Background material for BSCS course ‘History of Philosophy’

Excerpts from:

Frederick Copleston: *A History of Philosophy* (Volumes 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8)

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1. *Why Study the History of Philosophy?*

1. WE would scarcely call anyone "educated" who had no knowledge whatsoever of history; we all recognise that a man should know something of the history of his own country, its political, social and economic development, its literary and artistic achievements—preferably indeed in the wider setting of European and, to a certain extent, even World history. But if an educated and cultured Englishman may be expected to possess some knowledge of Alfred the Great and Elizabeth, of Cromwell and Marlborough and Nelson, of the Norman invasion, the Reformation, and the Industrial Revolution, it would seem equally clear that he should know something at least of Roger Bacon and Duns Scotus, of Francis Bacon and Hobbes, of Locke, Berkeley and Hume, of J. S. Mill and Herbert Spencer. Moreover, if an educated man is expected to be not entirely ignorant of Greece and Rome, if he would be ashamed to have to confess that he had never even heard of Sophocles or Virgil, and knew nothing of the origins of European culture, he might equally be expected to know something of Plato and Aristotle, two of the greatest thinkers the world has ever known, two men who stand at the head of European philosophy. A cultured man will know a little concerning Dante and Shakespeare and Goethe, concerning St. Francis of Assisi and Fra Angelico, concerning Frederick the Great and Napoleon I: why should he not be expected also to know something of St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas, Descartes and Spinoza, Kant and Hegel? It would be absurd to suggest that we should inform ourselves concerning the great conquerors and destroyers, but remain ignorant of the great creators, those who have really contributed to our European culture. But it is not only the great painters and sculptors who have left us an abiding legacy and treasure: it is also the great thinkers, men like Plato and Aristotle, St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas, who have enriched Europe and her culture. It belongs, therefore, to a cultured education to know something at least of the course of European philosophy, for it is our thinkers,

as well as our artists and generals, who have helped to make our time, whether for good or ill.

Now, no one would suppose that it is waste of time to read the works of Shakespeare or contemplate the creations of Michelangelo, for they have intrinsic value in themselves which is not diminished by the number of years that have elapsed between their deaths and our own time. Yet no more should it be considered a waste of time to study the thought of Plato or Aristotle or St. Augustine, for their thought-creations abide as outstanding achievements of the human spirit. Other artists have lived and painted since the time of Rubens, but that does not lessen the value of Rubens' work: other thinkers have philosophised since the time of Plato, but that does not destroy the interest and beauty of his philosophy.

But if it is desirable for all cultured men to know something of the history of philosophic thought, so far as occupation, cast of mind and need for specialisation permit, how much more is this not desirable for all avowed students of philosophy. I refer especially to students of the Scholastic Philosophy, who study it as the *philosophia perennis*. That it is the *philosophia perennis* I have no wish to dispute; but it did not drop down from Heaven, it grew out of the past; and if we really want to appreciate the work of St. Thomas Aquinas or St. Bonaventure or Duns Scotus, we should know something of Plato and Aristotle and St. Augustine. Again, if there is a *philosophia perennis*, it is only to be expected that some of its principles should be operative in the minds even of philosophers of modern times, who may seem at first sight to stand far from St. Thomas Aquinas. And even if this were not so, it would be instructive to observe what results follow from false premisses and faulty principles. Nor can it be denied that the practice of condemning thinkers whose position and meaning has not been grasped or seen in its true historic setting is greatly to be deprecated, while it might also be borne in mind that the application of true principles to all spheres of philosophy was certainly not completed in the Middle Ages, and it may well be that we have something to learn from modern thinkers, e.g. in the field of Aesthetic theory or Natural Philosophy.

2. It may be objected that the various philosophical systems of the past are merely antique relics; that the history of philosophy consists of "refuted and spiritually dead systems, since each has

killed and buried the other."[1] Did not Kant declare that Metaphysic is always "keeping the human mind in suspense with hopes that never fade, and yet are never fulfilled," that "while every other science is continually advancing," in Metaphysic men "perpetually revolve round the same point, without gaining a single step"?[2] Platonism, Aristotelianism, Scholasticism, Cartesianism, Kantianism, Hegelianism—all have had their periods of popularity and all have been challenged: European Thought may be "represented as littered with metaphysical systems, abandoned and unreconciled."[3] Why study the antiquated lumber of the chamber of history?

Now, even if all the philosophies of the past had been not only challenged (which is obvious) but also refuted (which is not at all the same thing), it still remains true that "errors are always instructive,"[4] assuming of course that philosophy is a possible science and is not *of itself* a will-o'-the-wisp. To take an example from Mediaeval Philosophy, the conclusions to which Exaggerated Realism lead on the one hand and those to which Nominalism lead on the other hand indicate that the solution of the problem of universals is to be sought in a mean between the two extremes. The history of the problem thus serves as an experimental proof of the thesis learnt in the Schools. Again, the fact that Absolute Idealism has found itself incapable of providing any adequate explanation of finite selves, should be sufficient to deter anyone from embarking on the monistic path. The insistence in modern philosophy on the theory of knowledge and the Subject-Object relation should, despite all the extravagances to which it has led, at any rate make it clear that subject can no more be reduced to object than object to subject, while Marxism, notwithstanding its fundamental errors, will teach us not to neglect the influence of technics and man's economic life on higher spheres of human culture. To him especially who does not set out to learn a given system of philosophy but aspires to philosophise *ab ovo*, as it were, the study of the history of philosophy is indispensable, otherwise he will run the risk of proceeding down blind alleys and repeating the mistakes of his predecessors, from which a serious study of past thought might perhaps have saved him.

3. That a study of the history of philosophy may tend to

[1] Hegel, *Hist. Phil.*, I, p. 17.
[2] *Proleg.*, p. 2 (Mahaffy).
[3] A. N. Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, p. 18. Needless to say, the anti-historical attitude is not Professor Whitehead's own attitude.
[4] N. Hartmann, *Ethics*, I, p. 119.

induce a sceptical frame of mind is true, but it must be remembered that the fact of a succession of systems does not prove that any one philosophy is erroneous. If *X* challenges the position of *Y* and abandons it, that does not by itself prove that the position of *Y* is untenable, since *X* may have abandoned it on insufficient grounds or have adopted false premisses, the development of which involved a departure from the philosophy of *Y*. The world has seen many religions—Buddhism, Hinduism, Zoroastrianism, Christianity, Mohammedanism, etc., but that does not prove that Christianity is not the true Religion; to prove that, a thorough refutation of Christian Apologetics would be necessary. But just as it is absurd to speak as if the existence of a variety of Religions *ipso facto* disproved the claim of any one religion to be the true Religion, so it is absurd to speak as though the succession of philosophies *ipso facto* demonstrated that there is no true philosophy and can be no true philosophy. (We make this observation, of course, without meaning to imply that there is no truth or value in any other religion than Christianity. Moreover, there is this great difference between the true (revealed) Religion and the true philosophy, that whereas the former, as revealed, is necessarily true in its totality, in all that is revealed, the true philosophy may be true in its main lines and principles without reaching completion at any given moment. Philosophy, which is the work of the human spirit and not the revelation of God, grows and develops; fresh vistas may be opened up by new lines of approach or application to new problems, newly discovered facts, fresh situations, etc. The term "true philosophy" or *philosophia perennis* should not be understood to denote a static and complete body of principles and applications, insusceptible of development or modification.)

II. *Nature of the History of Philosophy*

1. The history of philosophy is certainly not a mere congeries of opinions, a narration of isolated items of thought that have no connection with one another. If the history of philosophy is treated "only as the enumeration of various opinions," and if all these opinions are considered as of equal value or disvalue, then it becomes "an idle tale, or, if you will, an erudite investigation."[1] There is continuity and connection, action and reaction, thesis and antithesis, and no philosophy can really be understood fully

[1] Hegel, *Hist. Phil.*, I, p. 12.

unless it is seen in its historical setting and in the light of its connection with other systems. How can one really understand what Plato was getting at or what induced him to say what he did, unless one knows something of the thought of Heraclitus, Parmenides, the Pythagoreans? How can one understand why Kant adopted such an apparently extraordinary position in regard to Space, Time and the Categories, unless one knows something of British empiricism and realises the effect of Hume's sceptical conclusions on the mind of Kant?

2. But if the history of philosophy is no mere collection of isolated opinions, it cannot be regarded as a continual progress or even a spiral ascent. That one can find plausible instances in the course of philosophic speculation of the Hegelian triad of thesis, antithesis and synthesis is true, but it is scarcely the task of a scientific historian to adopt an *a priori* scheme and then to fit the facts into that scheme. Hegel supposed that the succession of philosophic systems "represent the necessary succession of stages in the development" of philosophy, but this can only be so if the philosophic thought of man is the very thinking of the "World-Spirit." That, practically speaking, any given thinker is limited as to the direction his thought will take, limited by the immediately preceding and the contemporary systems (limited also, we might add, by his personal temperament, his education, the historical and social situation, etc.) is doubtless true; none the less he is not determined to choose any particular premisses or principles, nor to react to the preceding philosophy in any particular way. Fichte believed that his system followed logically on that of Kant, and there is certainly a direct logical connection, as every student of modern philosophy is aware; but Fichte was not *determined* to develop the philosophy of Kant in the particular way he did. The succeeding philosopher to Kant might have chosen to re-examine Kant's premisses and to deny that the conclusions which Kant accepted from Hume were true conclusions; he might have gone back to other principles or excogitated new ones of his own. Logical sequence there undoubtedly is in the history of philosophy, but not *necessary* sequence in the strict sense.

We cannot, therefore, agree with Hegel when he says that "the final philosophy of a period is the result of this development, and is truth in the highest form which the self-consciousness of spirit affords of itself."[1] A good deal depends, of course, on how you

[1] *Hist. Phil.*, III, p. 552.

divide the "periods" and what you are pleased to consider the final philosophy of any period (and here there is ample scope for arbitrary choice, in accordance with preconceived opinion and wishes); but what guarantee is there (unless we first adopt the whole Hegelian position) that the final philosophy of any period represents the highest development of thought yet attained? If one can legitimately speak of a Mediaeval period of philosophy, and if Ockhamism can be regarded as the final main philosophy of that period, the Ockhamist philosophy can certainly not be regarded as the supreme achievement of mediaeval philosophy. Mediaeval philosophy, as Professor Gilson has shown,[1] represents a *curve* rather than a straight line. And what philosophy of the present day, one might pertinently ask, represents the synthesis of all preceding philosophies?

3. The history of philosophy exhibits man's search for Truth by the way of the discursive reason. A Neo-Thomist, developing St. Thomas' words, *Omnia cognoscentia cognoscunt implicite Deum in quolibet cognito*,[2] has maintained that the judgment always points beyond itself, always contains an implicit reference to Absolute Truth, Absolute Being.[3] (We are reminded of F. H. Bradley, though the term "Absolute" has not, of course, the same meaning in the two cases.) At any rate we may say that the search for truth is ultimately the search for Absolute Truth, God, and even those systems of philosophy which appear to refute this statement, e.g. Historical Materialism, are nevertheless examples of it, for they are all seeking, even if unconsciously, even if they would not recognise the fact, for the ultimate Ground, the supremely Real. Even if intellectual speculation has at times led to bizarre doctrines and monstrous conclusions, we cannot but have a certain sympathy for and interest in the struggle of the human intellect to attain Truth. Kant, who denied that Metaphysics in the traditional sense were or could be a science, none the less allowed that we cannot remain indifferent to the objects with which Metaphysics profess to deal, God, the soul, freedom;[4] and we may add that we cannot remain indifferent to the human intellect's search for the True and the Good. The ease with which mistakes are made, the fact that personal temperament, education and other apparently "fortuitous" circumstances may so often

[1] Cf. *The Unity of Philosophical Experience.*
[2] *De Verit.*, 22, 2, ad 1.
[3] J. Maréchal, S.J., *Le Point de Départ de la Metaphysique: Cahier V.*
[4] Pref. to 1st Ed. of *Critique of Pure Reason.*

lead the thinker up an intellectual cul-de-sac, the fact that we are not pure intelligences, but that the processes of our minds may frequently be influenced by extraneous factors, doubtless shows the need for religious Revelation; but that should not cause us to despair altogether of human speculation nor make us despise the *bona-fide* attempts of past thinkers to attain Truth.

4. The present writer adheres to the Thomistic standpoint that there is a *philosophia perennis* and that this *philosophia perennis* is Thomism in a wide sense. But he would like to make two observations on this matter: (*a*) To say that the Thomist system is the perennial philosophy does not mean that that system is closed at any given historical epoch and is incapable of further development in any direction. (*b*) The perennial philosophy after the close of the Mediaeval period does not develop merely alongside of and apart from "modern" philosophy, but develops also in and through modern philosophy. I do not mean to suggest that the philosophy of Spinoza or Hegel, for instance, can be comprehended under the term Thomism; but rather that when philosophers, even if they would by no means call themselves "Scholastic," arrive by the employment of true principles at valuable conclusions, these conclusions must be looked on as belonging to the perennial philosophy.

