applies to the soul. "In itself", or according to its essence, it is a substance. According to its function, however, it serves as a form for the human body.

Through this trick, both Aristotle and Plato should be fairly well satisfied. In other words: the soul certainly has the task of animating the human body. Certainly, also, that body dies. But still there is no actual reason to fear that the soul should be bound to die at the same time. What does the death of the body really mean, then? It only means that the soul has finished exerting "its special functions".

No wonder that even many Christian thinkers, in similar distress, found some temporary consolation in this ingenious attempt, on the part of a Mohammedan, to solve a painful problem. They, too, were obviously aching to have Plato's celestial immortality and Aristotle's unity of body and soul at the same time. Avicenna's eclectism seemed to furnish that palatable synthesis.

Albertus Magnus has eloquently expressed the intense willingness of Christian philosophy to accept this desperate attempt at reconciling the irreconcilable.

Animam considerando secundum se, consentiemus Platoni; considerando autem eam secundum formam animationis, quam dat

corpori, consentiemus Aristoteli. (Considering the soul in itself, we will agree with Plato; but considering it according to the form of animation which it gives to the body, we will agree with Aristotle.)[3]

But how one can actually agree with those two philosophers at the same time is of course only a new problem. If we accept the solution of considering the soul as a form given to the living body, how on earth can we still manage that fabulous trick of pure abstraction which consists in considering the soul "in itself"!

Thomas Aquinas was no man of easy compromises. But he, too, was a man of the late Middle Ages. That is a time when the doctrine of the natural immortality of the human soul had already been firmly and sacredly established by the Christian Church. And Thomas was no iconoclastic destroyer of consecrated dogmas. So how could he think it his task to cut away violently the doctrine of natural immortality? On the contrary, he believes in that doctrine, just as good Christians during centuries before him, and during centuries after him, have believed in it.

So he really has no advantages whatsoever over his colleagues in the realms of human philosophy. He is not exempted from the problem. He sees only one possibility: to face it. He faces it more seriously and more inexorably than Avicenna. And he, too, is an Aristotelian. He fully believes in the oneness of the human being. However, with that truly Christian belief in human oneness on one hand, and a truly non-Christian belief in natural immortality on the

other hand, how could he ever hope, in spite of the superior acuteness of his mind, to arrive at a true solution of the problem? How can there be any true solution, where there is no true problem? The "enigma" of a union between body and soul is an artificial problem. It bases itself on postulates which, themselves, have no foundation whatsoever--namely the dualism of the substances and the immortality of the soul. The more truly intelligent a thinker is, the more unable he will be to find the "true solution" of an entirely spurious problem.

Notes:

1. Etienne Gilson: Esprit de la philosophie medievale, 1932, I, p. 174.
2. De resurrectione, VIII.
3. Albertus Magnus: Summa theologica, II, 12, qu. 69.

Chapter 33

The Heralds of Modern Science

What is the most salient characteristic of our thinking in modern times? Some admirers of present-day efficiency may perhaps say the modern spirit is more practical than that of antiquity and of the Middle Ages. We would rather say, it is more materialistic. The practical is not, of course, necessarily materialistic. The practical may be highly spiritual. But the practical spirit characterizing our modern era is not particularly spiritual. Plato was a thousand times more spiritual than that.

The element lacking in our peculiar practicality is, once more, the vision of a purpose, a meaningful goal. What is the picture we obtain here if we go to the really eminent and influential philosophers of modern times?

Of course we must first mention Descartes. His Discours de la Méthode becomes a sort of constitutional charter to all subsequent philosophy. That illustrious manifesto of the principles of modern thinking, however, bluntly declares that the speculative philosophy of antiquity and of the Middle Ages must finally be replaced by a new philosophy,--a "practical" philosophy!

But let us notice one thing: this is not practical in the mild, humanistic, and spiritual sense of the word. It is much rather practical in what we should like to call a "political" sense. For what

is the great goal here? It is, expressly, to make man a possessor and master of nature.

What now finds its genesis, is the era of Western science in fact, the hardest and coldest form intellectualism has ever adopted.

Science, that brilliant new star of technical progress and material prosperity, is finally to take over the intellectual leadership of this world after the bankrupt reign of impractical super-idealists, as some moderns might undoubtedly like to call their predecessors.

Thus the old form of intellectualism--comparatively naive and harmless, after all--is henceforth inexorably replaced by a form more relentless and glaringly one-sided (that is, deficient in human totality) than almost any other. For if idealism without science (factual knowledge) is a bad thing, then science without idealism is ten times worse. Here, too, the exclusiveness appears to be the great misfortune and the fatality. For true totality, also, may have its perfectly affirmative attitude towards intellectual life. And that attitude is just a happy synthesis of those two fateful extremes of isolation.

But back to Descartes, that shrewd and capable initiator: the acuteness of his sagacious genius told him that nothing but the mathematical method would enable man to render himself master of nature within a reasonably brief period of time. In fact, Descartes (together with Galileo) must be regarded as the great founder of mathematical physics. This actually meant an entirely different

direction chosen for the future orientation of philosophy, as compared to that adopted by the philosophers of old.

Well, you may say, but certainly not only the moderns have been spellbound by the peculiar fascination of mathematics. Was that not, for instance, just one of the hobbyhorses of old Pythagoras as well? And heaven knows how far back the passion for mathematical computations may be traced in our history!

That is all very true. But the attitude of a Pythagoras towards mathematics is not entirely the same, we think, as that adopted by our modern world. We would rather insist that his attitude was essentially different. Permit us to call him a rather "idealistic" mathematician. In fact, we have the vision here of a comparatively innocent old theorist, losing himself in some rather impractical ideas far up in the high heavens of pure contemplation; in other words, something akin to our traditional cartoons of the distracted scholar, whose queernesses mean no serious harm to anybody, except perhaps to himself sometimes.

However, that new scientific spirit publicly inaugurated by Descartes is not quite as harmless as that; we mean harmless considered from our special point of view. It has been claimed--and it would be difficult to invalidate the claim--that Descartes definitively eliminated quality in favour of quantity. We shall presently show more precisely what we understand by the special "harmfulness" and the special "hardness" inherent in the spirit of modern science. But let us first have a glance at some aspects the

dualism of body and soul tends to adopt in the new age that is dawning.

Chapter 34

Anthropological Views in the Renaissance

What are the relationships between Platonism and Aristotelianism in the philosophical and anthropological activity of the Renaissance period?

Through the Academy of Florence, under the leadership of Marsilio Ficino, Plato's ideas have a veritable renaissance of their own. Both Ficino and Pico, another outstanding figure of the Florentine Academy, were thinkers of profound erudition and original creative power. Their school soon became the centre of a new Platonic influence in Europe. In England, for instance, the Florentine Academy exerted an influence which is clearly visible in the so-called Cambridge School of British thinking and theology. Ernst Cassirer has given a very interesting study on this Italian influence on the rebirth of Platonism in modern England.[1]

To our mind, there is a tinge of actual sadness pervading the whole history of that movement towards a Platonic reawakening right in the core of Western Christianity. Probably any attempt to create harmony and wholeness where there is nothing but discord and disintegration in the fundamental make-up, is bound to have something tragic about it. The battle between faith and knowledge has been the fateful disturber of inward peace with Occidental man for a long time. From this new secularized culture there seem to be no paths leading back to a genuine Christian culture of the old type.

True, the cultural spirit of antiquity, embraced by this Western World, as it is being ushered into the era of modern times, is not exactly the same as the paganism of old. It is a new paganism, but sometimes a paganism even more pagan than the old one. Its distance from Christianity has become greater, as it were. It is a paganism more titanic--wilfully and deliberately titanic--than that of antiquity had ever been. Today there is no more pia philosophia--anxious to give at least a certain illusion of a reconciliation. The days have passed when it was naively believed that the virtue-conscious and heaven-bound Plato could still be reconciled with Jesus Christ.

To be sure, some of the most enthusiastic idealists of the Florentine Academy may one have imagined that they had finally knit the knot of wonderful synthesis between Platonic and Plotinian Eros on the one hand, and the Christian Agape on the other. But men like Giordano Bruno were also eminently characteristic of the Renaissance. And such men seemed bent on proving to the world that the same Eros, whom pious souls had thought it possible to tame and Christianize, is forever indomitable, and pagan through and through. According to Giordano Bruno, love is "the strongest evidence of titanic power in man".

As time passes, more and more men will have to make the choice between Savonarola and Macchiavelli. The predominant trend of the times is to choose Macchiavelli rather than Savonarola.

The stranger thing, demanding an explanation, is perhaps this: How can some great personalities of the Renaissance imagine the possibility of a reconciliation between a most this-worldly ancient paganism and a Christianity which is bound to be mainly other-worldly, after all?

Here you might perhaps answer, "The Plato the Renaissance Platonists--or any Platonists--want to reconcile with Christ, is, himself, mainly otherworldly, of course."

No, that is not quite true, as far as the Florentine Plato is concerned. (And we might add, the same will seem to apply to the Cambridge Plato.) This Plato is obviously more this-worldly in essential respects than the Athenian one ever used to be. To Marsilio Ficino and Pico della Mirandola the outstanding element of Platonism is the Platonic (and Plotinian) doctrines of Eros and Beauty.

Here the very importance of the question of the Renaissance attitude towards the dualism of mind and body obliges us to make some retrospective movements: we recall Timaios's risk of inconsistency at the moment when he was to explain the strange fact that pure being has changed into becoming. The Platonists of the Renaissance could freely refer to Plotinus. In fact, he had elaborated considerably just on the idea of beauty in this material world. Right in the midst of his radical spiritualism Plotinus has indeed, made almost incredible allowances in favour of concern about quite

temporal things, on the part of the Eternal Idea. In the Enncads this rather sensational condescension is justified as follows:

To communicate essence and perfection to the body is therefore, for the soul, not an unmixed evil; for the providential care granted to an inferior nature does not hinder him who grants it from himself remaining in a state of perfection. (Enn. III, Book I, Ch. 10)

According to Plotinus, the fact that the divine once fell in love with the non-divine, is only one further sign of the former's nobility, its endless superiority over the latter.

So it is not considered inconsistent with the divine nature of the soul, either, that she simply enters into a body. Her attitude is perfectly decent and laudable. "She descends here below by a voluntary inclination--for the purpose of developing her power, and to adorn what is below" (Enn. IV, Book VIII).

No wonder that Renaissance philosophers, so strongly concerned about the dignity of the human soul, as well as about the excellence of this-worldly beauty, paid close attention to an ancient message of this kind.

Of course we may say that the great power which Christianity, too, introduces, in order to account for the fact of creation, is just Love. Plotinus, such an explanation in terms of Eros, to account for the existence of a material and temporal world of things, has certainly not come from Christian sources. His situation is also very

different from that of the Christian thinker. He is under the conscious pressure of a painful problem unknown to Christian thought: according to the general tenets of his philosophy the existence of that temporal and material world is just as glaringly inconsistent and inexplicable as it once had been to Plato. And to whom could he go with his problems, if not to Plato? We must assume that he did go to him. If so, did he find any consolation? We should not be so sure that he found nothing at all. Perhaps this was precisely where he found that queer idea of introducing Eros as the great solution.

In fact, the great master himself, in his Symposium, seems ta attribute, precisely to Love, the role as a sort of mediator between the divine and the human. In the Symposium we find this clear trend regarding the nature of Eros: he is neither completely god nor completely man--neither absolutely immortal nor absolutely mortal.

He is a great spirit (daimon), and, like all spirits, he is intermediate between the divine and the mortal. (Symp. 202)

And what is his power, his allotted mission?

He interprets ... between gods and men, conveying and taking across to the gods the prayers and sacrifices of men, and to men the commands and replies of the gods. He is the mediator who spans the chasm which divides them, and therefore in him all is bound together, and through him the arts of the prophet and the priest... find their way. (Ibid.)

In Plato's own days any mention of so "this-worldly" things as "love" and "beauty" may have been neglected as comparatively inessential to the philosophy of the Idea. But the world was destined to come to a time when such matters would tend to be considered as really essential to the realms of the spirit. And the Renaissance is, in the highest degree, just such a time. No wonder, then, that idealist in the era of the Renaissance and Humanism pay quite particular attention to these items--also in direct connection with the very ideology of Platonic philosophy.

So, in the present case, we should think it more than natural that Eros would be grasped as simply the great mysterious trait d'union explaining the inexplicable; we mean that long-sought bridge between two entirely incommensurable worlds, the great enigma we saw in Timaios. Eros is the great medium. No wonder he is described as a "formidable enchanter" (203). He is the medium of "sacrifices and mysteries and charms and all prophecy and incantation".

Here is something most indicative of the endless distance between God and man, according to Platonic idealism: that is, the distance between the general, impersonal Idea and the particular human individual. Nothing less than a veritable "sorcerer", a "sophist", could be expected to bridge such a chasm.

For God mingles not with man; but through Love all the intercourse and converse of god with man, whether awake or asleep,

is carried on. The wisdom which understands this is spiritual; all other wisdom, such as that of arts and handicrafts, is mean and vulgar. Now these spirits of intermediate powers are many and diverse, and one of them is Love. (Ibid.)

Just in order to carry out this mysterious mission of mediation, Plato's Eros is bound to be a curious "in-between", something lower than God and higher than man. Of course, the Christian Love is something very different. It is a quality so essential to God Himself that He simply identifies Himself with it. Yet there is no limit to the degree in which man, too, can partake of it. Lowliness is here no hindrance at all. In fact, the more humble a person is, the more he has appropriated of Love. For the essence of Love is humility. "The greatest among you shall be the servant of all" (Matt. xx: 26).

We shall see, in our next book, how little that Eros of pagan thought actually has in common, by and large, with the Christian Agape. Here we must mainly limit our examination to the part he plays in the properly secular Beauty cult of both Grecian antiquity and Italian Renaissance.

Even to Plato "love is the love of beauty". And here the Renaissance worshipers of mundane beauty certainly did not tend to interpret him as meaning moral beauty only, or even principally. Admittedly the reader who peruses the following pages of that context in the Symposium may be inclined to assume that the thing Socrates (Plato's mouthpiece) there speaks about is rather the more intellectual and "celestial" aspects of love. On the other hand, he

will also have to notice some striking features in the curious myth Diotima produces for the young philosopher's enlightenment, regarding the birth and subsequent deportment of that multifarius fellow, Eros. It would, indeed, be somewhat beside the rigid truth to maintain that everything here is suggestive of "Platonic love" exclusively. Eros is actually described as "always plotting against the fair and the good".