St. Thomas Aquinas certainly makes some statements concerning the State, for example, and we have no inclination to question his principles; but it would be absurd to expect a developed philosophy of the modern State in the thirteenth century, and from the practical point of view it is difficult to see how a developed and articulate philosophy of the State on scholastic principles could be elaborated in the concrete, until the modern State had emerged and until modern attitudes towards the State had shown themselves. It is only when we have had experience of the Liberal State and of the Totalitarian State and of the corresponding theories of the State, that we can realise all the implications contained in the little that St. Thomas says on the State and develop an elaborated Scholastic political philosophy applicable to the modern State, which will expressly contain all the good contained in the other theories while renouncing the errors. The resultant State-philosophy will be seen to be, when looked at in the concrete, not simply a development of Scholastic principle in absolute isolation from the actual historical situation and from intervening theories, but rather a development of these

principles in the light of the historical situation, a development achieved in and through opposing theories of the State. If this point of view be adopted, we shall be enabled to maintain the idea of a perennial philosophy without committing ourselves, on the one hand, to a very narrow outlook whereby the perennial philosophy is confined to a given century, or, on the other hand, to an Hegelian view of philosophy, which necessarily implies (though Hegel himself seems to have thought otherwise—inconsistently) that Truth is never attained at a given moment.

III. *How to Study the History of Philosophy*

1. The first point to be stressed is the need for seeing any philosophical system in its historical setting and connections. This point has already been mentioned and does not require further elaboration: it should be obvious that we can only grasp adequately the state of mind of a given philosopher and the *raison d'être* of his philosophy if we have first apprehended its historical *point de départ*. The example of Kant has already been given; we can understand his state of mind in developing his theory of the *a priori* only if we see him in his historical situation *vis-à-vis* the critical philosophy of Hume, the apparent bankruptcy of Continental Rationalism and the apparent certainty of mathematics and the Newtonian physics. Similarly, we are better enabled to understand the biological philosophy of Henri Bergson if we see it, for example, in its relation to preceding mechanistic theories and to preceding French "spiritualism."

2. For a profitable study of the history of philosophy there is also need for a certain "sympathy," almost the psychological approach. It is desirable that the historian should know something of the philosopher as a man (this is not possible in the case of *all* philosophers, of course), since this will help him to feel his way into the system in question, to view it, as it were, from inside, and to grasp its peculiar flavour and characteristics. We have to endeavour to put ourselves into the place of the philosopher, to try to see his thoughts from within. Moreover, this sympathy or imaginative insight is essential for the Scholastic philosopher who wishes to understand modern philosophy. If a man, for example, has the background of the Catholic Faith, the modern systems, or some of them at least, readily appear to him as mere bizarre monstrosities unworthy of serious attention, but if he succeeds, as far as he can (without, of course, surrendering

his own principles), in seeing the systems from within, he stands much more chance of understanding what the philosopher meant.

We must not, however, become so preoccupied with the psychology of the philosopher as to disregard the truth or falsity of his ideas taken in themselves, or the logical connection of his system with preceding thought. A *psychologist* may justly confine himself to the first viewpoint, but not an *historian* of philosophy. For example, a purely psychological approach might lead one to suppose that the system of Arthur Schopenhauer was the creation of an embittered, soured and disappointed man, who at the same time possessed literary power and aesthetic imagination and insight, and *nothing more*; as though his philosophy were simply the manifestation of certain psychological states. But this viewpoint would leave out of account the fact that his pessimistic Voluntaristic system is largely a reaction to the Hegelian optimistic Rationalism, as it would also leave out of account the fact that Schopenhauer's aesthetic theory may have a value of its own, independent of the *kind of man* that propounded it, and would also neglect the whole problem of evil and suffering which is raised by Schopenhauer's system and which is a very real problem, whether Schopenhauer himself was a disappointed and disillusioned man or not. Similarly, although it is a great help towards the understanding of the thought of Friedrich Nietzsche if we know something of the personal history of the man, his ideas can be looked at in themselves, apart from the man who thought them.

3. To work one's way into any thinker's system, thoroughly to understand not only the words and phrases as they stand, but also the shade of meaning that the author intended to convey (so far as this is feasible), to view the details of the system in their relation to the whole, fully to grasp its genesis and its implications, all this is not the work of a few moments. It is but natural, then, that specialisation in the field of the history of philosophy should be the general rule, as it is in the fields of the various sciences. A specialist knowledge of the philosophy of Plato, for instance, requires besides a thorough knowledge of Greek language and history, a knowledge of Greek mathematics, Greek religion, Greek science, etc. The specialist thus requires a great apparatus of scholarship; but it is essential, if he is to be a true historian of philosophy, that he should not be so overwhelmed with his scholarly equipment and the details of learning, that he fails

to penetrate the spirit of the philosophy in question and fails to make it live again in his writings or his lectures. Scholarship is indispensable but it is by no means enough.

The fact that a whole lifetime might well be devoted to the study of one great thinker and still leave much to be done, means that anyone who is so bold as to undertake the composition of a continuous history of philosophy can hardly hope to produce a work that will offer anything of much value to specialists. The author of the present work is quite conscious of this fact, and as he has already said in the preface, he is not writing for specialists but rather utilising the work of specialists. There is no need to repeat again here the author's reasons for writing this work; but he would like once more to mention that he will consider himself well repaid for his work if he can contribute in some small degree, not only to the instruction of the type of student for whom the work is primarily designed, but also to the broadening of his outlook, to the acquirement of a greater understanding of and sympathy with the intellectual struggle of mankind, and of course to a firmer and deeper hold on the principles of true philosophy.

IV. *Ancient Philosophy*

In this volume we treat of the philosophy of the Greeks and Romans. There can scarcely be much need for dwelling on the importance of Greek culture: as Hegel says, "the name of Greece strikes home to the hearts of men of education in Europe."[1] No one would attempt to deny that the Greeks left an imperishable legacy of literature and art to our European world, and the same is true in regard to philosophic speculation. After its first beginnings in Asia Minor, Greek philosophy pursued its course of development until it flowered in the two great philosophies of Plato and Aristotle, and later, through Neo-Platonism, exercised a great influence on the formation of Christian thought. Both in its character as the first period of European speculation and also for its intrinsic value, it cannot but be of interest to every student of philosophy. In Greek philosophy we watch problems come to light that have by no means lost their relevance for us, we find answers suggested that are not without value; and even though we may discern a certain *naïveté*, a certain over-confidence and precipitation, Greek philosophy remains one of the glories of European achievement. Moreover, if the philosophy of the

[1] *Hist. Phil.*, I, p. 149.

Greeks must be of interest to every student of philosophy for its influence on subsequent speculation and for its own intrinsic value, still more should it be of interest to students of Scholastic philosophy, which owes so much to Plato and to Aristotle. And this philosophy of the Greeks was really their own achievement, the fruit of their vigour and freshness of mind, just as their literature and art were their own achievement. We must not allow the laudable desire of taking into account possible non-Greek influence to lead us to exaggerate the importance of that influence and to underestimate the originality of the Greek mind: "the truth is that we are far more likely to underrate the originality of the Greeks than to exaggerate it."[1] The tendency of the historian always to seek for "sources" is, of course, productive of much valuable critical investigation, and it would be folly to belittle it; but it remains true that the tendency can be pushed too far, even to lengths when criticism threatens to be no longer scientific. For instance, one must not assume *a priori* that every opinion of every thinker is borrowed from a predecessor: if this is assumed, then we should be logically compelled to assume the existence of some primeval Colossus or Superman, from whom all subsequent philosophic speculation is ultimately derived. Nor can we safely assume that, whenever two succeeding contemporary thinkers or bodies of thinkers hold similar doctrines, one must have borrowed from the other. If it is absurd, as it is, to suppose that if some Christian custom or rite is partially found in Asiatic Eastern religion, Christianity must have borrowed that custom or rite from Asia, so it is absurd to suppose that if Greek speculation contains some thought similar to that appearing in an Oriental philosophy, the latter must be the historical source of the former. After all, the human intellect is quite capable of interpreting similar experiences in a similar way, whether it be the intellect of a Greek or an Indian, without its being necessary to suppose that similarity of reaction is an irrefutable proof of borrowing. These remarks are not meant to depreciate historical criticism and research, but rather to point out that historical criticism must rest its conclusions on historical proofs and not deduce them from *a priori* assumptions, garnishing them with a pseudo-historical flavour. Legitimate historical criticism would not, as yet at least, seem to have seriously impaired the claim to originality made on behalf of the Greeks.

[1] Burnet, *G.P.*, I, p. 9.

Roman philosophy, however, is but a meagre production compared with that of the Greeks, for the Romans depended in large part on the Greeks for their philosophic ideas, just as they depended on the Greeks in art and, to a great extent at least, in the field of literature. They had their own peculiar glory and achievements (we think at once of the creation of Roman Law and the achievements of Roman political genius), but their glory did not lie in the realm of philosophical speculation. Yet, though the dependence of Roman Schools of philosophy on Greek predecessors is undeniable, we cannot afford to neglect the philosophy of the Roman world, since it shows us the sort of ideas that became current among the more cultured members of the class that was Master of the European civilised world. The thought of the later Stoa, for example, the teaching of Seneca, Marcus Aurelius and Epictetus, affords in many respects an impressive and noble picture which can hardly fail to arouse admiration and esteem, even if at the same time we are conscious of much that is lacking. It is desirable too that the Christian student should know something of the best that paganism had to offer, and should acquaint himself with the various currents of thought in that Greco-Roman world in which the Revealed Religion was implanted and grew. It is to be regretted if students should be acquainted with the campaigns of Julius Caesar or Trajan, with the infamous careers of Caligula or Nero, and yet should be ignorant of the philosopher-Emperor, Marcus Aurelius, or the influence at Rome of the Greek Plotinus, who though not a Christian was a deeply religious man, and whose name was so dear to the first great figure of Christian philosophy, St. Augustine of Hippo.

CHAPTER XI

PRE-SOCRATIC PHILOSOPHY

1. It is often said that Greek philosophy centres round the problem of the One and the Many. Already in the very earliest stages of Greek philosophy we find the notion of unity: things change into one another—therefore there must be some common substratum, some ultimate principle, some unity underlying diversity. Thales declares that water is that common principle, Anaximenes air, Heraclitus fire: they choose different principles, but they all three believe in one ultimate principle. But although the fact of change—what Aristotle called "substantial" change—may have suggested to the early Cosmologists the notion of an underlying unity in the universe, it would be a mistake to reduce this notion to a conclusion of physical science. As far as strict scientific proof goes, they had not sufficient data to warrant their assertion of unity, still less to warrant the assertion of any particular ultimate principle, whether water, fire or air. The fact is, that the early Cosmologists leapt beyond the data to the intuition of universal unity: they possessed what we might call the power of metaphysical intuition, and this constitutes their glory and their claim to a place in the history of philosophy. If Thales had contented himself with saying that out of water earth is evolved, "we should," as Nietzsche observes, "only have a scientific hypothesis: a false one, though nevertheless difficult to refute." But Thales went beyond a mere scientific hypothesis: he reached out to a metaphysical doctrine, expressed in the metaphysical doctrine, that *Everything is One*.

Let me quote Nietzsche again. "Greek philosophy seems to begin with a preposterous fancy, with the proposition that *water* is the origin and mother-womb of all things. Is it really necessary to stop there and become serious? Yes, and for three reasons: Firstly, because the proposition does enunciate something about the origin of things; secondly, because it does so without figure and fable; thirdly and lastly, because in it is contained, although only in the chrysalis state, the idea—Everything is one. The first-mentioned reason leaves Thales still in the company of religious and superstitious people; the second, however, takes

him out of this company and shows him to us as a natural philosopher; but by virtue of the third, Thales becomes the first Greek philosopher."[1] This holds true of the other early Cosmologists; men like Anaximenes and Heraclitus also took wing and flew above and beyond what could be verified by mere empirical observation. At the same time they were not content with any mythological assumption, for they sought a real principle of unity, the ultimate substrate of change: what they asserted, they asserted in all seriousness. They had the notion of a world that was a whole, a system, of a world governed by law. Their assertions were dictated by reason or thought, not by mere imagination or mythology; and so they deserve to count as philosophers, the first philosophers of Europe.

2. But though the early Cosmologists were inspired by the idea of cosmic unity, they were faced by the fact of the Many, of multiplicity, of diversity, and they had to attempt the theoretical reconciliation of this evident plurality with the postulated unity —in other words, they had to account for the world as we know it. While Anaximenes, for example, had recourse to the principle of condensation and rarefaction, Parmenides, in the grip of his great theory that Being is one and changeless, roundly denied the facts of change and motion and multiplicity as illusions of the senses. Empedocles postulated four ultimate elements, out of which all things are built up under the action of Love and Strife, and Anaxagoras maintained the ultimate character of the atomic theory and the quantitative explanation of qualitative difference, thus doing justice to plurality, to the many, while tending to relinquish the earlier vision of unity, in spite of the fact that each atom represents the Parmenidean One.

We may say, therefore, that while the Pre-Socratics struggled with the problem of the One and the Many, they did not succeed in solving it. The Heraclitean philosophy contains, indeed, the profound notion of unity in diversity, but it is bound up with an over-assertion of Becoming and the difficulties consequent on the doctrine of Fire. The Pre-Socratics accordingly failed to solve the problem, and it was taken up again by Plato and Aristotle, who brought to bear on it their outstanding talent and genius.

3. But if the problem of the One and the Many continued to exercise Greek philosophy in the Post-Socratic period, and received much more satisfactory solutions at the hands of Plato

[1] *Philosophy during the Tragic Age of the Greeks*, in sect. 3.

and Aristotle, it is obvious that we cannot characterise Pre-Socratic philosophy by reference to that problem: we require some other note of characterisation and distinction. Where is it to be found? We may say that Pre-Socratic philosophy centres round the external world, the Object, the not-self. Man, the Subject, the self, is of course not excluded from consideration, but the interest in the not-self is predominant. This can be seen from the question which the successive Pre-Socratic thinkers set themselves to answer: "Of what is the world ultimately composed?" In their answers to this question the early Ionian philosophers certainly went beyond what the empirical data warranted, but, as already remarked, they tackled the question in a philosophic spirit and not in the spirit of weavers of mythological fancies. They had not differentiated between physical science and philosophy, and combined "scientific" observations of a purely practical character with philosophic speculations; but it must be remembered that a differentiation between physical science and philosophy was hardly possible at that early stage—men wanted to know something more about the world, and it was but natural that scientific questions and philosophical questions should be mingled together. Since they were concerned with the *ultimate* nature of the world, their theories rank as philosophical; but since they had not yet formed any clear distinction between spirit and matter, and since their question was largely prompted by the fact of material change, their answer was couched for the most part in terms and concepts taken from matter. They found the ultimate "stuff" of the universe to be some kind of matter—naturally enough—whether the water of Thales, the Indeterminate of Anaximander, the air of Anaximenes, the fire of Heraclitus, or the atoms of Leucippus, and so a large part of their subject-matter would be claimed by physical scientists of to-day as belonging to their province.

The early Greek philosophers are then rightly called Cosmologists, for they were concerned with the nature of the Cosmos, the object of our knowledge, and man himself is considered in his objective aspect, as one item in the Cosmos, rather than in his subjective aspect, as the subject of knowledge or as the morally willing and acting subject. In their consideration of the Cosmos, they did not reach any final conclusion accounting for all the factors involved; and this apparent bankruptcy of Cosmology, together with other causes to be considered presently, naturally

led to a swing-over of interest from Object to Subject, from the Cosmos to Man himself. This change of interest, as exemplified in the Sophists, we will consider in the following section of this book.

4. Although it is true that Pre-Socratic philosophy centres round the Cosmos, the external world, and that this cosmological interest is the distinguishing mark of Pre-Socratic as contrasted with Socratic philosophy, it must also be remarked that one problem at any rate connected with man as the knowing subject was raised in Pre-Socratic philosophy, that of the relation between sense-experience and reason. Thus Parmenides, starting with the notion of the One, and finding himself unable to explain coming-to-be and passing-away—which are given in sense-experience—set aside the evidence of the senses as illusion, and proclaimed the sole validity of reason, which alone is able to attain the Real and Abiding. But the problem was not treated in any full or adequate manner, and when Parmenides denied the validity of sense-perception, he did so because of a metaphysical doctrine or assumption, rather than from any prolonged consideration of the nature of sense-perception and the nature of non-sensuous thought.

5. Since the early Greek thinkers may justly be termed philosophers, and since they proceeded largely by way of action and reaction, or thesis and antithesis (e.g. Heraclitus over-emphasising Becoming and Parmenides over-stressing Being), it was only to be expected that the germs of later philosophical tendencies and Schools would already be discernible in Pre-Socratic philosophy. Thus in the Parmenidean doctrine of the One, when coupled with the exaltation of Reason at the expense of sense-perception, we can see the germs of later idealism; while in the introduction of Nous by Anaxagoras—however restricted his actual use of Nous may have been—we may see the germs of later philosophical theism; and in the atomism of Leucippus and Democritus we may see an anticipation of later materialistic and mechanistic philosophies which would endeavour to explain all quality by quantity and to reduce everything in the universe to matter and its products.

6. From what has been said, it should be clear that Pre-Socratic philosophy is not simply a pre-philosophic stage which can be discounted in a study of Greek thought—so that we should be justified in starting immediately with Socrates and Plato. The Pre-Socratic philosophy is *not* a pre-philosophic stage, but is the

first stage of Greek philosophy: it may not be pure and unmixed philosophy, but it is philosophy, and it deserves to be studied for the sake of its own intrinsic interest as the first Greek attempt to attain a rational understanding of the world. Moreover, it is not a self-contained unit, shut off from succeeding philosophic thought in a watertight compartment; rather is it preparatory to the succeeding period, for in it we see problems raised which were to occupy the greatest of Greek philosophers. Greek thought develops, and though we can hardly over-estimate the native genius of men like Plato and Aristotle, it would be wrong to imagine that they were uninfluenced by the past. Plato was profoundly influenced by Pre-Socratic thought, by the Heraclitean, Eleatic and Pythagorean systems; Aristotle regarded his philosophy as the heir and crown of the past; and both thinkers took up philosophic problems from the hands of their predecessors, giving, it is true, original solutions, but at the same time tackling the problems in their historic setting. It would be absurd, therefore, to start a history of Greek philosophy with a discussion of Socrates and Plato without any discussion of preceding thought, for we cannot understand Socrates or Plato—or Aristotle either —without a knowledge of the past.

We must now turn to the next phase of Greek philosophy, which may be considered the antithesis to the preceding period of Cosmological speculation—the Sophistic and Socratic period.

CHAPTER VI

THE ONE OF PARMENIDES AND MELISSUS

THE reputed founder of the Eleatic School was Xenophanes. However, as there is no real evidence that he ever went to Elea in Southern Italy, it is unlikely that he is to be accounted anything more than a tutelary founder, a patron of the School. It is not difficult to see why he was adopted as a patron by the School that held fast to the idea of the motionless One, when we consider some of the sayings attributed to him. Xenophanes attacks the anthropomorphic Greek deities: "If oxen and horses or lions had hands, and could paint with their hands, and produce works of art as men do, horses would paint the forms of the gods like horses, and oxen like oxen, and make their bodies in the image of their several kinds":[1] and substitutes in their place, "One god, the greatest among Gods and men, neither in form like unto mortals, nor in thought," who "abideth ever in the selfsame place, moving not at all; nor doth it befit him to go about now hither now thither."[2] Aristotle tells us in the *Metaphysics* that Xenophanes, "referring to the whole world, said the One was god."[3] Most probably, then, he was a monist and not a monotheist, and this interpretation of his "theology" would certainly be more compatible with the Eleatic attitude towards him than a theistic interpretation. A really monotheistic theology may be a familiar enough notion to us, but in the Greece of the period it would have been something exceptional.

But whatever the opinions of Xenophanes may have been, the real founder of the Eleatic School from a philosophical and historical viewpoint was undoubtedly Parmenides, a citizen of Elea. Parmenides seems to have been born towards the close of the sixth century B.C., since round about 451–449 B.C., when 65 years old, he conversed with the young Socrates at Athens. He is said to have drawn up laws for his native city of Elea, and Diogenes preserves a statement of Sotion to the effect that

[1] Frag. 15. One might compare the words of Epicharmus (Frag. 5): "For the dog seems to the dog to be the most beautiful creature, and the ox to the ox, the donkey to the donkey, and the swine to the swine."
[2] Frags. 23 and 26.
[3] *Metaph.*, A 5, 986 b 18.

Parmenides began by being a Pythagorean, but afterwards abandoned that philosophy in favour of his own.[1]

Parmenides wrote in verse, most of the fragments we possess being preserved by Simplicius in his commentary. His doctrine in brief is to the effect that Being, the One, *is*, and that Becoming, change, is illusion. For if anything comes to be, then it comes either out of being or out of not-being. If the former, then it already is—in which case it does not come to be; if the latter, then it is nothing, since out of nothing comes nothing. Becoming is, then, illusion. Being simply *is* and Being is One, since plurality is also illusion. Now, this doctrine is obviously not the type of theory that rises immediately to the mind of the man in the street, and so it is not surprising to find Parmenides insisting on the radical distinction between the Way of Truth and the Way of Belief or Opinion. It is very probable that the Way of Opinion exposed in the second part of the poem, represents the cosmology of the Pythagoreans; and since the Pythagorean philosophy would itself scarcely occur to the man who went *merely* by sense-knowledge, it should not be maintained that Parmenides' distinction between the two Ways has all the formal generality of Plato's later distinction between Knowledge and Opinion, Thought and Sense. It is rather the rejection of one definite philosophy in favour of another definite philosophy. Yet it is true that Parmenides rejects the Pythagorean philosophy—and, indeed, every philosophy that agrees with it on the point—because it admits change and movement. Now change and movement are most certainly phenomena which appear to the senses, so that in rejecting change and movement, Parmenides is rejecting the way of sense-appearance. It is, therefore, not incorrect to say that Parmenides introduces the most important distinction between Reason and Sense, Truth and Appearance. It is true, of course, that even Thales recognised this distinction to a certain extent, for his supposed truth, that all is Water, is scarcely perceptible immediately to the senses: it needs reason, which passes beyond appearance, in order to be conceived. The central "truth" of Heraclitus is, again, a truth of reason and far exceeds the common opinion of men, who trust in everything to sense-appearance. It is also true that Heraclitus even makes the distinction partly explicit, for does he not distinguish between mere common sense and his Word? Yet it is Parmenides who first lays great and

[1] Diog. Laërt., 9, 21.

explicit stress on the distinction, and it is easy enough to understand why he does so, when we consider the conclusions to which he came. In the Platonic philosophy the distinction became of cardinal importance, as indeed it must be in all forms of idealism.

Yet though Parmenides enunciates a distinction which was to become a fundamental tenet of idealism, the temptation to speak of him as though he were himself an idealist is to be rejected. As we shall see, there is very good reason for supposing that in Parmenides' eyes the One is sensual and material, and to turn him into an objective idealist of the nineteenth-century type is to be guilty of an anachronism: it does not follow from the negation of change that the One is Idea. We may be called upon to follow the way of thought, but it does not follow that Parmenides regarded the One, at which we arrive by this way, as actually being Thought itself. If Parmenides had represented the One as self-subsistent Thought, Plato and Aristotle would hardly have failed to record the fact, and Socrates would not have found the first sober philosopher in Anaxagoras, with his concept of Mind or Nous. The truth really seems to be that though Parmenides does assert the distinction between Reason and Sense, he asserts it not to establish an idealist system, but to establish a system of Monistic Materialism, in which change and movement are dismissed as illusory. Only Reason can apprehend Reality, but the Reality which Reason apprehends is material. This is not idealism but materialism.

To turn now to the doctrine of Parmenides on the nature of the world. His first great assertion is that "It is." "It," i.e. Reality, Being, of whatever nature it may be, is, exists, and cannot not be. It is, and it is impossible for it not to be. Being can be spoken of and it can be the object of my thought. But that which I can think about and speak of can be, "for it is the same thing that can be thought and that can be." But if "It" *can* be, then it *is*. Why? Because if it could be and yet were not, then it would be nothing. Now, nothing cannot be the object of speech or thought, for to speak about nothing is not to speak, and to think about nothing is the same as not thinking at all. Besides, if it merely *could be*, then, paradoxically, it could never come to be, for it would have to come out of nothing, and out of nothing comes nothing and not something. Being, then, Reality, "It" was not first possible, i.e. nothing, and then existent: it was always existent—more accurately, "It is."

Why do we say "more accurately, It is?" For this reason: If something comes into being, it must arise either out of being or out of not-being. If it arises out of being, then there is no real arising, no coming-to-be; for if it comes out of being, it already is. If, however, it arises out of not-being, then not-being must be already something, in order for being to be able to arise out of it. But this is a contradiction. Being therefore, "It" arises neither out of being nor out of not-being: it never came into being, but simply *is*. And as this must apply to all being, nothing ever becomes. For if anything ever becomes, however trifling, the same difficulty always recurs: does it come out of being or out of not-being? If the former, then it already is; if the latter, then you fall into a contradiction, since not-being is nothing and cannot be the source of being. Change, therefore, becoming and movement are impossible. Accordingly "It is." "One path only is left for us to speak of, namely, that *It is*. In this path are very many tokens that what is, is uncreated and indestructible, for it is complete, immovable and without end."[1]

Why does Parmenides say that "It" is complete, i.e. one Reality, which cannot be added to? Because if it is not one but divided, then it must be divided by something other than itself. But Being cannot be divided by something other than itself, for besides being there is nothing. Nor can anything be added to it, since anything that was added to being would itself be being. Similarly, it is immovable and continuous, for all movement and change, forms of becoming, are excluded.