He is bold, enterprising, strong, a mighty hunter, always weaving some intrigue or other, keen in the pursuit of wisdom, fertile in resources, a philosopher at all times, terrible as an enchanter, sorcerer, sophist. He is by nature neither mortal nor immortal, but alive and flourishing at one moment when he is in plenty, and dead at another moment, and again alive by reason of his father's nature. But that which is always flowing in, is always flowing out, and so he is never in want and never in wealth. (203)

Such descriptions of that remarkable "daimon" leave a serious question in our mind: Is not Plato's Eros fairly identical with Giordano Bruno's Eros? We are thinking of a certain seething volcano of titanic forces in the explosive depth of human nature--above all, the irrepressible passion of infinitude, which refuses to halt at any conventional borders or barriers of the properly finite, man's appropriate domain. That is the titanism which we have seen as the extreme symptom of defiant Adulthood in the awakening of a new age. It is the consciously arising spirit of egocentricity in modern times, and in every possible respect a diametrical contrast to

Agape; we are particularly referring to Agape as the essence of alterocentricity, Agape as the spirit of lowliness.

It may seem bold on our part to simply make Eros into a general symbol of that disruptive and desperate attempt in man to break the bounds of his nature as the finite one, reaching heedlessly and stubbornly out for the infinite; that is, the spirit of self-sufficiency in its most bitterly defiant mood. But in the light of our historical research, following the trend of spiritualism down from century to century in our Western World, we feel that we have ample evidence to justify a specification of our diagnosis in the following terms. In the inexorable craving for immortality, as this is seen to assert itself in the history of mankind (as far as we have had opportunity to observe this historical drama) there is exactly that same disruption and desperation. Pagan man's titanic and autarchic grasping out for "immortality"--even at the risk of landing on the barren shores of a vain nirvana or a totally meaningless universal automatism--well, this whole frenzy is "erotic" in the peculiarly Platonic sense: It is autarkes!

By the way, such bold coupling together of the idea of "Eros" and the idea of "Immortality" is not only one that seems fully justified to us by the trend which proud anthropocentric spiritualism and semireligious immortalsoulism have taken in post-Platonic times, particularly in these ultra-modern times. No, that coupling together of Eros on one hand, and a man-made (self-sufficient) sham-immortalism on the other, is expressly suggested by Plato

himself in his Banquet. Just listen to Diotima inquiring into the secrets of Eros's nature:

What is the manner of the pursuit? What are they doing who show all this eagerness and heat which is called love? And what is the object they have in view?

Her own answer follows promptly. And it is obviously meant to apply both to carnal, secular love and to love as "a desire for the everlasting possession of good" in the widest sense:

The object which they have in view is birth in beauty, whether of body or of soul... There is a certain age in which human nature is desirous of procreation--a procreation which must be in beauty, and not in deformity; and this procreation is the union of man and woman, and is a divine thing; for conception and generation are an immortal principle in the mortal creature. But the deformed is always inharmonious with the divine, and the beautiful is harmonious. Beauty then is the destiny or goddess of parturition who presides at birth. (206)

Now you may have a very legitimate and very important question here: Is that human urge towards "birth in beauty", in its very essence, necessarily a pagan phenomenon? Your question is concerned with the urge as such, whether it appears in antiquity or in the Renaissance, or at any time. It is necessarily pagan to harbour in one's breast an ardent desire for some lasting creation? And notice, you may say, here it is even a question of realizing

something outside oneself. It is a question of admiring the beautiful in a most tangible everyday world, perhaps even personally bearing it into that world, an active existential engagement in what the artist would call birth in beauty! Is this necessarily pagan? Is this human attempt at a certain "procreation", a certain self-transcendence, a certain eternalization of what is most valuable in man--is this absolutely objectionable from a Christian point of view?

By no means. All this may be consistent with the sternest Christianity. In fact, we would find it a lot more doubtful to answer in the affirmative if you asked the opposite question: Is this truly consistent with Platonic spiritualism, or neo-Platonic spiritualism? What right, in fact, could Plato or Plotinus actually have to praise the beauty of bodies or any this-worldly things? It is the ingenuous child, not the ingenious, sophisticated philosopher, who is consistent with himself when he reaches out to contact or create such things in the living context of his everyday human life. The consistent spiritualist philosopher has no logical right whatsoever to "bear" anything whatsoever of a truly beautiful and lasting nature. The consistent trend of Plato's celestial Eros would rather be to "bear" some sort of "beauty" in a stringently abstract sense, and to "create" some sort of "lastingness" of a correspondingly invisible fabric. And this is not what realistic men call birth; this they call abortion.

God forbid, however, that our reader should think lightly of this "scramble for nothingness", called "Eros" by Plato and Plotinus, and preferably "spiritualism" or "disruption" by us. It would be particularly fateful to let the impression prevail:

Those vain climbing maneuvers of self-sufficient pagan thinking are just laughable, nothing more.

Oh no, among naturally gullible and vain human beings, like you and me, children of the modern West, a cunningly deceptive device, like that of the spiritualist Eros, is a lethal danger.

But how, then, does this peculiar "erotic" trauma practically affect us?

Let us go back for a moment to the case of that frankly confessing "sentimental" Friedrich Schiller; he is, as we have pointed out (pp. 90-103), the typical representative of a modern Western culture. We remember that when the great German dramatist spoke about "der sentimentalische Dichter", he meant contemporary Western man. He meant himself. Had he known you and me, he might have meant particularly us. He meant any neo-idealist of a post-Platonic world. And now, what did he say about this "sentimentalist", this "super-idealist" of an unchanging world?

"For eternity only will he sow and plant."

That sounds awfully nice, doesn’t it? It sounds "idealistic", even in a rather human--and one might say naively Christian--sense of "idealism". But be not deceived! Please remember the formidable goal that outspoken modern Occidental, Friedrich Schiller, had set

for his own life. What pinnacles of glorious achievement was he reaching out for?

"The highest enjoyment a thinking spirit can realize: greatness in the world, immortality of the name." (sic!)

"Unsterblichkeit des Namens!" These last words of his statement are the ones we should like to dwell upon here in a particular way. "Immortality--of the name"--that is, indeed, what we would venture to call a rather "abstract" or "ideal" type of survival.

We want to be quite plain and deadly earnest in our inquiry: Could any "immortality" be more eligible for the negative epithet of sham immortality than this? Could any "eternity" be more correctly qualified as a pseudo-eternity?

The blunt accusation we feel in duty bound to bring up against Plato's Eros--as the dawn of modern times seem so eager to embrace him--is nothing more and nothing less than this: sheer vanity; that is: a deleterious vanity, not just emptiness as a neutral value, an innocuous trifle.

And what, now, is the uncontradictable testimony of history in this respect?

Just from the days of the Renaissance, there has been, in this culture of ours, a steadily increasing number of fame-craving

intellectuals, just passionately climbing on and on, simply exchanging the stern realities of modest human lives, peace-enjoying lives, for the purest phantasms of an imaginary human glory.

What has this vain-glorious pride of a mental boundlessness, a fighting for the stars, really given in return to the new sentimental, walking so faithfully in Giordano Bruno's footsteps? Nothing, absolutely nothing--unless, indeed, that desperate state of inward disruption, the convulsive agony ringing like an infernal crescendo of idealist despair through Schiller's pathetic words about the "sentimental" modern man:

What he demands of himself is infinite, but everything he achieves is limited.

What could be more frustrating than this, or more disastrous to totality and meaningfulness in human life?

So here, then, appears--by way of contrast--the advantage falling to the lot of the realistic naive: he could sense quite intuitively, as it were: a definite limitation is the natural destiny of every human creature. Anything man possesses, in himself, is bound to be finite and mortal. And this is the hard law which disagreeably forces itself upon the attention of any creature--even the one who has opted for utter self-dependence. That option simply means throwing one's existence upon the merciless rocks of a purely secular, non-religious world. The one who makes this choice should at least be realistic

enough to face his predicament: there is no palliative whatsoever to the naked necessity in which man as such finds himself. A mere longing for immortalization has never immortalized anyone.

If that longing for eternity turns into an irrational monomania, a conscious scramble for survival, survival at any price, only one thing can be achieved: the gulf between mortal man's endless desires and their actual fulfillment is rendered more painfully abysmal day by day. This bitter sense of miserable human short-coming--nay, of total failure--is just the tragic disruption which fate inevitably has in store for the relentlessly self-sufficient and irreconcilably schizothyme mind. It is the tragedy of Eros, in terms of the titanic spiritualist's Autarkeia; that is, the fundamental motif of pagan pride, as against Metanoia, Christianity's fundamental motif of humble subjection. A modern Christian author has a striking name for it: "unsanctified spiritual love", or "free-lovism" (8T292). How mysteriously the term "love", with some qualifying epithet, turns up in the records of human destiny! Perverted love is, indeed, a manifold phenomenon. In this case it is identical with self-indulgence, be it of an openly sensual or of a pseudo-spiritual nature; the two may blend confusingly together.

Briefly, there is a genuine infinitude, an absolute immortality towards which human hearts may aspire. There is a fulfillment for which they may long. But here Eros becomes nothing but a limited humanity's miserable makeshift realization of that infinitude, of that immortality and that fulfillment. In other words, there can be little

more than a sigh of bitter resignation in the proclamation Plato makes:

To the mortal creature, generation is a sort of eternity and immortality... Therefore Love is of immortality. (Symp. 206)

As for Plato himself, it would seem particularly incredible to assume that the extremely spiritualizing idealist could really ever have found any true fulfillment and durable satisfaction--or even any consolation at all--in that biological makeshift immortality he mentions under the name of "Eros". In fact, it is only, as far as we can understand, through a curious caprice once more that this radically spiritualistic philosopher suddenly condescends to give particular attention to corporeal beauty at all. Frankly, this must be a logical salto of the most glaring inconsistency.

And now what about the reaction of the Renaissance men, those professedly this-worldly worshipers of natural beauty, when they dived into the Symposium, eagerly scrutinizing the old master's oracular statements on the topic of love and beauty? To be entirely frank, we are somewhat at a loss to understand what on earth those awakening realists of a new age could find of essential value to them in Platonic philosophy! They, of all men, with their growing appreciation of individual humanity and of any tangible beauty this wonderful world of the human senses may still have--they should have every possibility of taking a far more near-to-life attitude towards such living splendours than Plato did.

Indeed, let us confess our viewpoint once more: as realistic historians we must make a distinction between two elements of our Greek heritage: on one hand the ingenuous (the "naive"), on the other the ingenious (the "sentimental", the sophisticatedly adult). Now, from which of these have the Renaissance men inherited their new awakening sense of natural beauty and fragrantly enfolding humanity? We would say their heritage is not a heritage from the exceptional genius Plato. It is a heritage from the common Greek, the congenial naive whom Schiller speaks about.

Accordingly, the wonderland of the past to which they are making their historic pilgrimage is not Plato's land, either. It is the land of plain, average ancient Greeks, an erstwhile naive and near-to-earth people. No doubt, this congeniality applies to the great majority of the "pilgrims" concerned.

Of course that is not necessarily tantamount to saying that they thus avoid every contamination of paganism. Oh no, not by any means, for remember there is another source of paganism besides the spiritualistic one. There is a materialistic category of paganism. And that paganism was definitely better avoided by the medieval spirit than by the spirit of the forthcoming new era.

It is the Renaissance that initiates our world into an age of spirit-forsaken secularism.

But what, then, is the actual and essential difference between the Renaissance way of conceiving beauty--this-worldly beauty--and the medieval way?

The most enraged anti-clericalists in the Renaissance would probably have answered disdainfully: "The medieval "sense of beauty" is the pitiable one you Christians have made your constant sacred tradition: It is a sense mummified and mutilated by monastic asceticism; that is, a gloomy seclusion which never had the courage to be human!"

To us this seems to be a monstrous caricature of the true Christian way of conceiving natural beauty. It would also appear to be a rather unfair wholesale condemnation of the way medieval men related themselves to art, as opposed to the human freshness and generosity of the Renaissance conception. For even right in the midst of the medieval Church there was considerable appreciation of genuine artistic creation. In fact, the Middle Ages testify to the presence of a good number of sincere Christians who did not at all permit a narrow trend of gloominess and seclusion, in terms of contemporary monasticism, to blur their vision of natural beauty. On the contrary, their very ingenuity (which is a medieval quality more than a Renaissance one) caused them to enjoy artistic activities as something perfectly legitimate and actually God-given.

In fact, it would seem highly relevant to our topic to concern ourselves with a peculiarly Christian attitude towards beauty as compared to the attitude manifested by a rather secularized

community. The pivotal point of our theory is still that nothing could be more congenial with totality in human life than a truly Christian attitude towards that life.

Now, the Christian conception of beauty is bound to be intimately and decisively connected with certain theological and cosmological assumptions which appear self-evident to the childlike faith of a Christian: the God of the Christian child is a God who has created even this material world with all its natural glories. He is also the God who has created the human senses with which those glories are perceived. He has ingeniously and deliberately fitted those two creations together in such a way that man may have pleasure--even downright sensuous pleasure.

These simple facts appear so clearly from the deepest spirit pervading the biblical records, that attentive Christians, even in an environment of the most lugubrious seclusion in medieval monasticism, could not lose sight of it. In spite of the severest injunctions, on the part of their pessimistic superiors, to consider as disreputable and sinful everything connected with human bodies or the natural beauties of a surrounding world, many sincere Christians could not be prevailed upon to let go their buoyant Christian optimism--that is, their invincible confidence in the goodness of God, and the meaningfulness of His creation.

The questions many a childishly realistic soul kept asking himself were of the following order: If every natural bodiliness is nothing but an occasion for sin and corruption, why then has God

given me a body at all? Is the body there for no other reason than that it should be chastised, flagellated, killed? Does man's main duty consist of confining himself to the darkest dungeons, shunning every contact with the beauties of this world and with congenial human society? Is it, after all, Satan who has called into existence the fragrant charms of material nature, the sweet attractions of congenial human fellowship?