Now, of what nature is this "It," Being, according to Parmenides? That Parmenides regarded Being as material, seems to be clearly indicated by his assertion that Being, the One, is finite. Infinite for him must have meant indeterminate and indefinite, and Being, as the Real, cannot be indefinite or indeterminate, cannot change, cannot be conceived as expanding into empty space: it must be definite, determinate, complete. It is temporarily infinite, as having neither beginning nor end, but it is spatially finite. Moreover, it is equally real in all directions, and so is spherical in shape, "equally poised from the centre in every direction: for it cannot be greater or smaller in one place than in another."[2] Now, how could Parmenides possibly think of Being as spherical, unless he thought of it as material? It would seem, then, that Burnet is right when he aptly says: "Parmenides is

[1] Frag. 8. [2] Frag. 8.

not, as some have said, 'the father of idealism'; on the contrary, all materialism depends on his view of reality."[1] Professor Stace has to admit that "Parmenides, Melissus and the Eleatics generally did regard Being as, in some sense, material"; but he still tries to make out that Parmenides was an idealist in that he held the "cardinal thesis of idealism," "that the absolute reality, of which the world is a manifestation, consists in thought, in concepts."[2] It is perfectly true that the Being of Parmenides can be grasped only by thought, but so can the reality of Thales or Anaximenes be grasped only by thought, in concepts. But to equate "being grasped in thought" with "being thought" is surely a confusion.

As an historical fact, then, it would seem that Parmenides was a materialist and nothing else. However, that does not prevent there being an unreconciled contradiction in Parmenides' philosophy, as affirmed by Professor Stace,[3] so that, though a materialist, his thought contains also the germs of idealism, or would at any rate form the *point de départ* for idealism. On the one hand Parmenides asserted the unchangeability of Being, and, in so far as he conceived of Being as material, he asserted the indestructibility of matter. Empedocles and Democritus adopted this position and used it in their atomistic doctrine. But while Parmenides felt himself compelled to dismiss change and becoming as illusion, thus adopting the very opposite position to that of Heraclitus, Democritus could not reject what appears to be an inescapable fact of experience, which needs more explanation than a curt dismissal. Democritus, therefore, while adopting Parmenides' thesis that being can neither arise nor pass away—the indestructibility of matter—interpreted change as due to the aggregation and separation of indestructible particles of matter. On the other hand, it is an historical fact that Plato seized on the thesis of Parmenides concerning the unchangeability of Being, and identified the abiding being with the subsistent and objective Idea. To that extent, therefore, Parmenides may be called the father of idealism, in that the first great idealist adopted a cardinal tenet of Parmenides and interpreted it from an idealistic standpoint. Moreover, Plato made great use of Parmenides' distinction between the world of reason and the world of sense or appearance. But if in that historical sense Parmenides may rightly be described as the father of idealism, through his undoubted influence on Plato, it must be understood at the same

[1] *E.G.P.*, p. 182. [2] *Crit. Hist.*, pp. 47 and 48. [3] *Crit. Hist.*, pp. 49–52.

time that Parmenides himself taught a materialistic doctrine, and that materialists like Democritus were his legitimate children.

Heraclitus, in his theory of the πάντα ῥεῖ, laid stress on *Becoming*. As we have seen, he did not assert Becoming to the total exclusion of Being, saying that there is becoming, but nothing which becomes. He affirmed the existence of the One—Fire, but held that change, becoming, tension, are essential to the existence of the One. Parmenides, on the other hand, asserted Being even to the exclusion of Becoming, affirming that change and movement are illusory. Sense tells us that there is change, but truth is to be sought, not in sense, but in reason and thought. We have, therefore, two tendencies exemplified in these two philosophers, the tendency to emphasise Becoming and the tendency to emphasise Being. Plato attempted a synthesis of the two, a combination of what is true in each. He adopts Parmenides' distinction between thought and sense, and declares that sense-objects, the objects of sense-perception, are not the objects of true knowledge, for they do not possess the necessary stability, being subject to the Heraclitean flux. The objects of true knowledge are stable and eternal, like the Being of Parmenides; but they are not material, like the Being of Parmenides. They are, on the contrary, ideal, subsistent and immaterial Forms, hierarchically arranged and culminating in the Form of the Good.

The synthesis may be said to have been worked out further by Aristotle. Being, in the sense of ultimate and immaterial Reality, God, is changeless, subsistent Thought, νόησις νοήσεως. As to material being, Aristotle agrees with Heraclitus that it is subject to change, and rejects the position of Parmenides, but Aristotle accounts better than Heraclitus did for the relative stability in things by making Plato's Forms or Ideas concrete, formal principles in the objects of this world. Again, Aristotle solves the dilemma of Parmenides by emphasising the notion of potentiality. He points out that it is no contradiction to say that a thing is X actually but Y potentially. It *is* X, but is going to be Y in the future in virtue of a potentiality, which is not simply nothing, yet is not actual being. Being therefore arises, not out of not-being nor out of being precisely as being *actu*, but out of being considered as being *potentia*, δύναμει. Of the second part of the poem of Parmenides, *The Way of Belief*, it is unnecessary to say anything, but it is as well to say a few words concerning Melissus, as he supplemented the thought of his master, Parmenides.

Parmenides had declared that Being, the One, is spatially finite; but Melissus, the Samian disciple of Parmenides, would not accept this doctrine. If Being is finite, then beyond being there must be nothing: being must be bounded or limited by nothing. But if being is limited by nothing, it must be infinite and not finite. There cannot be a void outside being, "for what is empty is nothing. What is nothing cannot be."[1]

Aristotle tells us that the One of Melissus was conceived as material.[2] Now, Simplicius quotes a fragment to prove that Melissus did *not* look upon the One as corporeal, but as incorporeal. "Now, if it were to exist, it must needs to be one; but if it is one, it cannot have body; for if it had body, it would have parts, and would no longer be one."[3] The explanation seems to be indicated by the fact that Melissus is speaking of an hypothetical case. Burnet, following Zeller, points out the similarity of the fragment to an argument of Zeno, in which Zeno is saying that if the ultimate units of the Pythagoreans existed, then each would have parts and would not be one. We may suppose, therefore, that Melissus, too, is speaking of the doctrine of the Pythagoreans, is trying to disprove the existence of their ultimate units, and is not talking of the Parmenidean One at all.

[1] Frag. 7. [2] *Metaph.*, 986 b 18–21. [3] Frag. 9. (Simplic. *Phys.*, 109, 34).

CHAPTER VII

THE DIALECTIC OF ZENO

ZENO is well known as the author of several ingenious arguments to prove the impossibility of motion, such as the riddle of Achilles and the tortoise; arguments which may tend to further the opinion that Zeno was no more than a clever riddler who delighted in using his wits in order to puzzle those who were less clever than himself. But in reality Zeno was not concerned simply to display his cleverness—though clever he undoubtedly was—but had a serious purpose in view. For the understanding of Zeno and the appreciation of his conundrums, it is therefore essential to grasp the character of this purpose, otherwise there is danger of altogether misapprehending his position and aim.

Zeno of Elea, born probably about 489 B.C., was a disciple of Parmenides, and it is from this point of view that he is to be understood. His arguments are not simply witty toys, but are calculated to prove the position of the Master. Parmenides had combated pluralism, and had declared change and motion to be illusion. Since plurality and motion seem to be such evident data of our sense-experience, this bold position was naturally such as to induce a certain amount of ridicule. Zeno, a firm adherent of the theory of Parmenides, endeavours to prove it, or at least to demonstrate that it is by no means ridiculous, by the expedient of showing that the pluralism of the Pythagoreans is involved in insoluble difficulties, and that change and motion are impossible even on their pluralistic hypothesis. The arguments of Zeno then are meant to refute the Pythagorean opponents of Parmenides by a series of clever *reductiones ad absurdum*. Plato makes this quite clear in the *Parmenides*, when he indicates the purpose of Zeno's (lost) book. "The truth is that these writings were meant to be some protection to the arguments of Parmenides against those who attack him and show the many ridiculous and contradictory results which they suppose to follow from the affirmation of the one. My writing is an answer to the partisans of the many and it returns their attack with interest, with a view to showing that the hypothesis of the many, if examined sufficiently in detail, leads to even more ridiculous results than the hypothesis of the

One."[1] And Proclus informs us that "Zeno composed forty proofs to demonstrate that being is one, thinking it a good thing to come to the help of his master."[2]

1. *Proofs against Pythagorean Pluralism*

1. Let us suppose with the Pythagoreans that Reality is made up of units. These units are either with magnitude or without magnitude. If the former, then a line for example, as made up of units possessed of magnitude, will be infinitely divisible, since, however far you divide, the units will still have magnitude and so be divisible. But in this case the line will be made up of an infinite number of units, each of which is possessed of magnitude. The line, then, must be infinitely great, as composed of an infinite number of bodies. Everything in the world, then, must be infinitely great, and *a fortiori* the world itself must be infinitely great. Suppose, on the other hand, that the units are without magnitude. In this case the whole universe will also be without magnitude, since, however many units you add together, if none of them has any magnitude, then the whole collection of them will also be without magnitude. But if the universe is without any magnitude, it must be infinitely small. Indeed, everything in the universe must be infinitely small.

The Pythagoreans are thus faced with this dilemma. Either everything in the universe is infinitely great, or everything in the universe is infinitely small. The conclusion which Zeno wishes us to draw from this argument is, of course, that the supposition from which the dilemma flows is an absurd supposition, namely, that the universe and everything in it are composed of units. If the Pythagoreans think that the hypothesis of the One is absurd and leads to ridiculous conclusions, it has now been shown that the contrary hypothesis, that of the many, is productive of equally ridiculous conclusions.[3]

2. If there is a many, then we ought to be able to say *how many* there are. At least, they should be numerable; if they are not numerable, how can they exist? On the other hand, they cannot possibly be numerable, but must be infinite. Why? Because between any two assigned units there will always be other units, just as a line is infinitely divisible. But it is absurd to say that the many are finite in number and infinite in number at the same time.[4]

[1] *Parmen.*, 128 b.
[2] Procl., *in Parmen.*, 694, 23 (D. 29 A 15).
[3] Frags. 1, 2.
[4] Frag. 3.

3. Does a bushel of corn make a noise when it falls to the ground? Clearly. But what of a grain of corn, or the thousandth part of a grain of corn? It makes no noise. But the bushel of corn is composed only of the grains of corn or of the parts of the grains of corn. If, then, the parts make no sound when they fall, how can the whole make a sound, when the whole is composed only of the parts?[1]

II. *Arguments against the Pythagorean Doctrine of Space*

Parmenides denied the existence of the void or empty space, and Zeno tries to support this denial by reducing the opposite view to absurdity. Suppose for a moment that there is a space in which things are. If it is nothing, then things cannot be in it. If, however, it is something, it will itself be in space, and *that* space will itself be in space, and so on indefinitely. But this is an absurdity. Things, therefore, are not in space or in an empty void, and Parmenides was quite right to deny the existence of a void.[2]

III. *Arguments Concerning Motion*

The most celebrated arguments of Zeno are those concerning motion. It should be remembered that what Zeno is attempting to show is this: that motion, which Parmenides denied, is equally impossible on the pluralistic theory of the Pythagoreans.

1. Let us suppose that you want to cross a stadium or race-course. In order to do so, you would have to traverse an infinite number of points—on the Pythagorean hypothesis, that is to say. Moreover, you would have to travel the distance in finite time, if you wanted to get to the other side at all. But how can you traverse an infinite number of points, and so an infinite distance, in a finite time? We must conclude that you *cannot* cross the stadium. Indeed, we must conclude that no object can traverse any distance whatsoever (for the same difficulty always recurs), and that all motion is consequently impossible.[3]

2. Let us suppose that Achilles and a tortoise are going to have a race. Since Achilles is a sportsman, he gives the tortoise a start. Now, by the time that Achilles has reached the place from which the tortoise started, the latter has again advanced to

[1] Arist., *Phys.*, H, 5,250 a 19; Simplic., 1108, 18 (D. 29 A 29).
[2] Arist., *Phys.*, Δ 3,210 b 22; 1,209 a 23. Eudem., *Phys.*, Frag. 42 (D. 29 A 24)
[3] Arist., *Phys.*, Z 9,239 b 9; 2,233 a 21; *Top.*, Θ 8,160 b 7.

another point; and when Achilles reaches *that* point, then the tortoise will have advanced still another distance, even if very short. Thus Achilles is always coming nearer to the tortoise, but never actually overtakes it—and never *can* do so, on the supposition that a line is made up of an infinite number of points, for then Achilles would have to traverse an infinite distance. On the Pythagorean hypothesis, then, Achilles will never catch up the tortoise; and so, although they assert the reality of motion, they make it impossible on their own doctrine. For it follows that the slower moves as fast as the faster.[1]

3. Suppose a moving arrow. According to the Pythagorean theory the arrow should occupy a given position in space. But to occupy a given position in space is to be at rest. Therefore the flying arrow is at rest, which is a contradiction.[2]

4. The fourth argument of Zeno, which we know from Aristotle[3] is, as Sir David Ross says, "very difficult to follow, partly owing to use of ambiguous language by Aristotle, partly owing to doubts as to the readings."[4] We have to represent to ourselves three sets of bodies on a stadium or race-course. One set is stationary, the other two are moving in opposite directions to one another with equal velocity.