His own intelligent and orthodox answer was bound to be: No. The Scriptures themselves tell me that Satan has produced nothing but ugliness and evil. So he cannot be the origin of one single genuine pleasure. Take for instance the delightful taste of the fruit making my mouth water. Has Satan made it so wonderfully delicious? Or take that beautiful young companion of mine. Was it Satan who made her so beautiful? Did he create the forces of life in me that make her so particularly attractive to my senses? No, that would be absurd, simply contrary to the plain teachings of Holy Writ. God is the source of every good and pleasant thing in original nature.

Of course I know, as a Christian, the other side of the story too. The truth just mentioned has to be supplemented by another one in order to give the full picture: I cannot unrestrainedly give my life to a thoughtless indulgence in those material and sensual pleasures without exposing my life to the risks of a fateful one-sidedness and actual disintegration. Precisely the fact that God, my Father, has created all those things--and this quite intentionally, for my gratification--that makes it all-important and imperative that I do not

disconnect them from the supreme reality in my life, the reality that He constitutes in it. The very moment when I make that mistake--that felony against the Source of my being--then my situation in the world will be radically and fatally changed. The sacred totality of my deepest life will then be broken.

What is this breach of totality in human life? Since we are speaking about man's relationship to God, and the part this plays even in his aesthetic pleasures, let us state the facts briefly as follows. Beauty enjoyed without thankfulness is a strangely reduced enjoyment. It is also a strangely short-lived enjoyment. The practical effect is exactly the same as if beauty herself were fatefully stunted. So we realize the importance of a sense of connectedness in the person who enjoys. He should be aware of the great Other One, to whom he owes the beauty he admires. Whether he knows it or not, whether he admits it or not, this sense of connectedness is indispensable for both depth and duration in the aesthetic experience. This applies to any individual enjoying himself, to any group of individuals enjoying themselves, and to any kind of enjoyment; particularly an open expression of one's thankfulness would enhance the experience and increase its joy a hundredfold. A simple word of praise to a personally engaged Benefactor, the Author of pleasant experiences, means a world of difference in the inmost quality of those very experiences. Instead of oceans of enjoyment, artistic and otherwise, man contents himself with scanty drops. The secret he has not detected is this: failing to be thankful for the pleasure one enjoys, in nature or anywhere else, simply

means disconnecting them from their spiritual counterpart. It means denying their source and meaning.

And the latter attitude is that of the Modern Adult, as opposed to the Medieval Child. From the Renaissance onwards, men in this world became increasingly disturbed by a curious fear: they were haunted by the idea that the flowers man admires might lose a considerable portion, or some mysterious shade, of their peculiar fragrance at the crucial moment when he gives expression to the fact--or at least pays attention to the thought--that he is indebted for the pleasure of such perceptions to another being--perhaps even a Superior Being.

What an incredible notion, in view of the fact that the very opposite is the obvious truth! What a baleful notion, in view of the fact that all flashes of beauty are doomed to vanish like a flickering torch in the night, as soon as the Source of Life withdraws from the scene.

This is precisely where we discern the fundamentally illusive character of spiritualism, as well as of materialism. Both of them beguile their dupes into believing in a partial reality, a reality lamentably hanging in mid-air, so to speak. Words of profound and well-integrated appreciation of natural beauty must sound most fitting in the mouth of a Christian monist. But the same words in the mouth of a professed pagan dualist would seem strangely mal à propos. By way of example we shall quote a passage from Plotinus, a wonderful one, but, alas, how inconsistent and bizarre when we

think of the general principles otherwise forming the basis of that author's thinking. In fact, what logical right does an inveterate spiritualist have to give such fullness of expression to both the broadest human or "this-worldly" sentiments and the deepest tones of religious meaningfulness.

One rises to the intelligible [or why not simply God, if our translation does not appear too naive] by seeing a shining image of beauty glowing in a human face. Heavy and senseless must be that mind which could contemplate all these visible beauties, this harmony, and this imposing arrangement, this grand panoramic view, furnished by the stars in spite of their distance--without being stirred to enthusiasm, and admiration of their splendour and magnificence. He who can fail to experience such feeling must have failed to observe sense-objects, or know even less the intelligible world [the world of the spirit, we have the boldness to translate interpretively once more]. (Enn. II, Book IX, Ch. 16. Parentheses ours)

In one way we are not surprised at all at the charming effect, of eloquent passages like this one, on the minds of the "neo-neo-Platonists" of the Renaissance. They were simply confused in their basic aesthetic thinking. A firm and realistic attachment to plain natural human beauty was suddenly imagined to be logically consistent with the coldest and most barren phantoms of Platonic idealism (pseudo-realism), after all.

This was a fatal confusion, fatal both to aesthetic theory and to the living forces of inward harmony in the Humanist movement as a whole. In fact, a tragic mistake of unfathomable consequences happened to the Renaissance men as they gradually tended to make a decision in favour of detaching their deepest personal experience of human values (including the value of plain this-worldly beauty) from the idea of a personal God, individually intervening in the affairs of men; that is, an idea transmitted to them by the still God-dependent and naively God-trusting men of the Middle Ages. In the same degree as a new generation of ostentatiously self-dependent (but inwardly increasingly insecure) men came to despise the best, together with the worst, in their predecessors" heritage, a baleful disruption was bound to take place in their deepest hearts. Proudly and radically they kept on severing their ties with medieval traditions. This was destined to include a more or less conscious emancipation from an age-old belief in a personal Creator; that is, a God generously planning and dispensing of every single one of those this-worldly values with which he insists on surrounding man in his daily life.

Anyway, a most ironic interlude happened in history: the men who were to become so famous for eagerly making their way to the very sources of things ("ad fontes"), happened to be the very ones who gradually lost sight of the Source par excellence, the Source of their most cherished beauties, of any pleasure ever coming to the life of any human being. Accordingly they lost sight of their essential connections. This, in turn, caused them to lose their very bearings in life, their orientation towards the things outside themselves, and

greater than themselves. The primordial element of gratitude was left out of their life's final account, their main balance as artists and as men. From that point on, they had the sad fate of seeing their dearest values crumbling to pieces in their hands. This is simply the tragic story of waning totality in modern times. The one great salvationary force in human lives is seen to fight a losing battle in the Western World; that is a battle first and foremost against most subtle waves of spiritualist irrealism, waves rising again and again in the most incredible ways and in the most unexpected places.

So much for Platonism in the Renaissance. Is there any similar revival of Aristotelianism? Yes, indeed. Let us leave the Florentine Academy now for the Paduan school. Its wholehearted Aristotelians are eminently Renaissance-minded in several excellent respects. For instance, they too favour the famous principle contained in the resounding catchword, ad fontes. The Paduan scholars make a noteworthy and praiseworthy effort to go right back to the original Aristotle. That is, not the Aristotle of scholasticism, as Averroes for instance had interpreted him. What had characterized Averroistic philosophy was a marked impersonalism and typically collectivistic views. Of course these had not applied to all scholastic interpretations of Aristotle. We have already seen undeniably individualistic traits flourishing fairly well even in the Middle Ages, particularly in men strongly influenced by the Christian Gospel, such as Thomas Aquinas.

To expect any truly humanistic trends from the Averroists would be rather unreasonable, anyway. Their views had never

distinguished themselves as particularly anthropocentric in any respect. The sad thing, however, is that this rule applies to medieval Aristotelianism by and large: the really outstanding "natural biologist", Aristotle, the great realistic "scientist" who had discovered man, the individual--this Aristotle had almost completely been lost sight of in the maze of other trends. Indeed, he had disappeared under a thick layer of dry abstraction, produced, the some extent, by the illustrious Latin translations that intended to make him accessible to medieval man. Now the competent Humanist philologues saw it as their special task to go right down to the underlying realities, the tangible, literal Aristotle, as the original texts might reveal him.

Thus Aristotle, the genuine realist and naturalist of antiquity, was fairly well rediscovered. There was one particularly outstanding Renaissance philosopher who had the gift for rediscovering Aristotle. That was Pietro Pomponazzi. He had a sufficient trend towards naturalism himself to catch hold of the very spirit of the long-forgotten ancient hero.

To our historical study of mind-body realism versus spiritualist splitness, this Italian scholar is particularly interesting, not only because he is bold enough to proclaim, in his oral teaching, that man is one, but particularly because he even published a startling book On the Immortality of the Soul, where, in reality, he writes about the mortality of the soul. That is almost too bold to be imagined. His book could not fail to arouse the greatest attention. Its strong reverberations in contemporary circles of ecclesiastical leaders

obliged the author to follow up with an "Apology" which is not much less attention-stirring.

J.H. Randall, in his commentaries to a modern edition, qualifies Pomponazzi's treatise on the "immortality" of the soul as epoch-making. That is a strong word. We think it is indeed too strong. Of course Pomponazzi's publication was a most sensational one, as we shall soon see. But was it literally epoch-making? Did it create any really new epoch in the anthropology of the times?

Hardly. There was a crying need for something thoroughly epoch-making in the domain of anthropological views, after centuries of accumulated darkness regarding human nature and human destiny, in life and death. But, sad to say, that new epoch failed to dawn. Obviously two essential conditions were still unfavourable:

1) Contemporary humanity was too heavily under the spell of religious dogmas of immortalsoulism to receive any revolutionarily new outlook on human nature.

2) Pomponazzi himself was not revolutionary enough, or consistent enough. To be sure, he goes "ad fontes" with an ardour and an erudition which are, both of them, irreproachably Humanistic in the best sense of the term. Nevertheless, he does not go sufficiently "ad fontes" in all the fields that are relevant to his "revolution". Christianity was such a field. Or should we rather say: Christendom with its endless potential for historical change. How

could any student of philosophical anthropology in the Western World neglect to take into account the tremendous impact of historical Christianity upon anthropological views? And here the strange thing happens: no sooner does the "presumptuous doubter" Pomponazzi sense the presence of an authoritative Christendom standing in front of him, than he is found lying prostrate at the feet of that many-headed oracle, issuing its infallible statutes, decisive for life and death. The roaring lion has been transformed into a tail-wagging lap dog.

In fact, there is something like an irony of fate in this spectacle: the virulently anticlerical Pomponazzi is piteously prevented from rendering his book on human mortality an epoch-making one. What has prevented him? His own obsequious attitude towards the clergy of his day!

One thing is certain: at the bottom of his heart, Pomponazzi was anticlerical. Worse than that, he was probably to some extent anti-Christian. And there is no reason to be astonished at this. In him, as in so many others of this "tougher" generation, a certain increasing irreligiousness has to be admitted; that is, a certain departure from the prevailing childlikeness of the Middle Ages, some would say a legitimate departure from the prevailing childishness of that superstitious era. It is difficult to agree on the terms sometimes. We shall try to discuss the topic at greater depth in our third book. Let us summarily say, so far, that any genuine Renaissance personality is obviously a representative of a world culture "coming of age". So how could he hope to escape entirely the symptomatic traits of

adolescence, a certain harmony-disturbing introspection and egocentricity? This was the allotted part of the Renaissance. It was destined to be the Adolescent Era of the Western World, the age when our culture became "adult".

Almost in spite of themselves, we might be tempted to say, numerous pious men of sterling integrity and the most noble disposition, as far as human evaluations can measure these traits, now suddenly enter the turbulent currents of anticlericalism, or other types of an active rebellion against the established order of things.

To be sure, a willful enslavement of the weaker consciences, and an ugly hypocrisy holding sway in certain ecclesiastical circles, did not constitute the most favourable images to keep brandishing before the eyes of a new generation at this time of a general awakening. The people waking up here had an interior vision of a new dignity for individual human beings dawning upon their minds. And that vision did not at all agree with the prevailing background of dark, "medieval" conditions. Under such circumstances the breaking forth of something new, from the narrow limits of the old, was almost bound to have a tinge of iconoclasm about it. It took the form of a proud and feverish emancipation from the unworthy shackles of the past. Through a coincidence of unfortunate events, the ardent anthropocentricity of this turbulent age was somehow doomed to be at the same time--and with fateful consequences--just its furious egocentricity.

Anyway, this is the general setting, the undercurrent of a prevailing "spiritual" mood, we must keep in mind when we visualize Pomponazzi and his first major work entering upon the scene. That conscientious Aristotelian has arrived at a sensational conclusion--sensational from the viewpoint of the contemporary Church, that is: the human soul is essentially mortal. It is simply doomed to die with the body! That view--and only that view--is in strict accordance with the true Aristotle. It is also in accordance with all pure reason. Averroes, to be sure, has affirmed that the "intellective" soul is distinct in its existence ("realiter") from the corruptible soul. According to him, that so-called "intellective"--and allegedly "immortal"--soul is "one in number in all men"; in other words, entirely devoid of every element of the individual and the personal! But was not that just the element which the Christian teachers of the Middle Ages could never afford to give up and still remain Christian?

Now Pomponazzi seems to challenge the naive dreamers of a "Christian" philosophy dreadfully. They imagine that they can have stern classical philosophy and immortalsoulism at the same time. But the non-Christian thinkers speak very clearly and very unsentimentally about "the corruptible soul". This is the inescapable epithet of the "multiple soul" (de immortalitate animae, III).

And that "multiple" soul is the only one any genuine child of man would care about. It is also the soul any child of the Christian faith would care about. For it is the soul having one different consciousness for each individual person. And now the sad message

finally comes through: the only human soul really worthwhile is the one that is doomed to die!

Manifestly that is also the soul which has Pomponazzi's full sympathy. He takes sides unreservedly with that soul. This is not at all astonishing, by the way. As a true son of the Renaissance he is a wholehearted individualist. And how, then, should he ever manage to feel really attracted by that cold and bodiless phantom of a "common" or "collective" intellect, adorning itself with the vain epithet of "immortal". In his realistic ears that sounds like utter emptiness. What use can he make of an immortality that is absolutely impersonal? To him, a solid personalism, even strictly limited to this life, is a thousand times better to have, and be sure about, than any impersonalism which "lives" forever!

Moreover, the decisive point to Pomponazzi, as an historian, is this: What did Aristotle teach? In that venerable old philosopher he does not find any convincing evidence whatsoever of a belief in any separable existence of two essentially different souls in man.