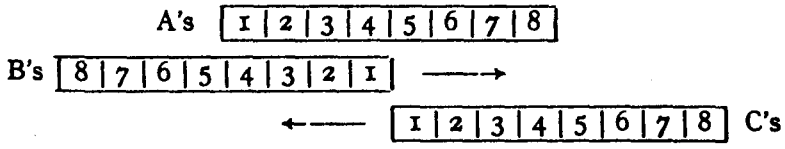


Fig. 1

The A's are stationary; the B's and C's are moving in opposite directions with the same velocity. They will come to occupy the following position:

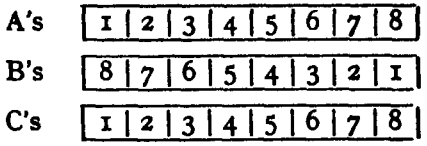


Fig. 2

[1] Arist., *Phys.*, Z 9,239 b 14.
[2] Arist., *Phys.*, Z 9,239 b 30.
[3] Arist., *Phys.*, Z 9,239 b 33.
[4] Ross, *Physics*, p. 660.

In attaining this second position the front of B1 has passed four of the A's, while the front of C1 has passed all the B's. If a unit of length is passed in a unit of time, then the front of B1 has taken half the time taken by the front of C1 in order to reach the position of Fig. 2. On the other hand the front of B1 has passed all the C's, just as the front of C1 has passed all the B's. The time of their passage must then be *equal*. We are left then with the absurd conclusion that the half of a certain time is equal to the whole of that time.

How are we to interpret these arguments of Zeno? It is important not to let oneself think: "These are mere sophistries on the part of Zeno. They are ingenious tricks, but they err by supposing that a line is composed of points and time of discrete moments." It may be that the solution of the riddles is to be found in showing that the line and time are continuous and not discrete; but, then, Zeno was not concerned to hold that they are discrete. On the contrary, he is concerned to show the absurd consequences which flow from supposing that they are discrete. Zeno, as a disciple of Parmenides, believed that motion is an illusion and is impossible, but in the foregoing arguments his aim is to prove that even on the pluralistic hypothesis motion is equally impossible, and that the assumption of its possibility leads to contradictory and absurd conclusions. Zeno's position was as follows: "The Real is a plenum, a complete continuum and motion is impossible. Our adversaries assert motion and try to explain it by an appeal to a pluralistic hypothesis. I propose to show that this hypothesis does nothing to explain motion, but only lands one in absurdities." Zeno thus reduced the hypothesis of his adversaries to absurdity, and the real result of his dialectic was not so much to establish Parmenidean monism (which is exposed to insuperable objections), as to show the necessity of admitting the concept of continuous quantity.

The Eleatics, then, deny the reality of multiplicity and motion. There is one principle, Being, which is conceived of as material and motionless. They do not deny, of course, that we *sense* motion and multiplicity, but they declare that what we sense is illusion: it is mere appearance. True being is to be found, not by sense but by thought, and thought shows that there can be no plurality, no movement, no change.

The Eleatics thus attempt, as the earlier Greek philosophers attempted before them, to discover the one principle of the world. The world, however, as it presents itself to us, is clearly a pluralistic world. The question is, therefore, how to reconcile the one principle with the plurality and change which we find in the world, i.e. the problem of the One and the Many, which Heraclitus had tried to solve in a philosophy that professed to do justice to both elements through a doctrine of Unity in Diversity, Identity in Difference. The Pythagoreans asserted plurality to the practical exclusion of the One—there are many ones; the Eleatics asserted the One to the exclusion of the many. But if you cling to the plurality which is suggested by sense-experience, then you must also admit change; and if you admit change of one thing into another, you cannot avoid the recurring problem as to the character of the common element in the things which change. If, on the other hand, you start with the doctrine of the One, you must—unless you are going to adopt a one-sided position like that of the Eleatics, which cannot last—deduce plurality from the One, or at least show how the plurality which we observe in the world is consistent with the One. In other words, justice must be done to both factors—the One and the Many, Stability and Change. The one-sided doctrine of Parmenides was unacceptable, as also was the one-sided doctrine of the Pythagoreans. Yet the philosophy of Heraclitus was also unsatisfactory. Apart from the fact that it hardly accounted sufficiently for the stable element in things, it was bound up with materialistic monism. Ultimately it was bound to be suggested that the highest and truest being is immaterial. Meanwhile it is not surprising to find what Zeller calls "compromise-systems," trying to weld together the thought of their predecessors.

Note on "Pantheism" in pre-Socratic Greek Philosophy

(i) If a Pantheist is a man who has a subjective religious attitude towards the universe, which latter he identifies with God, then the Pre-Socratics are scarcely to be called pantheists. That Heraclitus speaks of the One as Zeus is true, but it does not appear that he adopted any religious attitude towards the One—Fire.

(ii) If a pantheist is a man who, while denying a Transcendent Principle of the universe, makes the universe to be ultimately *Thought* (unlike the materialist, who makes it Matter alone), then the Pre-Socratics again scarcely merit the name of pantheists, for

they conceive or speak of the One in material terms (though it is true that the spirit-matter distinction had not yet been so clearly conceived that they could deny it in the way that the modern materialistic monist denies it).

(iii) In any case the One, the universe, could not be identified with the Greek gods. It has been remarked (by Schelling) that there is no supernatural in Homer, for the Homeric god is part of nature. This remark has its application in the present question. The Greek god was finite and anthropomorphically conceived; he could not possibly be identified with the One, nor would it occur to anyone to do so literally. The *name* of a god might be sometimes transferred to the One, e.g. Zeus, but the one is not to be thought of as identified with the "actual" Zeus of legend and mythology. The suggestion may be that the One is the only "god" there is, and that the Olympian deities are anthropomorphic fables; but even then it seems very uncertain if the philosopher ever *worshipped* the One. Stoics might with justice be called pantheists; but, as far as the early Pre-Socratics are concerned, it seems decidedly preferable to call them monists, rather than pantheists.

PART III

PLATO

CHAPTER XVII

LIFE OF PLATO

PLATO, one of the greatest philosophers of the world, was born at Athens (or Aegina), most probably in the year 428/7 B.C., of a distinguished Athenian family. His father was named Ariston and his mother Perictione, sister of Charmides and niece of Critias, who both figured in the Oligarchy of 404/3. He is said to have been originally called Aristocles, and to have been given the name Plato only later, on account of his robust figure,[1] though the truth of Diogenes' report may well be doubted. His two brothers, Adeimantus and Glaucon, appear in the *Republic*, and he had a sister named Potone. After the death of Ariston, Perictione married Pyrilampes, and their son Antiphon (Plato's half-brother) appears in the *Parmenides*. No doubt Plato was brought up in the home of his stepfather; but although he was of aristocratic descent and brought up in an aristocratic household, it must be remembered that Pyrilampes was a friend of Pericles, and that Plato must have been educated in the traditions of the Periclean régime. (Pericles died in 429/8.) It has been pointed out by various authors that Plato's later bias against democracy can hardly have been due, at any rate solely, to his upbringing, but was induced by the influence of Socrates and still more by the treatment which Socrates received at the hands of the democracy. On the other hand, it would seem possible that Plato's distrust of democracy dated from a period very much earlier than that of the death of Socrates. During the later course of the Peloponnesian War (it is highly probable that Plato fought at Arginusae in 406) it can hardly have failed to strike Plato that the democracy lacked a truly capable and responsible leader, and that what leaders there were were easily spoiled by the necessity of pleasing the populace. Plato's final abstention from home politics no doubt dates from the trial and condemnation of his Master; but the

[1] Diog. Laërt., 3, 4.

formulation of his conviction that the ship of State needs a firm pilot to guide her, and that he must be one who *knows* the right course to follow, and who is prepared to act conscientiously in accordance with that knowledge, can hardly fail to have been laid during the years when Athenian power was passing to its eclipse.

According to a report of Diogenes Laërtius, Plato "applied himself to the study of painting, and wrote poems, dithyrambics at first, and afterwards lyric poems and tragedies."[1] How far this is true, we cannot say; but Plato lived in the flourishing period of Athenian culture, and must have received a cultured education. Aristotle informs us that Plato had been acquainted in his youth with Cratylus, the Heraclitean philosopher.[2] From him Plato would have learnt that the world of sense-perception is a world of flux, and so not the right subject-matter for true and certain knowledge. That true and certain knowledge is attainable on the conceptual level, he would have learnt from Socrates, with whom he must have been acquainted from early years. Diogenes Laërtius indeed asserted that Plato "became a pupil of Socrates" when twenty years old,[3] but as Charmides, Plato's uncle, had made the acquaintance of Socrates in 431,[4] Plato must have known Socrates at least before he was twenty. In any case we have no reason for supposing that Plato became a "disciple" of Socrates, in the sense of devoting himself wholly and professedly to philosophy, since he tells us himself that he originally intended to embark on a political career—as was natural in a young man of his antecedents.[5] His relatives in the Oligarchy of 403–4 urged Plato to enter upon political life under their patronage; but when the Oligarchy started to pursue a policy of violence and attempted to implicate Socrates in their crimes, Plato became disgusted with them. Yet the democrats were no better, since it was they who put Socrates to death, and Plato accordingly abandoned the idea of a political career.

Plato was present at the trial of Socrates, and he was one of the friends who urged Socrates to increase his proposed fine from one to thirty *minae*, offering to stand security;[6] but he was absent from the death-scene of his friend in consequence of an illness.[7] After the death of Socrates, Plato withdrew to Megara and took shelter with the philosopher Euclid, but in all probability he soon returned to Athens. He is said by the biographers to have

[1] Diog. Laërt., 3, 5. [2] *Metaph.*, A 6, 987 a 32–5. [3] Diog. Laërt., 3, 6.
[4] At least, this is what the reference to Potidaea (*Charmides*, 153) implies.
[5] *Ep.*, 7, 324 b 8–326 b 4. [6] *Apol.*, 34 a 1, 38 b 6–9. [7] *Phaedo*, 59 b 10.

travelled to Cyrene, Italy and Egypt, but it is uncertain what truth there is in these stories. For instance, Plato himself says nothing of any visit to Egypt. It may be that his knowledge of Egyptian mathematics, and even of the games of the children, indicate an actual journey to Egypt; on the other hand, the story of the journey may have been built up as a mere conclusion from what Plato has to say about the Egyptians. Some of these stories are obviously legendary in part; e.g. some give him Euripides as a companion, although the poet died in 406. This fact makes us rather sceptical concerning the reports of the journeys in general; but all the same, we cannot say with certainty that Plato did *not* visit Egypt, and he may have done so. If he did actually go to Egypt, he may have gone about 395 and have returned to Athens at the outbreak of the Corinthian wars. Professor Ritter thinks it very probable that Plato was a member of the Athenian force in the first years of the wars (395 and 394).

What is certain, however, is that Plato visited Italy and Sicily, when he was forty years old.[1] Possibly he wished to meet and converse with members of the Pythagorean School: in any case he became acquainted with Archytas, the learned Pythagorean. (According to Diogenes Laërtius, Plato's aim in undertaking the journey was to see Sicily and the volcanoes.) Plato was invited to the court of Dionysius I, Tyrant of Syracuse, where he became a friend of Dion, the Tyrant's brother-in-law. The story goes that Plato's outspokenness excited the anger of Dionysius, who gave him into the charge of Pollis, a Lacedaemonian envoy, to sell as a slave. Pollis sold Plato at Aegina (at that time at war with Athens), and Plato was even in danger of losing his life; but eventually a man of Cyrene, a certain Anniceris, ransomed him and sent him to Athens.[2] It is difficult to know what to make of this story, as it is not mentioned in Plato's *Epistles*: if it really happened (Ritter accepts the story) it must be dated 388 B.C.