This is not only in itself most false; it is unintelligible and monstrous and quite foreign to Aristotle. (Ibid., IV)

But how, then, did Averroes and other Aristotelians come to be so convinced about the theory of the "two different" souls? Pomponazzi feels that too many unwarranted conclusions, indeed, have been drawn from Aristotle's famous statement in De anima, III, 30. Admittedly, the philosopher does say here, "If the intellect is

taken by itself, it is nowise dependent on any phantasm." And this is "said very cleverly", Pomponazzi comments. Nevertheless, "it seems to profit nothing," he goes on, "because according to the common definition of the soul, the soul is the act of the body; that is, physical and organic, etc; therefore the intellective soul is the act of a physical and organic body. Since therefore the intellect, in its being, is the act of a physical and organic body, it will thus also depend, in all its functionings, on some organ, either as subject or as object. Hence it will never be released from some organ."

Now, what does he think, then, about the way Thomas manages to interpret Aristotle? That is bluntly stated: Thomas actually fails to build on reason in this case. Of course, his eager concern is to save the immortal-soul theory. And his understanding critic Pomponazzi does not find it unnatural at all, for a Christian, to be concerned about that. The fact is evident: Thomas has simply opted for a philosophy of immortality. The only sad thing however, is that he has not been consistent in his option. For what would the only logical follow-up have been where a theory of human immortality is assumed? Of course a consistent philosophical reasoning would have demanded that he also accept here, as a self-evident corollary of that immortality, the impersonalism which is bound to go along with it!

Now, admittedly, that impersonalism is fundamentally foreign to the spirit of Christianity. In other words, for the purpose of saving his Christian personalism, a Christian (here Thomas) is obviously constrained to take his refuge, not in philosophical reason, but rather

in the religious miracle. He actually introduces a non-philosophical means of multiplying and individuating human intellect in the beyond: nothing less than a special act of individual creation is necessary. This, however, is neither Platonic spiritualism, nor Aristotelian naturalism. We may be quite sure of that.

But what is it then? It is the unique way of the Christian wonder, the only way found capable of realistically saving totality in human lives.

However, do not imagine that the humanist Pomponazzi opts for this theory of a divine creation, a miraculous recreation. That alternative of a naive Judeo-Christian spirituality would appear too God-dependent, indeed, for an increasingly self-dependent Renaissance spirit. The new contours gradually coming into focus, even in Pomponazzi's work "De immortalitate", are those of a certain "emancipated naturalism". We are not speaking about a radically materialistic emancipation. No, this is rather the typical emancipation of humanism. The emancipated humanist turns gradually, but systematically, away from theological dogmas towards more purely human trends of reasoning. At the same time he turns away from certain philosophical dogmas, towards more prevailingly scientific trends of reasoning.

These peculiar trends of a gradual disengagement from the traditional tracks of time-honoured authority imply potentials of both good and evil, considered from the viewpoint of spiritual totality. Let us take up a most relevant question here, namely the

question of the immortality of the human soul. The movements of humanist emancipation do not provide any escape from the problem of immortality. On the contrary, a veritable crisis starts brewing up in the very heart of humanist thought and feeling relative to the question of human survival.

On one hand there is that irrepressible awaking of scientific realism. According to the basic principles of that realism, there is no room for any theory of a logically developing personal immortality.

On the other hand, the Renaissance means the forceful awakening of a profound interior anxiety, an increasing unrest in human minds. That is an awakening of the deepest conscience, an intense awareness of human dignity, a desperate craving for meaningfulness in human lives. How could the claims of that endless dignity and meaning be satisfied by anything less than a human personalism of an absolutely unbroken type? Man's life must be indestructible, interminable. Nothing short of eternity could ever satisfy the thirst for infinitude, inherent in the passionate minds of Renaissance men.

There was almost bound to be a violent clash, then, between outward facts and inward aspirations in the humanist's life, i.e. between his ever increasing realism and his ever increasing idealism. This is the very gist of the crisis of the Renaissance anthropologist, as we have come to look upon him. To have one's mind so mercilessly torn in two opposite directions, would seem to be a situation that predisposes for serious disruption.

Christianity, it is true, has its own peculiar remedy for any disruptive pointedness of the issues--a pointedness pushing them otherwise right onto the precipice of such a crisis. It has its unique means of reconciliation, which is a dependence, not on self, but on God, on an intervention from an outside Reality. But this "alterocentricity" is a Christian way out. It is spiritual in the sense of Christian totality! The Renaissance, however, is not spiritual in this sense. It is not properly religious in the sense of the Christian Child. If it is spiritual and religious at all, that must be in the sense of the Pagan Adult.

Anyway, the heroes of this increasingly secularized movement do not find the solution to their problem in the mystery for which the typical child keeps reaching out. They find it--or at least they look for it, with the turbulence of their adolescent hearts--in entirely different fields.

The would-be realists among them insist on seeking it right in the natural facts of this present pitiless world. Pomponazzi, for one, simply abandons the idealist's convulsive fight for immortality. To his mind comes the alternative "solution" of trying to establish, instead, a sort of modus vivendi with downright mortality! A startling paradox, you may rightly say, both in linguistic terms and in a deeper meaning: the only "way out" is to make life on this side as intensely alive as possible, as glowingly personal and as deeply meaningful as any man can ever make it.

Of course the whole stupefying trend of a Renaissance secularization is already present in the author's bold proclamation of this pagan self-sufficiency, in its materialistic form, as a principle of escape, or of "surmounting". We shall consider the second alternative, the spiritualistic one, in a little while.

But now first this would-be realistic attempt to overcome the problem: let us have a closer look at Pomponazzi's heroic endeavour to make the question a purely "this-worldly" one. Why was this no real solution? Why did it become part of the great disruption, rather than a realistic solution? Simply because it represented a blow in the face, a blunt negation of that most legitimate thirst for unbrokenness and infinitude inspiring the minds and the hearts of Renaissance men.

A genuine longing for eternity and perfection constituted part and parcel of that very dignity, of which intensely vibrating human minds in an awakening new age had become so disturbingly conscious. That longing, in itself, was not disruptive. What, then, was disruptive? The frustration that is always bound to follow when nothing but a potion of oblivion is offered to the longing soul, in place of the living water.

And any humanist should be truthful enough to face the sad facts about Pomponazzi's heroic endeavours in his "De immortalitate". It would be very far from the truth to affirm that he made a successful job of accepting death as the reality it actually constitutes. He rather makes the subterfuge of "accepting" it by

minimizing its real significance. He exhausts his energies in trying to explain away its naked monstrosity, its total irreconcilability to the deepest aspirations of true humanism: meaningfulness in the destinies of human beings.

In fact, the formidable giant with whom Pomponazzi has to wrestle most desperately is just Finality. And here a cruel attack from outside comes to aggravate his torture, right in the midst of that nightmare battle he has to fight with his own conscience; that is, with the ideals of a meaningfulness and a beauty which any true Renaissance humanist is bound to harbour in his inmost heart.

The realistic Aristotelian simply could not avoid the shrill voices of his most furious adversaries, the Platonic idealists surrounding him like buzzing wasps: "How in the world," they argued sneeringly, "can such a hideous thing as simple mortality be compatible at all with the dignified position a humanist is bound to assume for any one so closely related to the eternal and the divine as is the Reasonable Soul, the kingly intellect of speculative men? How could this noble substance be supposed to die the ignominious death of miserable creatures entirely given to their quite animal, vegetative, and sordidly practical functions? How could death be an end worthy of truly intelligent, time-transcending minds?"

Pomponazzi hates this voice ringing so piercingly and so painfully in his ears. He does not realize to what extent this voice, too, is vain and pitiably impotent, in its turn, being nothing but the hollow echo of an inherently human intellectual pride. He feels the

need of bracing himself against it. In his response he is tempted to adopt an attitude of similar intellectualism, although not perhaps exactly of similar pride. Striving convulsively, and with the courage of despair, to get on honourable terms with the finality argument--and still maintain the "reasonability" of death--he argues approximately as follows. It is true that each thing has an end, a meaningful goal. That end, however, is not necessarily what reaches the highest peak of perfection, or, in the author's own words, "what is good to a greater degree". No, it is sufficient that the end should be in accordance with "the thing's nature"!

Although it is better to sense than not to sense, it does not suit a stone to sense, nor would it be for the good of the stone; for then it would no longer be a stone. (XIV)

The same must be taken into consideration when an end is assigned to man. Not all men can participate perfectly in the theoretical intellect! (Obviously this was looked upon as the highest level of human dignity, even by the humanist Pomponazzi, just as it had unfailingly been by intellectuals in previous ages, for instance Plato and Aristotle in antiquity.) They cannot all be philosophers, mathematicians, etc. In fact, mankind would not long subsist if that were the case. There must be practical workers also. In this field all men reach a certain perfection; and they should reach it; the continued existence and well-being of mankind depend upon it. However, into this "lower" category of human proficiency Pomponazzi evidently also relegates--please note the remarkable point--moral virtue: all men can be, and ought to be, "of good

character". To the preservation of the human race, as a collective unit, it is most important that the individuals should be morally virtuous!

And now we come to the salient point in Pomponazzi's argument. Immortality is not an absolute requirement, or an absolute good. The demands of finality in human life may be more properly met without it. In view of the practical conditions just mentioned, you see, even without an immortal soul--or precisely without it.

Man can have the end which suits man universally; the end that belongs to the most perfect part he can not have. (Ibid.)

What is that "most perfect part"? It is, obviously, the exquisite genius characterized by extreme intelligibility, absolute speculativeness, the perfect abstraction. But this is an ideal which man, as we commonly know him, cannot reach. It is a spiritualism so divine, a "purification" process so minute, cutting apart, as it were, a certain layer of "pure spirit" so thin and fine that it would, indeed, be presumptuous for quite ordinary human beings to entertain any hopes of managing it.

A mortal ought not to desire immortal happiness, since the immortal is not fitting for the mortal.

Immortality for man is not fitting! That is the capital point in Pomponazzi's conclusion. Why is it not fitting? Simply because it would, according to Pomponazzi, require of the individual human

being something he does not possess; namely, some kind of perfect intellectuality; that is, something the author of "De immortalitate" obviously considers as the absolute prerequisite for, and the only title to, the eternal pleasures of the immortal gods.

And now what is the conception Pomponazzi has--or at least expounds in this philosophical work--about immortality and divinity? It is not at all a Christian conception. It is a pagan and traditionally philosophical conception. The divine can be nothing but "pure spirit". Incarnation is out of the question entirely. An immortality presupposing such perfect abstraction of the "spiritual" from the "corporeal", of the theoretical from the practical, would not only be impossible to realize, in an everyday human world like ours, but it would be downright detrimental to the "common good" of humanity; that is, "humanity" in terms of the vile plebeian crowd we all know. Only an elite of divine exquisiteness could ever profit from anything as ethereally pure as immortality. Such absolute perfection would be simply destructive to the essence of human creatures as a whole.

Here the humanist certainly goes back to a sense of moderation found in the original Greek, which we are tempted to describe as almost philistine; so sadly does it belie the boldest aspirations of the more heaven-bound type of humanism. Just listen to the Aristotelian Pomponazzi, systematically jacking man's immoderate longings down to a philistine level. Notice, however, that this "fitting level" to which Pomponazzi, in the following passage, is so anxious to have man, as a general species, safely "jacked down" to, is not

necessarily "philistine" in a Judeo-Christian sense. No, it is "philistine" and "inferior" in the modern theorist's sense. The human being is deemed capable, already, of reaching considerable heights of moral excellence. But this is not seen as essential to maximum felicity. Oh no, truly felicitous is only the being endowed with quite other faculties, in addition to the moral ones. Perfection once more means "pure intellect". But it would be presumptuous and unwise for man to aim at such pinnacles of the immortal gods!

Not every limb can have the perfection of the heart or the eye. For then the animal would not subsist. Similarly, if every man were theoretical, the human community would not subsist ... Happiness does not consist in the theoretical power of demonstration as suitable for the whole human race, but as suiting its first principal part. And though the other parts cannot arrive at such happiness, they are still not wholly deprived of all happiness, since they can possess something of the theoretical, and something of the productive, and the practical perfectly. This power can make almost everyone blessed. For farmer or smith, destitute or rich, if his life be moral, can be called happy, and truly so called, and can depart contented with his lot. In addition, besides moral happiness, he can be called a happy farmer or a happy builder, if he operates successfully in agriculture or in house-building, although he is not, on this account, so properly called happy. For these things are not in human power, like the virtues and the vices. Hence the human race is not frustrated in its end, unless it make itself so. (Ibid.)

It is in fair accordance with the principle of finality after all, then, that man should have a less "divine" end. "He should have the end which suits man universally." We might as well say, the end that suits the collective mass, the general multitude.

As far as we can make out, the whole individualism, otherwise so fondly cherished by the humanist Pomponazzi, collapses lamentably here. And what is the reason? Obviously it is his servile adherence to the system of thought, and the conception of human values, peculiar to Greek philosophy. His intellectual allegiance to, and sentimental preference for, this typical paganism, simply bars his way towards a free unfolding of the deepest humanistic yearnings for a really gratifying personalism and a true meaningfulness in human destiny.

In other words, it is a fundamentally pagan intellectualism which forces the newly-awakened Renaissance spirit--with its boundless aspirations towards a perfect unfolding of the human values--back to the narrower circle of its pagan past. It simply prevents him from freely enjoying the beatific and harmony-creating solution to human problem complexes which Christian childlikeness had actually discovered centuries ago.

Christianity had taken up an unflinching battle precisely with the greatest enemies ever threatening the interests of the individual. Christianity had triumphantly vanquished the greatest problems ever known to true individualism: in fact, problems as gigantic as those

of human death and human meaninglessness! And, now, how is this solution received by the Renaissance humanist?

About Pomponazzi, to be sure, we must admit one good thing: he scorns every absurd attempt to deny the main facts at issue. Unlike so many scholastic theologians and philosophers, he does not try for a moment to persuade his readers, and himself, into believing that Aristotle--or even Plato--taught a personal salvation of the human being across the abyss of death and destruction, in any terms that can have the remotest relationship to the Christian concept of salvation.