On his return to Athens, Plato seems to have founded the Academy (388/7), near the sanctuary of the hero Academus. The Academy may rightly be called the first European university, for the studies were not confined to philosophy proper, but extended over a wide range of auxiliary sciences, like mathematics, astronomy and the physical sciences, the members of the School joining in the common worship of the Muses. Youths came to the Academy, not only from Athens itself, but also from abroad;

[1] *Ep.*, 7, 324 a 5–6. [2] Diog. Laërt., 3, 19–20.

and it is a tribute to the scientific spirit of the Academy and a proof that it was not simply a "philosophical-mystery" society, that the celebrated mathematician Eudoxus transferred himself and his School from Cyzicus to the Academy. It is as well to lay stress on this scientific spirit of the Academy, for though it is perfectly true that Plato aimed at forming statesmen and rulers, his method did not consist in simply teaching those things which would be of immediate practical application, e.g. rhetoric (as did Isocrates in his School), but in fostering the disinterested pursuit of science. The programme of studies culminated in philosophy, but it included as preliminary subjects a study of mathematics and astronomy, and no doubt harmonics, in a disinterested and not purely utilitarian spirit. Plato was convinced that the best training for public life is not a merely practical "sophistic" training, but rather the pursuit of science for its own sake. Mathematics, apart of course from its importance for Plato's philosophy of the Ideas, offered an obvious field for disinterested study, and it had already reached a high pitch of development among the Greeks. (The studies seem also to have included biological, e.g. botanical, researches, pursued in connection with problems of logical classification.) The politician so formed will not be an opportunist time-server, but will act courageously and fearlessly in accordance with convictions founded on eternal and changeless truths. In other words, Plato aimed at producing statesmen and not demagogues.

Besides directing the studies in the Academy, Plato himself gave lectures and his hearers took notes. It is important to notice that these lectures were not published, and that they stand in contrast to the dialogues, which were published works meant for "popular" reading. If we realise this fact, then some of the sharp differences that we naturally tend to discern between Plato and Aristotle (who entered the Academy in 367) disappear, at least in part. We possess Plato's popular works, his dialogues, but not his lectures. The situation is the exact opposite in regard to Aristotle, for while the works of Aristotle that are in our hands represent his lectures, his popular works or dialogues have not come down to us—only fragments remain. We cannot, therefore, by a comparison of Plato's dialogues with Aristotle's lectures, draw conclusions, without further evidence, as to a strong opposition between the two philosophers in point of literary ability, for instance, or emotional, aesthetic and "mystical" outlook. We

are told that Aristotle used to relate how those who came to hear Plato's lecture on the Good, were often astonished to hear of nothing but arithmetic and astronomy, and of the limit and the One. In *Ep.* 7, Plato repudiates the accounts that some had published of the lecture in question. In the same letter he says: "So there is not, and may there never be, any treatise by me at least on these things, for the subject is not communicable in words, as other sciences are. Rather is it that after long association in the business itself and a shared life that a light is lit in the soul, kindled, as it were, by a leaping flame, and thenceforward feeds itself." Again, in *Ep.* 2: "Therefore I have never myself written a word on these matters, and there neither is nor ever shall be any written treatise of Plato; what now bears the name belongs to Socrates, beautified and rejuvenated."[1] From such passages some draw the conclusion that Plato had not much opinion of the value of books for really educative purposes. This may well be so, but we should not put undue emphasis on this point, for Plato, after all, *did* publish books—and we must also remember that the passages in question may not be by Plato at all. Yet we must concede that the Ideal Theory, in the precise form in which it was taught in the Academy, was not given to the public in writing.

Plato's reputation as teacher and counsellor of statesmen must have contributed to bringing about his second journey to Syracuse in 367. In that year Dionysius I died, and Dion invited Plato to come to Syracuse in order to take in hand the education of Dionysius II, then about thirty years old. Plato did so, and set the Tyrant to a course of geometry. Soon, however, Dionysius' jealousy of Dion got the upper hand, and when Dion left Syracuse, the philosopher after some difficulty managed to return to Athens, whence he continued to instruct Dionysius by letter. He did not succeed in bringing about a reconciliation between the Tyrant and his uncle, who took up residence at Athens, where he consorted with Plato. In 361, however, Plato undertook a third journey to Syracuse at the earnest request of Dionysius, who wished to continue his philosophical studies. Plato apparently hoped to draft a constitution for a proposed confederation of Greek cities against the Carthaginian menace, but opposition proved too strong: moreover, he found himself unable to secure the recall of Dion, whose fortune was confiscated by his nephew.

[1] *Ep.* 7, 341 c 4–d 2; *Ep.* 2, 314 c 1–4.

In 360, therefore, Plato returned to Athens, where he continued his activities in the Academy until his death in the year 348/7.[1] (In 357 Dion succeeded in making himself master of Syracuse, but he was murdered in 353, to the great grief of Plato, who felt that he had been disappointed in his dream of a philosopher-king.)

[1] *Uno et octogesimo anno scribens est mortuus.* Cic., *De Senect.*, 5, 13.

CHAPTER XX

THE DOCTRINE OF FORMS

In this chapter I propose to discuss the theory of Forms or Ideas in its ontological aspect. We have already seen that in Plato's eyes the object of true knowledge must be stable and abiding, the object of intelligence and not of sense, and that these requirements are fulfilled by the universal, as far as the highest cognitive state, that of νόησις, is concerned. The Platonic epistemology clearly implies that the universals which we conceive in thought are not devoid of objective reference, but we have not yet examined the important question, in what this objective reference consists. There is indeed plenty of evidence that Plato continued to occupy himself throughout his years of academic and literary activity with problems arising from the theory of Forms, but there is no real evidence that he ever radically changed his doctrine, still less that he abandoned it altogether, however much he tried to clarify or modify it, in view of difficulties that occurred to him or that were suggested by others. It has sometimes been asserted that the mathematisation of the Forms, which is ascribed to Plato by Aristotle, was a doctrine of Plato's old age, a relapse into Pythagorean "mysticism,"[1] but Aristotle does not say that Plato *changed* his doctrine, and the only reasonable conclusion to be drawn from Aristotle's words would appear to be that Plato held more or less the same doctrine, at least during the time that Aristotle worked under him in the Academy. (Whether Aristotle misinterpreted Plato or not is naturally another question.) But though Plato continued to maintain the doctrine of Ideas, and though he sought to clarify his meaning and the ontological and logical implications of his thought, it does not follow that we can always clearly grasp what he actually meant. It is greatly to be regretted that we have no adequate record of his lectures in the Academy, since this would doubtless throw great light on the interpretation of his theories as put forward in the dialogues, besides conferring on us the inestimable benefit of knowing what Plato's "real" opinions were, the opinions that he transmitted only through oral teaching and never published.

[1] Cf. Stace, *Critical History*, p. 191.

In the *Republic* it is assumed that whenever a plurality of individuals have a common name, they have also a corresponding idea or form.[1] This is the universal, the common nature or quality which is grasped in the concept, e.g. beauty. There are many beautiful things, but we form one universal concept of beauty itself: and Plato assumed that these universal concepts are not merely subjective concepts, but that in them we apprehend objective essences. At first hearing this sounds a peculiarly naïve view, perhaps, but we must recall that for Plato it is thought that grasps reality, so that the object of thought, as opposed to sense-perception, i.e. universals, must have reality. How could they be grasped and made the object of thought unless they were real? We *discover* them: they are not simply invented by us. Another point to remember is that Plato seems first to have concerned himself with moral and aesthetic universals (as also with the objects of mathematical science), as was only natural, considering the main interest of Socrates, and to think of Absolute Goodness or Absolute Beauty existing in their own right, so to speak, is not unreasonable, particularly if Plato identified them, as we believe that he did. But when Plato came to turn his attention more to natural objects than he had formerly done, and to consider class-concepts, such as those of man or horse, it was obviously rather difficult to suppose that universals corresponding to these class-concepts existed in their own right as objective essences. One may identify Absolute Goodness and Absolute Beauty, but it is not so easy to identify the objective essence of man with the objective essence of horse: in fact, to attempt to do so would be ludicrous. But some principle of unity had to be found, if the essences were not to be left in isolation one from another, and Plato came to devote attention to this principle of unity, so that all the specific essences might be unified under or subordinated to one supreme generic essence. Plato tackles this problem from the logical viewpoint, it is true, inquiring into the problem of logical classification; but there is no real evidence that he ever abandoned the view that universals have an ontological status, and he doubtless thought that in settling the problem of logical classification, he was also settling the problem of ontological unification.

To these objective essences Plato gave the name of Ideas or Forms (ἰδέαι or εἴδη), words which are used interchangeably.

[1] *Rep.*, 596 a 6–7; cf. 507 ab.

The word εἶδος in this connection appears suddenly in the *Phaedo*.[1] But we must not be misled by this use of the term "Idea." "Idea" in ordinary parlance means a subjective concept in the mind, as when we say: "That is only an idea and nothing real"; but Plato, when he speaks of Ideas or Forms, is referring to the objective content or reference of our universal concepts. In our universal concepts we apprehend objective essences, and it is to these objective essences that Plato applied the term "Ideas." In some dialogues, e.g. in the *Symposium*, the word "Idea" is not used, but the *meaning* is there, for in that dialogue Plato speaks of essential or absolute Beauty (αὐτὸ ὃ ἔστι καλόν), and this is what Plato would mean by the Idea of Beauty. Thus it would be a matter of indifference, whether he spoke of the Absolute Good or of the Idea of the Good: both would refer to an objective essence, which is the source of goodness in all the particular things that are truly good.

Since by Ideas or Forms Plato meant objective essences, it becomes of paramount importance for an understanding of the Platonic ontology to determine, as far as possible, precisely how he regarded these objective essences. Have they a transcendental existence of their own, apart from particular things, and, if so, what is their relation to one another and to the concrete particular objects of this world? Does Plato duplicate the world of sense-experience by postulating a transcendental world of invisible, immaterial essences? If so, what is the relation of this world of essences to God? That Plato's language often implies the existence of a separate world of transcendental essences cannot be denied, but it must be remembered that language is primarily designed to refer to the objects of our sense-experience, and is very often found inadequate for the precise expression of metaphysical truths. Thus we speak, and cannot well help speaking, of "God foreseeing," a phrase that, as it stands, implies that God is in time, whereas we know that God is not in time but is eternal. We cannot, however, speak adequately of the eternity of God, since we have no experience of eternity ourselves, and our language is not designed to express such matters. We are human beings and have to use human language—we can use no other: and this fact should make us cautious in attaching too much weight to the mere language or phrases used by Plato in dealing with abstruse, metaphysical points. We have to endeavour to

[1] *Phaedo*, 102 b 1.

get at the meaning behind those phrases. By this I do not mean to imply that Plato did not believe in the subsistence of universal essences, but simply to point out that, if we find that he did in fact hold this doctrine, we must beware of the temptation to put that doctrine in a ludicrous light by stressing the phrases used by Plato, without due consideration of the meaning to be attached to those phrases.

Now, what we might call the "vulgar" presentation of the Platonic theory of Ideas has generally been more or less as follows. In Plato's view the objects which we apprehend in universal concepts, the objects with which science deals, the objects corresponding to universal terms of predication, are objective Ideas or subsistent Universals, existing in a transcendental world of their own—somewhere "out there"—apart from sensible things, understanding by "apart from" practically spatial separation. Sensible things are copies or participations in these universal realities, but the latter abide in an unchanging heaven of their own, while sensible things are subject to change, in fact are always becoming and can never truly be said to *be*. The Ideas exist in their heaven in a state of isolation one from another, and apart from the mind of any Thinker. Plato's theory having been thus presented, it is pointed out that the subsistent universals either *exist* (in which case the real world of our experience is unjustifiably duplicated) or they do not exist, but have independent and *essential reality* in some mysterious way (in which case a wedge is unjustifiably driven between existence and essence.) (The Thomist School of Scholastic philosophers, be it remarked in passing, admit a "real distinction" between essence and the act of existence in created being; but, for them, the distinction is *within* the creature. Uncreated Being is Absolute Existence and Absolute Essence in identity.) Of the reasons which have led to this traditional presentation of the doctrine of Plato one may enumerate three.

(i) Plato's way of speaking about the Ideas clearly supposes that they exist in a sphere apart. Thus in the *Phaedo* he teaches that the soul existed before its union with the body in a transcendental realm, where it beheld the subsistent intelligible entities or Ideas, which would seem to constitute a plurality of "detached" essences. The process of knowledge, or getting to know, consists essentially in recollection, in remembering the Ideas which the soul once beheld clearly in its state of pre-existence.

(ii) Aristotle asserts in the *Metaphysics*[1] that Plato "separated" the Ideas, whereas Socrates had not done so. In his criticism of the theory of Ideas he constantly supposes that, according to the Platonists, Ideas exist apart from sensible things. Ideas constitute the reality or "substance" of things; "how, therefore," asks Aristotle, "can the Ideas, being the substance of things, exist apart?"[2]

(iii) In the *Timaeus* Plato clearly teaches that God or the "Demiurge" forms the things of this world according to the model of the Forms. This implies that the Forms or Ideas exist apart, not only from the sensible things that are modelled on them, but also from God, Who takes them as His model. They are therefore hanging in the air, as it were.

In this way, say the critics, Plato—

(*a*) Duplicates the "real" world;
(*b*) Posits a multitude of subsistent essences with no sufficient metaphysical ground or basis (since they are independent even of God);
(*c*) Fails to explain the relation between sensible things and the Ideas (except by metaphorical phrases like "imitation" or "participation"); and
(*d*) Fails to explain the relation of the Ideas to one another, e.g. of species to genus, or to find any real principle of unity. Accordingly, if Plato was trying to solve the problem of the One and the Many, he failed lamentably and merely enriched the world with one more fantastic theory, which was exploded by the genius of Aristotle.

It must be left to an examination of Plato's thought in more detail to show what truth there is in this presentation of the theory of Ideas; but we would point out at once that these critics tend to neglect the fact that Plato saw clearly that the plurality of Ideas needs some principle of unity, and that he tried to solve this problem. They also tend to neglect the fact that we have indications not only in the dialogues themselves, but also in the allusions of Aristotle to Plato's theory and Plato's lectures, *how* Plato tried to solve the problem, namely, by a new interpretation, and application of the Eleatic doctrine of the One. Whether Plato actually solved the problems that arise out of his theories is a matter for dispute, but it will not do to speak as though he

[1] *Metaph.*, A, 987 b 1–10; M, 1078 b 30–32. [2] *Metaph.*, A, 991 b 2–3.

never saw any of the difficulties that Aristotle afterwards brought against him. On the contrary, Plato anticipated some of the very objections raised by Aristotle and thought that he had solved them more or less satisfactorily. Aristotle evidently thought otherwise, and he may have been right, but it is unhistorical to speak as though Aristotle raised objections which Plato had been too foolish to see. Moreover, if it is an historical fact, as it is, that Plato brought difficulties against himself, one should be careful in attributing to him an opinion that is fantastic—unless, of course, we are compelled by the evidence to believe that he held it.

Before going on to consider the theory of Ideas as presented in the dialogues, we will make some preliminary observations in connection with the three reasons that we enumerated in support of the traditional presentation of Plato's Ideal Theory.

(i) It is an undeniable fact that Plato's way of speaking about the Ideas very often implies that they exist "apart from" sensible things. I believe that Plato really did hold this doctrine; but there are two cautionary observations to be made.

(*a*) If they exist "apart from" sensible things, this "apart from" can only mean that the Ideas are possessed of a reality independent of sensible things. There can be no question of the Ideas being in a place, and, strictly speaking, they would be as much "in" as "out of" sensible things, for *ex hypothesi* they are incorporeal essences and incorporeal essences cannot be in a place. As Plato had to use human language, he would naturally express the essential reality and independence of the Ideas in spatial terminology (he could not do anything else); but he would not *mean* that the Ideas were spatially separate from things. Transcendence in this connection would mean that the Ideas do not change and perish with sensible particulars: it would no more mean that they are in a heavenly place of their own than God's transcendence implies for us that God is in a place, different from the places or spaces of the sensible objects He has created. It is absurd to speak as though the Platonic Theory involved the assumption of an Ideal Man with length, breadth, depth, etc., existing in the heavenly place. To do so is to make the Platonic theory gratuitously ridiculous: whatever the transcendence of the Ideas might mean, it could not mean *that*.

(*b*) We should be careful not to place too much weight on doctrines such as that of the pre-existence of the soul and the

process of "recollection." Plato sometimes, as is well known, makes use of "Myth," giving a "likely account," which he does not mean to be taken with the same exactitude and seriousness as more scientifically argued themes. Thus in the *Phaedo* "Socrates" gives an account of the soul's future life, and then expressly declares that it does not become a man of sense to affirm that these things are exactly as he has described them.[1] But while it is clear enough that the account of the soul's future life is conjectural and admittedly "mythical" in character, it appears altogether unjustifiable to extend the concept of "myth" to include the whole doctrine of immortality, as some would do, for in the passage alluded to in the *Phaedo* Socrates declares that, though the picture of the future life is not to be understood literally or positively affirmed, the soul is "certainly immortal." And, as Plato couples together immortality after death with pre-existence, it hardly seems that one is warranted in dismissing the whole conception of pre-existence as "mythical." It may possibly be that it was no more than an hypothesis in Plato's eyes (so that, as I said, we should not attach too much weight to it); but, all things considered, we are not justified in simply asserting that it actually is myth, and, unless its mythical character can be demonstrated satisfactorily, we ought to accept it as a seriously-meant doctrine. Yet even if the soul pre-existed and contemplated the Forms in that state of pre-existence, it would *not* follow that the Forms or Ideas are in any *place*, save metaphorically. Nor does it even necessarily follow that they are "detached" essences, for they might all be included in some ontological principle of unity.

(ii) In regard to the statements of Aristotle in the *Metaphysics* it is as well to point out at once that Aristotle must have known perfectly well what Plato taught in the Academy and that Aristotle was no imbecile. It is absurd to speak as though Aristotle's insufficient knowledge of contemporary mathematical developments would necessarily lead to his essentially perverting Plato's doctrine of the Forms, at least in its non-mathematical aspects. He may or may not have fully understood Plato's mathematical theories: it does not follow from this alone that he made an egregious blunder in his interpretation of the Platonic ontology. If Aristotle declares that Plato "separated" the Forms, we cannot pass over this statement as mere ignorant criticism.

[1] *Phaedo*, 114 d 1–2.

All the same, we have to be careful not to assume *a priori* what Aristotle meant by "separation," and in the second place we have to inquire whether Aristotle's criticism of the Platonic theory necessarily implies that Plato himself drew the conclusions that Aristotle attacks. It *might* be that some of the conclusions attacked by Aristotle were conclusions that he (Aristotle) considered to be logical consequences of the Platonic theory, although Plato may not have drawn those conclusions himself. If this were the case, then we should have to inquire whether the conclusions really did flow from Plato's premisses. But as it would be impracticable to discuss Aristotle's criticism until we have seen what Plato himself said about the Ideas in his published works, it is best to reserve till later a discussion of Aristotle's criticism, although it is true that, since one has to rely largely on Aristotle for knowledge of what Plato taught in his lectures, one cannot help drawing upon him in an exposition of the Platonic doctrine. It is, however, important (and this is the burden of these preliminary remarks) that we should put out of our heads the notion that Aristotle was an incompetent fool, incapable of understanding the true thought of the Master.[1] Unjust he may have been, but he was no fool.

(iii) It can scarcely be denied that Plato in the *Timaeus* speaks as though the Demiurge, the Efficient Cause of order in the world, fashions the objects of this world after the pattern of the Forms as Exemplary Cause, thus implying that the Forms or Ideas are quite distinct from the Demiurge, so that, if we call the Demiurge "God," we should have to conclude that the Forms are not only "outside" the things of this world, but also "outside" God. But though Plato's language in the *Timaeus* certainly implies this interpretation, there is some reason, as will be seen later, to think that the Demiurge of the *Timaeus* is an *hypothesis* and that Plato's "theism" is not to be over-stressed. Moreover, and this is an important fact to remember, Plato's doctrine, as given in his lectures, was not precisely the same as that given in the dialogues: or it might be better to say that Plato developed aspects of his doctrine in his lectures that scarcely appear in the dialogues. The remarks of Aristotle concerning Plato's lecture on the Good, as recorded by Aristoxenus, would seem to indicate

[1] It is indeed the opinion of the writer that Aristotle, in his criticism of the Ideal Theory, scarcely does justice to Plato, but he would ascribe this to the polemical attitude Aristotle came to adopt towards the theory rather than to any supposed imbecility.

that in dialogues such as the *Timaeus*, Plato revealed some of his thoughts only in a pictorial and figurative way. To this question I return later: we must now endeavour to ascertain, as far as possible, what Plato's doctrine of Ideas actually was.

1. In the *Phaedo*, where the discussion centres round the problem of immortality, it is suggested that truth is not to be attained by the bodily senses, but by reason alone, which lays hold of the things that "really are."[1] What are the things that "really are," i.e. that have true being? They are the essences of things, and Socrates gives as examples justice itself, beauty itself, and goodness itself, abstract equality, etc. These essences remain always the same, while particular objects of sense do not. That there really exist such essences is assumed by Socrates: he lays it down "as an hypothesis that there is a certain abstract beauty, and goodness, and magnitude," and that a particular beautiful object, for instance, is beautiful because it partakes of that abstract beauty.[2] (In 102 b the word Idea is applied to these essences; they are termed εἴδη.) In the *Phaedo* the existence of these essences is used as an aid in the proof of immortality. It is pointed out that the fact that a man is able to judge of things as more or less equal, more or less beautiful, implies knowledge of a standard, of the essence of beauty or equality. Now, men do not come into the world and grow up with a clear knowledge of universal essences: how is it, then, that they can judge of particular things in reference to a universal standard? Is it not because the soul pre-existed before its union with the body, and had knowledge of the essences in its state of pre-existence? The process of learning would thus be a process of reminiscence, in which particular embodiments of the essence acted as reminders of the essences previously beheld. Moreover, since rational knowledge of essences in this life involves transcending the bodily senses and rising to the intellectual plane, should we not suppose that the soul of the philosopher beholds these essences after death, when he is no longer hampered and shackled by the body?

Now, the natural interpretation of the doctrine of the Ideas as given in the *Phaedo* is that the Ideas are subsistent universals; but it is to be remembered that, as already mentioned, the doctrine is put forward tentatively as an "hypothesis," i.e. as a premiss which is assumed until connection with an evident first principle either justifies it or "destroys" it, or shows that it stands

[1] *Phaedo*, 65 c 2 ff. [2] *Phaedo*, 100 b 5–7.

in need of modification or correction. Of course, one cannot exclude the possibility that Plato put forward the doctrine tentatively because he (Plato) was not yet certain of it, but it would appear legitimate to suppose that Plato makes Socrates put forward the doctrine in a tentative fashion precisely because he knew very well that the historical Socrates had not reached the metaphysical theory of the Ideas, and that in any case he had not arrived at Plato's final Principle of the Good. It is significant that Plato allows Socrates to divine the Ideal Theory in his "swan-song," when he becomes "prophetic."[1] This might well imply that Plato allows Socrates to divine a certain amount of his (i.e. Plato's) theory, but not all. It is also to be noted that the theory of pre-existence and reminiscence is referred, in the *Meno*, to "priests and priestesses,"[2] just as the sublimest part of the *Symposium* is referred to "Diotima." Some have concluded that these passages were avowedly "Myths" in Plato's eyes, but it might equally well be the case that these hypothetical passages (hypothetical for *Socrates*) reveal something of Plato's own doctrine, as distinct from that of Socrates. (In any case we should not use the doctrine of reminiscence as an excuse for attributing to Plato an explicit anticipation of Neo-Kantian theory. The Neo-Kantians may think that the *a priori* in the Kantian sense is the truth that Plato was getting at or that underlies his words, but they cannot be justified in fathering the explicit doctrine on to Plato, without much better evidence than they can offer.) I conclude, then, that the theory of Ideas, as put forward in the *Phaedo*, represents but a part of Plato's doctrine. It should not be inferred that for Plato himself the Ideas were "*detached*" subsistent universals. Aristotle clearly stated that Plato identified the One with the Good; but this unifying principle, whether already held by Plato when he composed the *Phaedo* (as is most probable) or only later elaborated, certainly does not appear in the *Phaedo*.

2. In the *Symposium*, Socrates is represented as reporting a discourse made to him by one Diotima, a "Prophetess," concerning the soul's ascent to true Beauty under the impulse of Eros. From beautiful forms (i.e. bodies), a man ascends to the contemplation of the beauty that is in souls, and thence to science, that he may look upon the loveliness of wisdom, and turn towards the "wide ocean of beauty" and the "lovely and majestic forms

[1] Cf. *Phaedo*, 84 e 3–85 b 7. [2] *Meno*, 81 a 5 ff.

which it contains," until he reaches the contemplation of a Beauty that is "eternal, unproduced, indestructible; neither subject to increase nor decay; not partly beautiful and partly ugly; not at one time beautiful and at another time not; not beautiful in relation to one thing and deformed in relation to another; not here beautiful and there ugly; not beautiful in the estimation of some people and deformed in that of others. Nor can this supreme beauty be figured to the imagination like a beautiful face, or beautiful hands, or any other part of the body, nor like any discourse, nor any science. Nor does it subsist in any other thing that lives or is, either in earth, or in heaven, or in any other place; but it is eternally self-subsistent and monoeidic with itself. All other things are beautiful through a participation of it, with this condition, that although they are subject to production and decay, it never becomes more or less, or endures any change." This is the divine and pure, the monoeidic beautiful itself.[1] It is evidently the Beauty of the *Hippias Maior*, "from which all beautiful things derive their beauty."[2]

The priestess Diotima, into whose mouth Socrates puts his discourse on Absolute Beauty and the ascent thereto under the impulse of Eros, is represented as suggesting that Socrates may not be able to follow her to such sublime heights, and she urges him to strain all his attention to reach the obscure depth of the subject.[3] Professor A. E. Taylor interprets this to mean that Socrates is too modest to claim the mystical vision for himself (although he has really experienced it), and so represents himself as but reporting the words of Diotima. Taylor will have nothing to do with the suggestion that the speech of Diotima represents *Plato's* personal conviction, never attained by the historical Socrates. "Much unfortunate nonsense has been written about the meaning of Diotima's apparent doubt whether Socrates will be able to follow her as she goes on to speak of the 'full and perfect vision . . .' It has even been seriously argued that Plato is here guilty of the arrogance of professing that he has reached philosophical heights to which the 'historical' Socrates could not ascend."[4] That such a procedure would be indicative of arrogance on Plato's part might be true, if there were question of a mystical vision, as Taylor apparently thinks there is; but it is by no means certain that there is any question of religious mysticism in the

[1] *Sympos.*, 210 e 1–212 a 7. [2] *Hippias Maior*, 289 d 2–5.
[3] *Sympos.*, 209 e 5–210 a 4. Cf. 210 e 1–2. [4] *Plato*, p. 229, note 1.

speech of Socrates, and there seems no real reason why Plato should not be able to claim a greater philosophic penetration in regard to the ultimate Principle than Socrates, without thereby laying himself open to any justifiable charge of arrogance. Moreover, if, as Taylor supposes, the opinions put into the mouth of Socrates in the *Phaedo* and the *Symposium* are those of the historic Socrates, how does it come about that in the *Symposium* Socrates speaks as though he had actually grasped the ultimate Principle, the Absolute Beauty, while in the *Phaedo* the theory of Ideas (in which abstract beauty finds a place) is put forward as a tentative hypothesis, i.e. in the very dialogue that purports to give Socrates' conversation before his death? Might we not be justified in expecting that if the historic Socrates had really apprehended the final Principle for certain, some sure indication of this would have been given in his final discourse? I prefer, then, the view that in the *Symposium* the speech of Diotima does not represent the certain conviction of the historic Socrates. In any case, however, this is an academic point: whether the report of Diotima's words represents the conviction of the historic Socrates or of Plato himself, the evident fact remains that some hint (at the very least) of the existence of an Absolute is therein given.