On the contrary, he makes it brilliantly clear that man must make a definite choice: either Christian faith or philosophical reason; either the irrational hope of Christian revelation or the hard testimony of scientific fact: man dies--full stop.

What Pomponazzi fails to realize is no doubt due to the credulous confidence with which he accepts, in spite of his anticlerical skepticism, the medieval tradition regarding "true Christian" anthropology, and "true Christian" eschatology. He naturally assumes that the theologians are right in claiming that the Gospel teaches the immortality of the human soul. So he deprives himself of the unique discovery and the truly sensational proclamation he might have made in his day, that the earliest documentary sources of Christian beliefs about human nature on one side, and the boldest claims of stern natural science on the same subject on the other, actually go harmoniously hand in hand.They

simply coincide in their respective anthropologies not only up to the critical moment when a human organism ceases to function, but even a considerable stretch beyond that point: a total break happens to the lives of men! If Pomponazzi had gone to the sources, the original documents of Christian anthropology, he would have discovered that the earliest Church Fathers agreed strangely with Aristotle and himself, on essential points. According to true Judeo-Christian realism, there is no automatic survival of the soul, either personal or impersonal; death is not a deceptive illusion, it is a total interruption of all consciousness and all life--as long as it lasts! Not a moment longer, of course. For biblical revelation also sees a time in the future when the conjectures of science on one hand, and the plans of God on the other, are bound to go most radically apart. That is the historic event of a literal resurrection. Here, only, the natural death is triumphantly defied by the supernatural wonder of re-creation.

Pomponazzi's great merit as a hero of the Renaissance and even as "the first philosopher of modern enlightenment"--consists in the unflinching boldness with which he cuts aside the undergrowth of human tradition where he sees it. He has the rare temerity to admit realistically that man dies. His main fault consists in the not so realistic attempt to make it appear as if the fact of a human death actually does not matter so much as men are liable to imagine.

Probably that general tendency to reduce the actual extent of and the tremendous tragedy of human insufficiency, is the greatest fault and the saddest inconsistency of the humanist movement. Perhaps

just Pomponazzi's quite special endeavour to minimize the actual implications of death as a tragic event, is the very endeavour Luther refers to in his writings on Genesis. (For an excellent English translation see the edition by Jaroslav Pelica, 1956, Vol. 13, p. 76):

Theologians of recent times argue almost the same way. For, following the example of pagan thinkers, they say in their funeral sermons that one should not grieve over death, as if it were an evil; for death--so they assert--is a kind of haven in which we are securely sheltered from the troubles and misfortunes to which the life of all men is subject. But this is the worst blindedness, and a further disaster--also a result of original sin--when we thus minimize sin and death, together with all other sorrows of the human race.

Of course Pomponazzi and his followers, way back at the dawn of modern times, are not far behind professed agnostics, like Feuerbach at a later period of Occidental radicalism, as regards their deepest attitude towards death: only at the moment when man fearlessly accepts its certainty, its inescapable reality, only then does life, life on this side of the grave, become filled with meaning and intrinsic value. In their opinion, Christian transcendentalism tends to strip this life of the values it possesses in itself, the only values of which we have a positive assurance.

Pomponazzi's sensational publication on the immortality of the human soul appeared in Bologna in 1516, several years after the author had lectured on the same topic at the University of Ferrara. The work is not at all concluded in terms of an open proclamation

insisting that the immortality beliefs of the Church are contrary to demonstrable truth. The author rather contents himself with pointing out that such beliefs rest upon a foundation of religious faith exclusively. They cannot be philosophically demonstrated to be true.

But evidently this outspokenness was all that was needed in those days in order to call forth a veritable uproar on the part of philosophical opponents, maintaining the official views of the contemporary Church. In order to answer the many attacks made against him, Pomponazzi published an Apologia--in fact a new book on the same topic--in 1517. This work is of a really fiery polemical nature.

But even here we have to do with a fight against Platonic spiritualism, rather than a fight against the Christian religion. In fact, important parts of the book present themselves as a regular defence of the strictly orthodox teachings of the Christian Church on the subject of immortality. Immortality is shown to be not a natural endowment of the human soul but a supernatural act of grace and special intervention on the part of a heavenly Redeemer. It is called forth as an exceptional event of personal re-creation, involving nothing less than a literal resurrection of the body.

In a following work, De nutritione, at the instigation of his colleague Contarini, he commits himself fully and frankly to most unambiguous statements: the intellect, in its nature, is in no wise different from any other material form:

It is indissolubly united to the body in its existence, both as subject and as object; only in its functioning does it arise above the body, act independently, and receive universals. Thus a mortal soul can know immortal truths; it is in its function of knowing, not in any substantial character, that it is separable and impassive and unmixed. (John Herman Randall, Jr., et al., The Renaissance Philosophy of Man, Selections in Translation, 1948, p. 276)

Note:

1. Ernst Cassirer: The Platonic Renaissance in England, 1953.

Chapter 35

Descartes and His Followers in the Hard Paths of Modern Thought

Pomponazzi with his "De immortalitate" was vehemently denounced by his ecclesiastical contemporaries as the man undermining Christian doctrine--and rejecting finality. The true initiator of the spirit of modern science, René Descartes, was not in any similar way denounced as a man undermining Christian doctrine--and rejecting finality. In fact, his contemporaries may, to a large extent, have considered him a fairly good Christian. But we think the characteristic Charles Werner gives to Descartes of a true revolutionary spirit just in the field of the Christian conception of human finality, should be carefully noticed:

When he wants to banish "substantial forms" from philosophy, what he is actually banishing is the principle of quality, activity, and perfection: the soul that organizes matter and makes it alive. (Op. cit. p. 275)

Apart from man, who appears as an exception in the universe, the beings possess no soul whatsoever. Animal life is nothing but a machine. In this respect at least, Descartes rejects every consideration of finality! The Cartesian universe is still a universe created by God, it is true. And that God is said to be a God of perfection sovereign perfection. However, the "perfection" with which that same God has evidently endowed that same universe, is indeed, a sadly reduced perfection. It is "the perfection of

mechanics". Its movements are without any higher goal, without any real sense. No higher aspirations pervade it. Everything happens as if things were devoid of, and foreign to, any spirit of true totality, and strangely impassive towards the admitted perfection which has, allegedly, given birth to them.

We cannot quite agree, however, that antiquity is the only epoch abounding in a purpose-laden philosophy. As we have seen, some thinkers of the Middle Ages--and particularly just those most profoundly influenced by the heritage of Christianity--display a richness in finality and in human personalism rarely found in Greek philosophy. To the genius of medieval thought it was still comparatively easy to understand how the divine can interfere with the human, and how the world here below can have its share in the glories of the high heavens above. But these intuitive understandings of the child were soon to disappear in the cunning machinations of the irretrievably adult. The "rupture between the world and the principle of qualities" is soon made abysmal and bridgeless forever. Or, as Werner puts it:

Things were left defenseless to geometry. (Ibid.)

After Descartes, Spinoza found, in his turn, that the mathematical method was the only suitable one in philosophy. Little wonder that he adds to the title of his Ethica: "more geometrico demonstrata". In fact, this memorable work on a highly spiritual subject is arranged after the pattern of some thesis of geometry, that is, in a sternly theoretical way.

But has not Spinoza actually just abolished the duality of the created world versus the creating God, you may perhaps inquire, referring to his pantheistic views.

As far as just pantheism is concerned, however, we shall soon see to what extent it means, in all its forms, an annihilation of personalism rather than an enhancement of it. Whenever Creator and creation are treated as flowing together, it is not creation that becomes more personal, but the Creator who becomes more impersonal. It is not the created things that gain by appearing more divine, but the creating deity that loses by appearing more profane and commonplace. Above all, pantheism unfailingly constitutes a signal victory of the general over the specific, of the impassively collectivistic over the ardently individualistic.

Spinoza goes to the length of stating that things are derived from the essence of God with the same automatic necessity as the properties of the triangle are derived from its essence. Do any serious consequences devolve from such a view on the relations between visible everyday things of temporal nature and the invisible God of eternity? Yes, to that transcendence of perfection which is so indispensable to purpose and meaning in human destiny, and accordingly fundamental to any true religiousness, it means the inevitable pulverization.

It becomes particularly significant to see what Spinoza regarded as the great advantage of the mathematical method: it delivers us

from the "prejudice" of final causes. To the philosopher, human imagination is the source of that "sad prejudice". For it constantly fools us into believing that things exist for the sake of man--in order to serve his needs and provide for his commodities. When once we succeed in rising (by means of reason, that goes without saying) towards the real knowledge of the facts, then we shall luckily drop those vulgar notions of good and evil that bewilder us now. In front of us nothing will remain except nature alone in her grand eternal necessity!

The newer philosophy has, as a general rule, given up the ancient and medieval aspiration of considering things in their dependence on moral values, a dependence which--as we willingly admit--is far more religious than philosophical in its nature. According as philosophy gradually strips off its religious element, no other development could reasonably be expected.

Here it might of course be objected that even Aristotle, our sturdy old hero of the ancient world, did not go too far in an alterocentric direction, when it comes to ethics. We have seen, indeed, how obstinately he insists upon finding the most valuable life in contemplation, not in moral action. Thus he makes the realm of good into a realm accessible only to an exclusive club of intellectual highbrows, so to speak.

In fact, the Stoic was far more human and broad-minded in this respect. The Stoics placed good within the reach of even the most lowly minds among men. And then Christianity comes and

completes this tendency of "popularizing" the range of ethical unfolding for the human race. Now caritas becomes the wonderful summit, commanding even the highest peaks of scientific and philosophical exploits:

Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect. (Matt. V:48)

The perfection referred to here is not that of general ideas, but that of personal deeds.

How different is the programme of modern thought from this! Descartes announces solemnly and distinctly a purely scientific set of morals. And why does Spinoza think that the mathematical method is the only suitable one, even in ethics? Because that method makes us understand the necessity of things!

Charles Werner thinks there is something very contradictory here. All beings in the universe are exactly what they should be. There is no distinction between the real and the ideal. But then, how can Spinoza demand of us any real effort towards what is good?

In fact, even if, quite logically, he could demand such an effort, how should it at all result in any practical realizations? From our point of view, the bare facts of the case are that we ordinary mortals are simply excluded from the possibility of deriving any inspiration from an outlook on life so hopelessly devoid of any interior

connectedness, devoid of any superior sense, devoid of any higher goal, the sine qua non of all alterocentric orientation.

And what about Kant? Does he restore the equilibrium? His Kritik der reinen Vernunft presents nature as entirely subject to mechanics. Thus a world of liberty is separated from the world of nature. We, however, poor creatures that we are, constitute a part of nature. According to Werner, Kant has not at all succeeded in reconciling our liberty with that hard determinism governing all our actions, as far as we belong to that poor nature subject to the stern laws of mechanics.

If morality is defined as a mere form without any concrete contents, and duty becomes nothing but an abstract conception, the danger is imminent for human beings left in a concrete everyday world.

Certainly, after Kant, paradoxes have not been lacking in morality: for example, a morality without obligation has been proposed. But how timid all these paradoxes seem, compared to the Kantian paradox of a morality without purpose.[1]

The egocentric character of modern philosophy, however, certainly manifests itself much more clearly in the case of Schopenhauer. Here pessimism is not only a conclusion we ourselves may draw from the implicit logic of the system. No, here that pessimism is openly proclaimed as an integrating part of the system. Schopenhauer's inclination towards a Hindu-like mysticism

may also be taken as an immediate indication of a rather fundamental introversion.

Mysticism, we know, is a mental attitude which does not necessarily favour individuality. A very common tendency of the mystic is precisely to have his sense of the personal and the specific wiped out, as it were. His individuality is gradually dissolved into the abstract vagueness of the more general. That very common feature of mysticism makes us doubt very seriously that its radical forms, at least, have any particularly close relationship to that genuine religiousness which we have described as typically alterocentric, and favourable to totality.

On the contrary, we have seen the personal and the individual form essential elements of the alterocentric and the total.

But what about Schopenhauer's pessimism, then; has that also an obvious connection with his attitude towards the individual? Yes, that is precisely the conspicuous fact about this pessimism, now entering European thought in a demonstrative manner hardly known in the history of Europe up to that moment. Schopenhauer's pessimism reveals itself in one thing more than in anything else: its total failure to believe in an individual preservation.

His peculiar attitude towards the problem of mortality versus immortality, one of our main topics in this book, is well expressed by the Dutch student of Schopenhauer, Leonie Muller, in her

dissertation De onsterfelijkheidsgedachte bij Schopenhauer onder invloed van Kant en Plato:

Death, the destruction of individuality, is the adequate correction of our natural egoism. At the moment of death we stop being something we should never have become. Pessimism and an urge to be rescued go together in Schopenhauer's opinion that death takes from us a personality we are unable to correct ourselves.[2]

Dr. Muller here shows how Schopenhauer, from the very beginning of his reasoning, thinks the individual too unimportant to survive. Therefore nature is set upon a preservation of the species. That is a viewpoint we want to emphasize particularly, and compare it to Thomas Aquinas's attitude, which we have recently discussed.

Please notice another thing also: the concept "species" in Schopenhauer's terminology corresponds here to the Platonic idea, one may say. The Greek philosopher's dualism of idea versus world is conceived by Schopenhauer as a dualism of will versus representation (Wille und Vorstellung).

That "Vorstellung" has the serious "handicap" of being concrete and individual. Hence it simply cannot have any better fate than that of being destroyed. The "Wille", contrariwise, being abstract and general--those blessed qualities Plato found to be the noble attributes of the idea--has sufficient value in it to be preserved. Even in the household of nature, anything that is sufficiently collective and general to call itself a whole species, seems to enjoy a similar

prerogative and a similar durability. In fact, who would venture to doubt that the species is more durable? The empirical reality of every day gives proof of that. And vice versa: the obvious destructibility of the individual proves it to be the "illusive value". Nature deems it absolutely unworthy of being preserved. So nature and Schopenhauer seem to agree fairly well in this: they are unanimously pessimistic regarding the real value of all that is individual, all that is most profoundly human. We say that they seem to agree. Nature is apparently pessimistic. We know that it is quite possible to have a very different view of nature, a very different view of human values.

We may just call to mind once more Thomas Aquinas's words:

Etiam ipsa individua sunt de principali intentione naturae. (Even individuals themselves are part of the main intention of nature.)[3]

Anyway, one thing must be clear as crystal: meaningfulness, in the childlike sense, can never do without the salvation of the individual. Nobody is more dependent on the concrete and the specific than the genuine child. And this certainly also applies to the Christian Child, our supreme pattern for the totality in human life. Nobody is more dependent than he on the reality of the particular and the personal. But at the same time nobody is more dependent on the sublime, the transcendental and the spiritual. The grace of Christian totality consists just in the marvelous way in which it manages to join the temporal to the spiritual, the prosaic to the sublime, and time to eternity.

Notes:

1. Ibid., p. 288.
2. Leoni Muller: De onsterfelijkheidsgedachte bij Schopenhauer, 1957, p. 149.
3. Summa theol., I, 98, 1 c. See our comments in a previous chapter, III, 7, of our present work, "Human Totality Demands a Meaning", pp. 2ff.

Chapter 36

The Accentuated Modern Dualism of the Outward Versus the Inward

We shall have to pay much attention to a most serious case of dualism. That is the one in which the "I" is irreconcilably opposed to the "not-I".

Some might say, "A certain dualism is inevitable here. Any person who has begun to have any consciousness whatsoever of his own identity is obliged to feel the relation between his personal self and everything outside that self in terms of a certain opposition."

But to tell the full truth, another viewpoint may just as well be prevailing. That very same relation may be conceived perfectly well as a fairly harmonious one. True, a certain bipolarity here may be real enough, and quite unavoidable. But is an almost tragic pointedness of the bipolarity equally unavoidable?

Here the historical observer very soon undergoes a clear experience. In philosophical speculation an extreme dualism introduces itself with considerable force in this field at a very early stage. Even the Greek philosophers of nature established a distinction between things as they are, immediately perceived by the senses, and things as they are--"in reality".

And down through the centuries the general tendency of speculative thought has been to regard the conception by the senses as the "false" one. In fact, the idealists were to go much farther in this direction than the philosophers of nature had ever thought of going. Of course, Parmenides, too, charges the human senses with a certain deceptiveness (for instance, they make us believe that things are multiple and subject to movement). Anaxagoras and the Atomists teach that what we hear and see, etc., are not "the last elements" of things. But, nevertheless, those first Greek philosophers do, at least, accept the way our senses perceive things as inevitable and as the only possible way of perception. Their peculiar bias is rather that they reduce the essence of man to his bodily nature. There is no possibility of rising to any "higher" and "more ideal" form of perception. So they differ from Plato, for instance, in this: that they accept man and his world as they are commonly known.

However, right in the middle of their willing acceptance, these philosophers also have a certain resignation. In that curious "humanism" of Protagoras, for instance ("Man is the measure of all things"), there is, admittedly, something like a "relativity of truths", which is certainly not the perfect ideal of childlike simplicity: things are to me such as they appear to me. To you they are as they appear to you. The same wind blowing is warm to one individual and cold to the other. He tries to explain this through a double movement: "the active movement" of the object perceived and the "passive movement" of the subject that perceives (or the senses of the human being). Accordingly nothing is simple. As soon as we perceive a

thing, a certain duality arises. It is the duality of the thing perceived and the person perceiving. Truth becomes relative: my feeling is true for me, yours is true for you.[1]

However, the relation between the interior world of man's consciousness, and the exterior world of things surrounding him, is not yet as problematic as it becomes with Plato. There is, after all, a considerable confidence that man, thanks to his natural senses, is fairly able to grasp the realities of his environment.

As for Aristotle, we know what important role he ascribed to the exterior object, for the whole process of sensation. That object, moreover, is not only the condition of every sensation, but even its very cause. The object must exert a positive influx on the human sense. The subject is sensitive only in a more passive way; he is a potential perceiver. But the object first has to perform an act and a movement.[2]

There must be a contact between the object and the subject for any sensation, but the first impulse comes from the object perceived. Not that Aristotle underestimates the part the subject has in this process of sensation. In fact, it can only be explained through a synthesis of the subject and the object.

Here we think Aristotle's remarkable sense of totality, of oneness and wholeness, in fact his antidualistic tendency, comes in.

He admits the obvious diversity between the notion of colours or sounds on one hand, and that of sight or hearing on the other. But in the very act of seeing, the colour and the sight are no longer two distinct things. They are one and the same fact, a vital process, one identical metaphysical reality. For then the physical quality of the exterior object passes into the act of sight, and the sight passes into the quality.[3]

It was the modern genius Galileo, however, who, in a most fatefully dualistic manner, introduced the distinction between the primary qualities of things, such as dimensions, weights, etc., or any other fact capable of being measured, and the secondary qualities, such as form, colour, smell, etc., which escape the control of "scientific" measurements. So, for the sake of science, he made a line of separation between the quantitative and the qualitative. The former constantly showed remarkably good behaviour: they could be pressed into some known mathematical formulas. The latter did not yield to any such serious methods of scientific exactness. Accordingly, they were doomed to be increasingly neglected and looked down upon as rather nonsensical.

We cannot help agreeing heartily with Alexis Carrel that this evolution was most unfortunate for man and for everything that is most profoundly human.[4] For, verily, with man, just the things that are not to be measured have always proved to be of greater importance to his life than those that can be measured.

And that fatefully abstract distinction between primary and secondary qualities, introduced by Galileo, was certainly not rendered less accentuated, or less fateful, by the Cartesian introduction of a distinction between a res cogitans and a res extensa, as we shall soon see.

Carrel describes the discrimination undertaken by Galileo as bluntly artificial. Sanctioned by Descartes, that discrimination was destined to place our civilization upon the road which would lead science to its highest triumphs and man to his lowest downfall.

Notes:

1. Theaitetos, 152 c to 1e.
2. De anima, II, 5, 4a, 17-18.
3. De anima, III, 12, 4b, 25.
4. See Chapter VIII, Part 2, of Man the Unknown.

Chapter 37

The Union Between Soul and Body More Mysterious Than Ever

It goes without saying that this serious lack of confidence is something right in the core of the problem of modern disruption. We mean man's lack of confidence in the exterior world, as his immediate senses present it to him, and all that subtle distinction between a subjective and an objective reality. However, that cutting up of reality into radically separate parts is not all. The most serious thing is perhaps the systematic depreciation of one part, in favour of the other. It is a continuation, in the Western World, of the Veda tradition: there is an exterior and an interior world, a material and a spiritual world.[1] The interior only can claim to be spiritual, and the spiritual only is of real value.

Is this one-sided spiritualism true to life? That is the great question.

One phase of this schism between man's interior consciousness and his exterior world will be treated in our next chapter. But now we must first make some headway with our original capital problem of dualism. How is it possible for human thought to conceive of a body-soul unity?--We have already mentioned what a terrible dilemma that was to ancient philosophy. To modern philosophy it becomes a still more accentuated problem.

But why do we take this philosophical problem so seriously at all? Is it of such decisive importance to our topic? Our answer must be as follows.

Before philosophy--or whoever is responsible--removes the heavy doubts raised for centuries concerning a natural union and a fundamental oneness of the human body and the human soul, what basis could there ever be--quite logically speaking--for an outlook of true totality in our culture?

Descartes has been mentioned as the founder of modern philosophy. According to him, however, there exist two species of "substances", absolutely independent of each other. On one hand we have the clear idea of ourselves as a thing that thinks and has no extension. On the other hand we have an idea just as clear and distinct of a body, a thing having extension, but not thinking. Thus, on the authority of human consciousness, Descartes bases, not only a radical dualism between a res cogitans and a res extensa, but a dualism just as radical between body and spirit (to Descartes the term "spirit" is applied to the substance in which thought is contained. He regrets that he is not able to find any better and less ambiguous word) (cf. Raisons qui prouvent, Def., VI, Vol. IX, p. 125).

By means of his famous Cogito, Descartes finds that he is essentially a thinking subject, in fact, nothing but that, "c'est-à-dire un esprit, un entendement, une raison".[2]

Here it is worthwhile noticing that he does not define "le moi", or the soul, as a principle of life (as we shall show that the Judeo-Christian tradition does, to mention one typical instance of a non-dualistic anthropology). No, Descartes defines the soul as a principle of thought. The thought is the essence of the soul.

Thought is an attribute that belongs to me: it alone cannot be detached from me.[3]

Thus the soul is essentially thinking. And it is a thing which "needs only itself to exist".[4] In fact, this quality of "not having need of anything but oneself in order to exist", simply becomes the definition of a substance.

However, that thinking substance, through a sort of "inspection de l’esprit", soon discovers the existence of the whole universe--of God first, and then of bodies.

As for the existence of the body, Descartes proves this, "en postulant son existence au nom du principe de causalité pour rendre raison suffisante du contenu de notre pensée", as Etienne Gilson expresses it.[5]

The name generally given to this substance, taking its place beside the thinking substance, is then "la substance étendue", or "la substance corporelle", or simply "la matèrie". The great attribute proper to bodies is, above all, their "etendue". All other properties of a body actually have that extension as their evident presupposition.

The corporeal substance is independent of any human existence. Thus it is not even dependent upon our senses.[6]

So, according to Descartes, our human reason clearly distinguishes two things: on one hand there is the extension, on the other the thought. The former constitutes the nature of our bodies, the latter constitutes the nature of our souls. So extension and thought differ totally. "Intellectual acts have no affinity with bodily acts," as Descartes expresses it categorically.[7]

To us, the important conclusion at which Descartes arrives is this: the two "substances" must be conceived as "things complete in themselves".[8] And they become absolutely irreducible and radically heterogeneous. This amounts to saying that he establishes a distinction between body and soul as radical as any dualism can conceive it.

The Discours de la méthode is quite explicit here: in recognizing himself as a spiritual substance, man at the same time has consciousness of an absolute distinction between that soul and his body.[9] Through that "simple" inspection de l’esprit, Descartes satisfies himself that the body is not necessary for his own existence, whereas the thought is necessary--but also entirely sufficient. To him this explains perfectly why he has a much clearer recognition of his soul than of his body. How could that be otherwise, since it is the soul that constitutes his real "moi"?

This identification of the "être de la pensée" with the "être en soi" could not fail to lead Descartes in a very definite direction. His way towards the postulate of an immortal soul is entirely prepared here.

He had, as we remember, found the soul to be of a nature entirely distinct from that of the body. It is a simple and indivisible thing, capable of pure intellection, and entirely sufficient in itself. Descartes thinks his arguments suffice "to show clearly enough that, from the corruption of the body, the death of the soul does not follow". On the contrary, he concludes "that the spirit, or soul of man, as far as can be known by natural philosophy, is immortal".[10]

But here Descartes, of course, like so many other philosophers claiming the immortality of the soul, had to face the great old problem of how there can be a union between soul and body. For Descartes, far from denying any such union, admits that it is necessary. And that "necessary union" was destined to become a terrible stumbling block to the modern systems of philosophy.

Let us admit at once: Descartes's personal attitude towards the dualism of body and soul which he has elaborated, is very different from the attitude of a Plato, for instance. There is certainly no fanatical Manichean desire, either, of setting some miserably

suppressed soul to freedom from the dark dungeon of a despicable body. On the contrary, Descartes seems to have been a man of comparatively broad and sober and down-to-earth nature in several respects. For instance in his "Lettre à Elisabeth" of Nov. 3, 1645, we discern the practical citizen of some kind of Renaissance community, as it were--encouraging a fellow citizen not to be too punctilious on certain doctrinary questions. In fact, no one, he admits, has any assurance as regards the exact condition in which his soul will find itself when once separated from the body. So let us keep both feet on the earth. "We must not leave the certain for the uncertain." On the contrary, we should try to be satisfied in this world of ours. That is always possible. At least it is possible--and here follows an assumption which certainly has a far more "philistine" than a rigidly philosophical character--"provided that we know how to use reason." It is rare, indeed, to hear a dualist philosopher using the word raison with a connotation of almost "common sense".

Even quite publicly, and with great emphasis, Descartes points out that the philosophy he teaches is by no means "so barbaric nor so fierce that it rejects the use of passions". "On the contrary", he says, "It is in this sole use that I put all the sweetness and happiness of this life."[11]

This personal attitude of an almost sanguine or cyclothyme humanity, right in the middle of stern Cartesian speculation, may

suggest one explanation of the curious fact that the concrete being, the being of living flesh and blood, is still seen to constitute an astonishing part in the metaphysics of that philosopher. In Descartes's life and work there certainly is something besides that cold and all-consuming aspiration towards the theoretical heights of pure essence. That is, indeed, also what Alquie, an eminent student of Descartes, has discovered:

Of the human condition, Descartes did not want to ignore war, travel, duels, love, or study. Thus, the example he offers to Princess Elisabeth is not that of a pure meditator, an ascetic or a cabinet philosopher, but that of a man who spends only "a few hours a day on the thoughts that occupy the imagination", that is to say, science, "very few hours a year on those that occupy the understanding alone", that is to say, metaphysics, and who devotes all the rest of his time "to the relaxation of the senses and the rest of the mind.[12]

However, the Descartes with whom we have to do just now, is the Descartes of metaphysical theories, the Descartes who abstracts and dissects, the Descartes who has already involved himself in a theoretical maze from which there is no practical escape. Thus he has declared clearly enough, for instance: soul and body are things having an infinite abyss between them.

So our question arises: How will that same Descartes explain the fact that this same body and this same soul are still found together? To this one may evidently say that Descartes does not at all show himself so terribly anxious to explain that. To be sure, he does

profess his doctrine of a union between body and soul insistently enough, but with astonishingly little detail of explanation. In his later years, it is true, he gave some more study to the subject of man as a concrete being. But this is far from his general habit, or his natural tendency.

As Alquie has remarked, that change of emphasis asserting itself to some degree in the later part of the philosopher's life, was hardly first and foremost the necessary consequence of an internal intellectual evolution.[13] At least some rather accidental events are seen to have played a most important part in it. For instance, there was the intense philosophical curiosity of a princess, which had to be satisfied. (A rare incident disturbing a philosopher's schedule, we should think.) Then there was also the case of some careless statements on the part of his disciple Regius, which had to be corrected. Besides, there were of course quite a lot of objections, from this side and that side, which finally had to be answered.

However, the true and original cause of most of those questions, objections, etc., coming from outside and troubling Descartes's philosophical peace in his old age, is clear enough. It was simply that state of incompletion in which he had once left his philosophy. On the one hand he had admitted the union of the soul and the body. He had also admitted that the soul sets the body in motion. On the other hand--long before that--he had already established the dualism of a "substance pensante" and a "substance etendue". So his royal pen friend, the Princess Elisabeth, had the indiscretion of asking him one day how such a thing as a soul-governed movement of the body

can then take place at all. How can the thinking substance--which has no extension in space--really move a substance of spatial extension? For, of course, in order that one thing shall move another thing, there must be some sort of pushing ("pulsion"), mustn’t there? But that, in its turn, assumes a touching ("attouchement"). And does not such a "touching" seem rather incompatible with the radical difference in nature which is supposed to exist between the two elements now touching each other?

Descartes answers that there is no touching at all. The soul moves the body in very much the same way as the force of gravitation moves bodies.

Probably the good Princess Elisabeth did not see too clearly how the abyss of dualism between body and soul could be bridged so easily and elegantly. And the successors of Descartes--let it be noted--do not appear to have seen it either. At least, we can see them standing waveringly at the crossroads of a problematic choice: either to draw the full consequences of Descartes's doctrine of a dualism of the substance, or to abandon it altogether.

Malebranche, for instance, declared that the soul must be quite incapable of moving the body. Such an action can be attributed to God only. In his opinion, no other solution can be afforded by Christian philosophy. There must be a general law by which the Creator has regulated the relations between the two heterogeneous substances, thus establishing a correspondence between two entities most unequally yoked together: a human body and a human soul.

In the system of Leibniz similar problems forcibly present themselves. The monad "has no windows". So how can it really be influenced by the exterior? According to Leibniz, the position is clear enough.

And it ought to be problematic enough (for it is the problem which stands out here with a certain "clearness"): the soul simply cannot receive any impressions from the senses. And, vice versa, the soul cannot exert any influence whatsoever on the body. For all the activity of the monad is concentrated around the monad itself, limited to its own internal states.

And, nevertheless, that reciprocity between body and soul is still there. At least any man on the street would certainly swear to the fact that there is some such reciprocal influence between the two. Of course, it might all be just vain appearance. But that appearance, in its turn, would demand some kind of explanation, then, wouldn’t it?

Well, to account for it, Leibniz, too, takes his refuge in God: this inexplicable harmony between two radically independent series of phenomena is nothing less than a divine wonder. In the soul everything goes on as if no body had ever existed; and vice versa: in the body everything goes on as if the soul had never existed. But whence, then, that perfect correspondence between them? That is the secret of the great Artisan who has constructed both body and soul. In fact, even in creations pertaining to this earth one may imagine similar relations. And then follows the well-known example

of the clever watch-maker making two separate watches. Their mutual relation is that of a most absolute independence, of course. And, nevertheless, they proceed side by side in perfect harmony. They have simply been so wonderfully constructed as to march on in the most irreproachable unison.

So both Malebranche and Leibniz, in order to save their theory of a soul entirely separated from the body, took refuge in an explanation which less sympathetic observers would undoubtedly characterize as a sort of deus ex machina.

In fact, as sympathetic an observer as Charles Werner, in his comparison between Greek and modern philosophies,[14] admits that he is unable to qualify his explanation in any other way. Referring to just the attitudes of Malebranche and Leibniz here, he spontaneously exclaims: "How far their theory is from reality! How far it is from the common sense which Descartes invoked at the beginning of his Discours de la méthode. And how well we understand the protest of Maine de Biran, stating that philosophy has no right to place herself in a state of contradiction to interior experience. That experience, however, teaches us that the soul does move the body!"

Even the monism of a Spinoza, by the way, is shown to fail utterly in re-establishing unity. According to Spinoza, the special extension expresses, just like thought, the essence of God. But right in the midst of this statement he denies every real union between substances. He also denies the reality of an action here. The soul and

the body belong to two widely different orders, and therefore there can be no real interaction between them. Each of them is endowed with a perfect spontaneity.

To Spinoza, it is true, thought and extension became two attributes of the substance. But in reality that amounts to admitting two different substances, after all. For the "attribute" expresses the very essence of the substance.

So whatever terms he uses, Spinoza actually admits the thinking substance and the extended substance. Even more than that: he admits as many substances as there are attributes. In other words, unity tends to vanish in the ultimate effect. And in its place there appears just a juxta-position of an infinite number of essences. However, the important fact here is this: the idea of Spinoza becomes that of a parallelism between two series. And the peculiar thing about those two series is this: they never join each other.

One does understand the undertone of regretful astonishment in Werner's words where he sums up this paradox:

Nowhere has dualism presented itself with such rigor as in this philosophy which has tended so strongly towards unity.[15]

However, we should also mention at least something about Descartes's own attitude towards the problem he had so fatefully introduced into modern philosophy; although, as he admits himself, this is a topic on which he has "quasi rien dit".

In his correspondence with Princess Elisabeth he was urged, as it were, to be somewhat more explicit. He starts by repeating his familiar statement. That is, concerning the two ideas--"claires et distinctes"--which we all have, the ideas of two substantial natures: 1) that of the "pensée", and 2) that of the "étendue". But--and this is a remarkable addition--there is even a third substance. And what is that? The third "notion primitive" is simply a notion of the union between the body and the soul!

Where, however, are we to look for the proper place of that "idea of a union between the body and the soul"? Is it in the "entendement", just as for the idea of the thought? No. Is it in the "entendement aide de l"imagination", just as for the "idée de l"étendue"? No, not there either. Notice this: in order to find the idea of a union between body and soul, we are simply asked to place ourselves in the sphere of the senses! For the thing resulting from that union is just a thing of the senses!

The things which belong to the union of the soul and the body are known only obscurely by the understanding alone, nor even by the understanding aided by the imagination; but they are known very clearly by the senses. Why is it that those who never philosophize, and who use only their senses, do not doubt that the soul moves the body, and that the body acts on the soul? But they consider both as one thing, that is to say, they conceive their union, for to conceive the union which is between two things is to conceive them as one.[16]

What a remarkable passage! After such a passage any reader looking for tidbits of refreshingly human wisdom, right in the dry land of philosophical rumination, might be tempted to shout "Bravissimo!"

Here, then, according to Descartes, is the reason why the idea of a union between soul and body defies every effort of speculative analysis. And nevertheless, it is one of those "idées-meres immanentes" springing right out from experience itself.

It is by using only ordinary life and conversations, and by abstaining from meditating and studying things which exercise the imagination, that one learns to conceive the union of soul and body.[17]

What a wonderful vote of confidence to life there is in those words. And, at the same time, what a vote of diffidence to philosophy!

We need not here enter into any further details relative to the conclusive manifestations of a real union of body and soul (for instance, the argument of the "pensées imaginatives" on the one hand, and that of the "passions de l’âme" on the other).

May it suffice to say that what Descartes has essentially applied himself to proving is just that union between the body and the soul as a fait accompli. But how this fact has been accomplished, that is a

question remaining just as vague as at the beginning. And, by the way, how could Descartes be expected to show us the proof? With the dualism he had adopted in the first place, it was quite impossible.

One thing here, however, has appeared particularly remarkable to us. That is Descartes's very introduction of a "troisième substance".

He already had his "substance pensante". He also had his "substance étendue". Why, then, did he feel the necessity of adding to those nice abstractions even a third substance, that of the union of the former two? Has he not, by this implicitly admitted that the "third thing" here coming into existence is a thing entirely different from the "two things" with which the philosopher has so far busied himself?

We should think so, indeed. That union of the two "elements" (or "substances") would have to produce something widely different from the "elements" themselves! And the difference would have to be just the difference there has always been between the vain shadow of abstraction and the living truth of concrete reality!

We have had a glimpse of the triumphant stride of dualism in the philosophy of modern times. But, some may object, are there not some signs of a definite change here in our century?

We have no place now for any fruitful discussion of the attitude in ultra-modern philosophy towards egocentricity and dualism. But of course we may at least take time to admit that there has even been a movement in the first decades of our own twentieth century which Arthur O. Lovejoy has found worthy of the name "the Revolt against Dualism". In this interesting work, bearing the same title (1930), he gives an historical and critical survey of a valiant effort made by a generation of contemporary philosophers (particularly of Anglo-Saxon nationalities) to finally do away with that unnatural "bifurcation of nature" which had remained practically unchallenged since it was established so firmly by the "legislators of modern science", way back in the grand siècle of modern philosophy. Here there is suddenly a sort of actual resentment against two well-known forms of dualism. First we may mention the epistemological dualism, the dualism which Locke has proclaimed so confidently saying:

It is evident that the mind knows not things immediately, but by the intervention of the ideas it has of them.

(See some of our objections to epistemological dualism mentioned in Chapter III, 3, pp. 203-208)

But the feeling of revolt was not less directed against the psychophysical dualism which maintains that the empirical reality falls asunder into a world of mind and a world of matter. And now comes the interesting question. What was the eventual outcome of that "wrathful" revolt? Lovejoy's famous and masterly analysis of

the whole movement impresses us, more than anything else, as the sad story of a rising monism's last convulsions and final collapse. The author freely admits that what began as a repudiation of dualism, actually ends as an ardent confession of faith in it. Man automatically relapses into the miasma of his favourite confusions.

By the way, it must also be remembered that the first decades of the twentieth century are precisely the time of the triumphantly rising ideas of the Einsteinian theores of relativity. And how are those theories related to the famous aspiration in seventeenth-century philosophy of having a physical universe with which mathematical figures alone are fully sufficient to cope? In fact, both the theory of relativity and the quantum theory seem to move harmoniously in one direction: the "real" physical object is now simply identified with the "scientific" object. On the other hand, the distance between that scientific object, and objects as human beings perceive them, is greater than ever before.

Notes:

1. Only with inverted signs: what is plus to radical spiritualism, becomes minus to the radical materialism, and vice versa.
2. 2 e Medit, VII, p. 27.
3. Ibid., IX, p. 21.
4. Principes, I, IX, p. 44.
5. Etienne Gilson: Spinoza, interprete de Descartes, 1922, p. 70.
6. Letter 537, Vol. V, p. 269.

7. Responses aux troisiemes objections, Vol. IX, p. 137.
8. Responses aux quatriemes objections, Vol, IX, p. 172.
9. Discours de la methode, Vol, VI, p. 32.
10. Responses aux deuxiemes objections, Vol. IX, p. 120.
11. Passions de l''ame, Art. 212, Vol. XI, p. 488.
12. F. Alquie: La Decouverte de la metaphysique de l''homme chez Descartes, 1950, p. 304.
13. Ibid., p. 300.
14. La Philosophie grecque, pp. 291-92.
15. Ibid., p. 293.
16. Lettre a Elisabeth, Vol. III, p. 691-92.
17. Ibid., Vol. III, p. 692.

Chapter 38

Man, the Indivisible

What we need to know more about than most other things is man. That is, not man "in himself", but rather man in his totality and in his dependence on an environment--an environment delimiting him on all sides, but at the same time extending him infinitely in all directions.

Not that we have found it inappropriate or false to distinguish between certain "parts" in man. One should only keep in mind that they are all just different aspects of an inseparable totality. An age-old schematic representation--in fact, even a fairly popular one--is the following. The human totality is a tripartition. This may sound like a paradox. But it is not necessarily an absurdity. The three "parts" traditionally suggested are the spirit, the soul, and the body. However, there has been considerable confusion as regards the actual meaning of these terms, and it may safely be added that this confusion has proved fateful to the understanding of human nature.

Of course, even Plato had a similar trichotomy in his anthropological explanations, and as Aristotle takes over the "office" of the leading philosopher, no actual refutation is made regarding the main contents of that conception: the highest part of man (the nous) is the principle of intellectual life, and the only part possessing immortality. The second is that of the soul (psyche), the principle of

physiological life, comprising the realms of the senses and of nutrition. The lowest is that of the body (soma).

Christian "philosophical anthropology" may already be mentioned as establishing a trichotomy expressed in similar terms. For instance, Paul, writing to the Thessalonians, says:

And I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. (I Thes. v:23)

Some Fathers of the Church--neo-Platonists to a large extent--often speak of the manifestation of human life in very much the same way as they would speak of the manifestations of the Trinity. Thomas Aquinas, the Aristotelian, also, seems to take special pleasure in defining man as a "created trinity", corresponding to the "un-created Trinity".

In our modern world of specialization this division of man into "parts" has been grasped with particular eagerness and with the usual lack of comprehension. Thus medical and biological sciences have been occupied with the human body as their field of speciality. Psychologists have sometimes given the impression of considering themselves as the exclusive specialists in the field of the human mind. And, as for the august sphere of the spirit, the monopoly here has been disputed by several branches of learning, among which theologians--that goes without saying--take a dominating position.

Too often that customary dividing of man into three parts has been conceived in terms of storeys, one above the other, and each storey being evaluated--in relation to the other storeys--according to a fairly fixed system of comparative dignity, so to speak. The result of such a hierarchy has certainly not been too favourable. Paul Tournier[1] points out one erroneous idea resulting from it: the spirit is commonly believed to be a part having a very close relation to the mental area of the human being, but "not so close" to the body. Such an idea of spirituality in human beings, however, certainly has not come to us from Christianity, which to our culture certainly ought to be the most natural source of information when we desire to be more specifically informed regarding the nature of the spiritual and to know where we can expect to "find most" of that in man. In fact, the Christian idea of spirituality is most intimately connected with that of the Incarnation. According to this, the "spirit" is by no means a "department" in man, located at a "farther distance" from the body than from the soul. Where in the Bible is it taught that a human mind is "more spiritual" than a human body?

There is no serious reason to doubt where that tendency to establish such a schematic scale, with its varying degrees of dignity and spirituality, has come from. It has always been the result of a common failure in human thinking to conceive of man as a real unity, an inseparable whole. It was invariably the same obstinate prejudice of dualist spiritualism--ancient or modern--to consider some incorporeal fluctuations of the human mind as the one essential thing. But there is a deep truth worth considering in what Zurcher says: often the simple movement of a human hand (and we

should assume most people will think of that as rather corporeal!) may have a value infinitely more spiritual than the most subtle thought.[2]

Generally speaking, any grading of values--within the realms of the human reality--is certainly a most problematic enterprise. All true evaluations here are, no doubt, bound to cut imperiously across all conventional lines of partition, with sovereign disrespect for our pedantic schemes.

The true value of man, says that same author, resides in the act which constitutes the soul, and which, in realizing that soul, "gives itself a body". For either the soul has to express itself through the entire being at once, or not at all.

Says Henry Baruk, relative to the same topic:

It would be a grave mistake to create levels and to believe that moral conscience is a separate function that can be placed either at the bottom of the hierarchy or at the top. Everything is merged into a unity.[3]

Notes:

1. Paul Tournier: Desharmonie de la vie moderne, 1947.
2. Jean Zurcher: L"Homme, sa nature et sa destinee, 1953, p. 175.

3. Henry Baruk: La connaissance de l"homme du xxe siecle, Deuxieme entretien public, p. 212.

Chapter 39

Psycho-somatic Interactions

In our first chapter we discussed the striking relations between the interior states of a human soul and the exterior expressions of those states through the instrumentality of a human body. We made an endeavour to show that it is perfectly possible to consider those relations between the inward and the outward in a perspective of totality.

And now we perhaps realize more easily just why there must necessarily be such a close connection between the inward impression and the outward expression: they do not take place in two "parts" of the person infinitely distant from each other, but rather exactly in the same "spot". For the soul is not a thing just "located in the brain", and thus "very far" from--let us say--the foot, or the hand, or any other limb or organ you might mention. No, the soul is of course in the entire body--and just as much in the foot or in the hand as in any other part of the body.

In its manifestations the soul is always inseparably connected with each and every one of the various functions of the body. For they are the basis for life exerting itself in a human being.(103)

Small wonder, then, that it has always proved so discouragingly difficult to distinguish clearly between, for instance, motion and

emotion. Where there is true perfection of integration, no man can expect any interval to separate the integrating parts.

According to the Bible, God Himself is the perfect model of wholeness and harmony. With Him the thought coincides so perfectly with His external actions, which constitute the way that thought manifests itself, that they are described as instantaneous:

For he spake and it was done; he commanded and it stood fast. (Ps. xxxiii:9)

In the human being, too, who is such a supreme marvel of God's making, we must assume a similarly striking oneness and harmony. There is, indeed, perfect oneness and harmony between the means by which a human soul realizes itself and the means by which it expresses itself.

Without its tangible expression in the body, the mind would forever remain in a "frozen" state of pure virtuality. In order to have any existence at all, the soul must needs find its adequate expression and "take its place" in the world of phenomena.

Considered against the background of this principle of totality, it becomes equally understandable that the remarkable concomitance established in our first chapter as a fact of true relationship between the "inward" and the "outward" in everyday human life, simply could not be otherwise. The oneness we here experience is actually a

category without which the human being cannot be imagined, without which it cannot exist.

To separate those interior functions of a human mind from their exterior manifestations in a human body, is simply a Platonic abstraction which has nothing to correspond to it in practical and living reality. That emotion (or thought) which we try to imagine as an independent entity of our deepest interior, simply does not exist. It has only one basis of real existence: it exists precisely in those exterior manifestations taking place in visible flesh and blood.

So to distinguish, in terms of a definite "opposition", between a state of mind (in its "pure potentiality") on the one hand, and its outer manifestations in bodily action on the other, that must be a distinction absolutely devoid of practical meaning, and as completely foreign to the reality of life as any kind of speculative dualism could ever be.

So we ask ourselves this question: What kind and what degree of dualism was it that Aristotle vanquished at the moment when, courageously, he rose up to the daring simplicity of considering the Idea as the form realized in matter? Was it not a dualism which, in any case, has the most serious bearing on vital issues in human life? Was it not, in the last analysis, some kind of dualism between the outward and the inward in man's most vital everyday reality?

In our opinion, it is just a far-reaching and most practical victory of this vital order that so many a monist in subsequent ages has in

reality gained, although he may not always have expressed himself in the same terms. Some have expressed themselves in terms of modern psycho-physiology. Some have abstained from learned terminologies altogether. They have contented themselves with simply living that monism out in their modest individual lives.

According to Aristotle, the soul was the principle of action which moulds the body, making it into an organism capable of accomplishing the functions of life. Thus this philosopher, as Charles Werner reminds us, definitively established the harmonious unity of the soul on one hand and the living body on the other.

Hence, even in circles of theoretical philosophy, there should be no more mention of two substances, body and soul. The soul is the only real substance, but a substance penetrating matter and taking possession of it so thoroughly that no independent existence is ever left to it. In other words, the union of the soul and the body is not the mysterious union of two things which could exist separately under any circumstances.

This has always been the triumphant certainty of the thoroughbred monist, wherever his sturdy realism has succeeded in asserting itself, sporadically, in the history of Western ideas.

However, there is one thing about which we do not by any means feel as "triumphantly" certain as Professor Werner seems to feel. We are referring to his statement that "the doctrine of immortality has nothing to fear", as far as this attitude of victorious

totality--as we would call it--is concerned. Let us rather quote his very words:

We do not think that there is a real difficulty here. Immortality has nothing to fear from a theory that shows, not the dependence of the soul on the body, but the power it exerts over the body. We will be left to admit, as Leibniz wanted, that the soul, in the afterlife, will continue to express itself through a material organism.

What is, exactly, that solution proposed by Leibniz, of a soul continuing to express itself, in the hereafter, as well, through a material organism? If it were an openly admitted refuge taken in revealed religion (i.e. in the peculiarly Christian doctrine of a resurrection of the whole man, realized, by and by, through a divine intervention just as specific and just as praeter-natural as that of man's first creation, according to a strictly fundamentalist interpretation of the Genesis record), well, then we would be perfectly able to understand the reasoning of both Leibniz and Charles Werner, but certainly not from a purely philosophical point of view; and that must, indeed, be the only natural viewpoint to assume in this present context.

No, in all candour, an existential and innate immortality would be a very different matter. Neither realistic common sense nor biblical revelation gives us any reason to expect anything like that automatic type of a human soul survival. What original Christianity promises is rather that final immortality, granted to the believers only after an intermediate period of a temporary, but indisputable

death, an immortality granted as a special gift depending on God's mercy and on very special conditions which, after all, have to be met by the beneficiary, and therefore described in theological terminology as a conditional immortality. That, of course, would be a possibility which no philosopher could bluntly exclude, at least as a theoretical solution. But on the other hand, he could not openly accept it either, as the one great solution in which he believes--without immediately leaving the proper premises of philosophy.

The fact of the case is clearly that philosophy can neither prove nor disprove human immortality!

Chapter 40

Connectedness

A Deeply Moral Concern and a Common-sense Matter

We do not doubt the dynamism inherent in the quality of totality. But sometimes we feel the need of a word more expressly suggestive of dramatic action, perhaps a noun implying a verb in it. The idea of repairing something that may now be sadly broken is foremost in our mind. We cannot help thinking of the prevailing need in this culture, an urgent necessity for every member of it. Is not this thing we all need so desperately connectedness?

The illness from which we suffer is dis-connectedness. Someone--in some way--has to re-connect what has been dis-connected. Man must re-enter that state of an intimate connection which God has prepared for all things.

With what, in particular, has he lost his original connection? First and foremost precisely with God. But consequently also his connection with the whole tangible, visible world which he finds surrounding him. He has lost his connection with his fellows, and so, perhaps worst of all, his connection with himself.

We have tried to show this, particularly by focusing our attention on a certain doubleness of vision we call dualism.

Some will perhaps object that men today, in the West above all, are too firmly anchored in their own "sturdy realism" to be seriously troubled by any such "doubleness of vision" whatsoever.

Let us have a brief glance at that "anchor" and that "sturdiness". We have been astonished to discover how often some sort of dualistic illusion may turn out to be at the base of most varying forms of onesidedness in our culture. Does even radical materialism form any real exception here?

As a dogmatic standpoint, that peculiar "Lebensanschauung" may of course present itself as a certain "monism". It may have succeeded in establishing itself as a view of remarkable "wholeness" and "harmony". But is this by virtue of a fundamental oneness? Or is it just the spurious effect of an audacious trick? There is an age-old maneuver practised sometimes in order to pose as a formidable monist: one simply excludes all unwanted aspects of human reality. In the case of materialism this may be done with the solemn proclamation: "Matter is one. Matter is the great, all-encompassing fact of this universe!"

By way of a conclusive test, we have contented ourselves with a simple glance at human individuals, seen under the vertically piercing light of the Christian Gospel. I only need to visualize myself as a being like so many others, steeped in materialistic unconcern. What, then, is the real nature of my ailment? What has made that materialism of mine a potent danger to my basic equilibrium, both as a logically reasoning and as a morally acting

person? I have simply caught the "bacillus": a common, but fatal idea has, somehow, managed to enter my head and my heart. Whether that idea has come to me from Plato, or from Marx, or from any other source down the sinuous trail of the human pilgrimage across the centuries, that is a question of minor importance in this context. And the idea is approximately the following.

I constantly imagine--or there is something in the sombre depths of my being which constantly imagines-that everything will be all right with my life as long as I can provide satisfactorily for my "physical" needs. If things are going well with my body, with my house--my standard of living, and so on, and so forth--then the peculiar needs of something called my soul, my spirit, etc. will be a comparatively negligible concern. In other words, I tacitly detach that "soul", that "spirit"--or whatever one may call it--from my total destiny as a human being.

But what is this, if not a false abstraction of the most deleterious kind? And what is the subtle trick that fools me into assuming that such a detachment can properly be performed at all, without falling headlong into the trap of some kind of dualistic deception? Perhaps just materialism may turn out to be the most common manifestation of false dualism ever occurring to man. Certainly, materialism and atheism--seen from the higher viewpoint of Christian totality--are very far from abolishing dualism. For in accordance with that Christian viewpoint, a genuine religious outlook on life, and on the

world, is the only escape open to man--away from the lethal clutch of dualistic illusion.

The term "flesh", as used in the Bible, is very different from the term "matter", as used in our world. In our Christian anthropology we shall endeavour to show how the former consistently stands for a whole man, body and soul--a man as we commonly know men in this world of ours, a man "under the sign of sin". Now Paul has a particularly interesting expression here: he speaks about "sowing in the flesh" (I Cor. xv:44). That is, indeed, an illustrative example of just this disruptive and alluringly one-sided materialism, towards which we are all so frantically inclined in our self-delusion.

Let us make our point still more plain and understandable through a practical example: On a tree in front of me there hangs a nice-looking apple belonging to another person. I happen to know that stealing this apple from him will cause the owner a most serious loss. For some reason he needs that apple himself quite desperately. And it is his. Nevertheless the temptation becomes too strong for me. One day I take the apple and eat it.

Now, what do physiology and my biology--as detached natural sciences--teach me concerning the things happening when I resolutely take that apple and introduce it into my hungry stomach?

They say, "This is absolutely perfect. Such and such a physiological process has started in the most beautiful order. The end of it all will be increased strength and well-being." The case is

one of perfect satisfaction in all essential respects--physically and chemically speaking, or let us say biologically speaking, in order to be sure to include the nice physiological process taking place in a sound, living human being.

But stop now for a moment: Is not this "biology" here, after all, a monstrously crippled one? Is it not a biology brutally segregated from its spiritual aspect? For, in accordance with the full facts of the laws of "unmolested biology" (as Christianity is bound to look upon bios!), that apple--just like Eve's in the garden of Eden--soon brings misery, and eventually even death.

Was there anything wrong with the apply "in itself", considered as "pure matter"? Was there anything wrong with the science I consulted, considered as "pure science"?

Of course, the real wrong was already in believing that things pertaining to life can be divided into sections in that habitual way at all, without turning immediately into monsters instead of things.

Sometimes, it is true, the absurdity of the dualistic view may invite us to an almost comic consideration. We have, in the case of faith versus works, suggested the image of a windowpane. Remaining in that same field of illustration, let us try and tell a slightly different story. Imagine a customer who has purchased a set of windows. He writes the following letter to his provider:

"Dear glazier, I have just received the windows you sent me. On close inspection I notice that there are two sides to each windowpane, an outside and an inside. Now, in my case, that is a bit of a luxury. I very seldom leave my room, you see. So, generally, I can only enjoy the inside of the windows. In the future, therefore, I would suggest that you always send me windowpanes having only one side. I hope that you can then grant me a considerable discount; perhaps I should not be charged more than half the ordinary price. That would not seem unreasonable, I think, in view of the fact that my windows will then have the total of exactly half as many sides as ordinary windows. I know, of course, that most people treat themselves to windows of the double-sided type, but to me that is an extravagance I can hardly afford, and, moreover, a superfluity which is against my principles."

However, dualism, as we have here endeavoured to study it from a Christian viewpoint, regarding the most serious realities of human lives, contains so many painful and even tragic aspects that perhaps the following parable would afford a more adequate illustration.

We imagine a fine city fearfully menaced by external enemies on all sides, but wonderfully protected against them all by means of a high wall surrounding it. There is peace and prosperity among the happy inhabitants of that city for a long time. But then one day a terrible internal strife begins to divide up the population into parties fighting each other with increasing passion and bitterness. The "reason" for the conflict, however, is this "problematic" question

which has suddenly arisen in their midst: "Which side of the great wall is the essential and really important one for our efficient protection, the inside or the outside?"

One group cries, "It is the outside, for that is the side stopping every attack from our dangerous enemies."

"Oh no, it is the inside," insists the other group, "for that is truly our side of the wall. We have nothing whatsoever to do with the outside. That is the side of our enemies. So it is an entirely despicable and disgusting side. In fact, we simply ought to steal out one night and tear that side down."

Presumably, no reasoning man would think a strife of that kind very intelligent or very happy. But in what does it differ so notoriously from the whole tragic-comedy we have tried to describe in our culture; we mean viewed with the eyes of an anthropology which has managed to catch sight of one curious fact--man, the indivisible!