Is this Beauty in itself, the very essence of Beauty, a subsistent essence, "separate" from beautiful things, or is it not? It is true that Plato's words concerning science might be taken to imply a scientific appreciation of the mere universal concept of Beauty which is embodied in varying degrees in various beautiful objects; but the whole tenor of Socrates' discourse in the *Symposium* leads one to suppose that this essential Beauty is no mere concept, but has objective reality. Does this imply that it is "separate?" Beauty in itself or Absolute Beauty is "separate" in the sense that it is real, subsistent, but not in the sense that it is in a world of its own, spatially separate from things. For *ex hypothesi* Absolute Beauty is spiritual; and the categories of time and space, of local separation, simply do not apply in the case of that which is essentially spiritual. In the case of that which transcends space and time, we cannot even legitimately raise the question, *where* it is. It is nowhere, as far as local presence is concerned (though it is not nowhere in the sense of being unreal). The Χωρισμός or separation would thus seem to imply, in the case of the Platonic essence, a reality beyond the subjective reality of the abstract

concept—a subsistent reality, but not a local separation. It is, therefore, just as true to say that the essence is immanent, as that it is transcendent: the great point is that it is *real* and independent of particulars, unchanged and abiding. It is foolish to remark that if the Platonic essence is real, it must be somewhere. Absolute Beauty, for instance, does not exist outside us in the sense in which a flower exists outside us—for it might just as well be said to exist inside us, inasmuch as spatial categories simply do not apply to it. On the other hand, it cannot be said to be inside us in the sense that it is purely subjective, is confined to us, comes into being with us, and perishes through our agency or with us. It is both transcendent and immanent, inaccessible to the senses, apprehensible only by the intellect.

To the means of ascent to Absolute Beauty, the signification of Eros, and the question whether a mystical approach is implied, we must return later: at the present I wish simply to point out that in the *Symposium* indications are not wanting that Absolute Beauty is the ultimate Principle of unity. The passage[1] concerning the ascent from different sciences to one science—the science of universal Beauty—suggests that "the wide ocean of intellectual beauty," containing "lovely and majestic forms," is subordinate to or even comprised in the ultimate Principle of Absolute Beauty. And if Absolute Beauty is a final and unifying Principle, it becomes necessary to identify it with the Absolute Good of the *Republic*.

3. In the *Republic* it is clearly shown that the true philosopher seeks to know the essential nature of each thing. He is not concerned to know, for example, a multiplicity of beautiful things or a multiplicity of good things, but rather to discern the essence of beauty and the essence of goodness, which are embodied in varying degrees in particular beautiful things and particular good things. Non-philosophers, who are so taken up with the multiplicity of appearances that they do not attend to the essential nature and cannot distinguish, e.g. the essence of beauty from the many beautiful phenomena, are represented as having only opinion (δόξα) and as lacking in scientific knowledge. They are not concerned with not-being, it is true, since not-being cannot be an object of "knowledge" at all, but is completely unknowable; yet they are no more concerned with true being or reality, which is stable and abiding: they are concerned with fleeting phenomena or appearances, objects which are in a state of *becoming*,

[1] *Sympos.*, 210 a 4 ff.

constantly coming to be and passing away. Their state of mind is thus one of δόξα and the object of their δόξα is the phenomenon that stands half-way between being and not-being. The state of mind of the philosopher, on the other hand, is one of knowledge, and the object of his knowledge is Being, the fully real, the essential, the Idea or Form.

So far, indeed, there is no direct indication that the essence or Idea is regarded as subsistent or "separate" (so far as the latter term is applicable at all to non-sensual reality); but that it *is* so regarded may be seen from Plato's doctrine concerning the Idea of the Good, the Idea that occupies a peculiar position of pre-eminence in the *Republic*. The Good is there compared to the sun, the light of which makes the objects of nature visible to all and so is, in a sense, the source of their worth and value and beauty. This comparison is, of course, but a comparison, and as such should not be pressed: we are not to suppose that the Good exists as an object among objects, as the sun exists as an object among other objects. On the other hand, as Plato clearly asserts that the Good gives being to the objects of knowledge and so is, as it were, the unifying and all-comprehensive Principle of the essential order, while itself excelling even essential being in dignity and power,[1] it is impossible to conclude that the Good is a mere concept or even that it is a non-existent end, a teleological principle, as yet unreal, towards which all things are working: it is not only an epistemological principle, but also—in some, as yet, ill-defined sense—an *ontological* principle, a principle of being. It is, therefore, real in itself and subsistent.

It would seem that the Idea of the Good of the *Republic* must be regarded as identical with the essential Beauty of the *Symposium*. Both are represented as the high-peak of an intellectual ascent, while the comparison of the Idea of the Good with the sun would appear to indicate that it is the source not only of the goodness of things, but also of their beauty. The Idea of the Good gives being to the Forms or essences of the intellectual order, while science and the wide ocean of intellectual beauty is a stage on the ascent to the essentially beautiful. Plato is clearly working towards the conception of the Absolute, the absolutely Perfect and exemplary Pattern of all things, the ultimate ontological Principle. This Absolute is immanent, for phenomena embody it, "copy" it, partake in it, manifest it, in their varying degrees;

[1] *Rep.*, 509 b 6–10.

but it is also transcendent, for it is said to transcend even being itself, while the metaphors of participation (μέθεξις) and imitation (μίμησις)[1] imply a distinction between the participation and the Partaken of, between the imitation and the Imitated or Exemplar. Any attempt to reduce the Platonic Good to a mere logical principle and to disregard the indications that it is an ontological principle, necessarily leads to a denial of the sublimity of the Platonic metaphysic—as also, of course, to the conclusion that the Middle Platonist and Neo-Platonist philosophers entirely misunderstood the essential meaning of the Master.

At this point in the discussion there are two important observations to be made:

(i) Aristotle in the *Eudemian Ethics*[2] says that Plato identifies the Good with the One, while Aristoxenus, recalling Aristotle's account of Plato's lecture on the Good, tells us that the audience, who went to the lecture expecting to hear something about human goods, such as wealth, happiness, etc., were surprised when they found themselves listening to a discourse on mathematics, astronomy, numbers and *the identity of the good and one*. In the *Metaphysics*, Aristotle says that "Of those who maintain the existence of the unchangeable substances, some say that the one itself is the good itself, but they thought its substance lay mainly in its unity."[3] Plato is not mentioned by name in this passage, but elsewhere[4] Aristotle distinctly says that, for Plato, "the Forms are the cause of the essence of all other things, and the One is the cause of the essence of the Forms." Now, in the *Republic*,[5] Plato speaks of the ascent of the mind to the first principle of the whole, and asserts that the Idea of the Good is inferred to be "the universal author of all things beautiful and right, parent of light and of the lord of light in this world, and the *source of truth and reason* in the other." Hence it would seem only reasonable to conclude that the One, the Good and the essential Beauty are the same for Plato, and that the intelligible world of Forms owes its being in some way to the One. The word "emanation" (so dear to the Neo-Platonists) is nowhere used, and it is difficult to form any precise notion how Plato derived the Forms from the One; but it is clear enough that the One is the unifying Principle. Moreover, the One itself, though immanent in the Forms, is also transcendent, in that it cannot

[1] These phrases occur in the *Phaedo*. [2] 1218 a 24. [3] *Metaph.*, 1091, b 13–15.
[4] *Metaph.*, 988 a 10–11. [5] 517 b 7–c 4.

be simply equated with the single Forms. Plato tells us that "the good is not essence, but far exceeds essence in dignity and power," while on the other hand it is "not only the source of intelligibility in all objects of knowledge, but also of their being and essence,"[1] so that he who turns his eye towards the Good, turns it towards "that place where is the full perfection of being."[2] The implication is that the Idea of the Good may rightly be said to transcend being, since it is above all visible and intelligible objects, while on the other hand, as the Supremely Real, the true Absolute, it is the Principle of being and essence in all things.

In the *Timaeus*, Plato says that "It is hard to find the maker and father of the universe, and having found him, it is impossible to speak of him to all."[3] That the position occupied by the Demiurge in the *Timaeus* suggests that these words apply to him, is true; but we must remember (*a*) that the Demiurge is probably a symbol for the operation of Reason in the universe, and (*b*) that Plato explicitly said that there were subjects on which he refused to write,[4] one of these subjects being without doubt his full doctrine of the One. The Demiurge belongs to the "likely account."[5] In his second letter, Plato says that it is a mistake to suppose that any of the predicates we are acquainted with apply to the "king of the universe,"[6] and in his sixth letter he asks his friends to swear an oath of loyalty "in the name of the God who is captain of all things present and to come, and of the Father of that captain and cause."[7] Now, if the "Captain" is the Demiurge, the "Father" cannot be the Demiurge too, but must be the One; and I think that Plotinus was right in identifying the Father with the One or Good of the *Republic*.

The One is thus Plato's ultimate Principle and the source of the world of Forms, and Plato, as we have seen, thinks that the One transcends human predicates. This implies that the *via negativa* of Neo-Platonist and Christian philosophers is a legitimate approach to the One, but it should not be immediately concluded that the approach to the One is an "ecstatic" approach, as in Plotinus. In the *Republic* it is definitely asserted that the approach is *dialectical*, and that a man attains the vision of the Good by "pure intelligence."[8] By dialectic the highest principle of the soul is raised "to the contemplation of that which is best in existence."[9] To this subject we must return later.

[1] *Rep.*, 509 b 6–10. [2] *Rep.*, 526 e 3–4. [3] *Tim.*, 28 c 3–5.
[4] *Cf. Ep.* 2, 314 b 7–c 4. [5] *Tim.*, 30 b 6–c 1. [6] *Ep.* 2, 312 e ff.
[7] *Ep.* 6, 323 d 2–6. [8] *Rep.* 532 a 5–b 2. [9] *Rep.*, 532 c 5–6.

(ii) If the Forms proceed from the One—in some undefined manner—what of particular sensible objects? Does not Plato make such a rift between intelligible and visible worlds that they can be no longer interconnected? It would appear that Plato, who in the *Republic*[1] appears to condemn empirical astronomy, was forced by the progress of empirical science to modify his views, and in the *Timaeus* he himself considers nature and natural questions. (Moreover, Plato came to see that the dichotomy between an unchanging, intelligible world of reality and a changing world of unreality is hardly satisfactory. "Shall we be easily persuaded that change and life and soul and wisdom are not really present to what completely is, that it is neither living nor intelligent but is something awful and sacred in its thoughtless and static stability?")[2] In the *Sophist* and *Philebus* it is implied that διάνοια and αἰσθησις (which belong to different segments of the Line) unite together in the scientific judgment of perception. Ontologically speaking, the sensible particular can become the object of judgment and knowledge only in so far as it is really subsumed under one of the Ideas, "partaking" in the specific Form: in so far as it is a class-instance, it is real and can be known. The sensible particular *as such*, however, considered precisely in its particularity, is indefinable and unknowable, and is not truly "real." To this conviction Plato clung, and it is obviously an Eleatic legacy. The sense-world is, therefore, not wholly illusion, but it contains an element of unreality. Yet it can hardly be denied that even this position, with its sharp distinction between the formal and material elements of the particular, would leave the problem of the "separation" of the intelligible world from the sensible world really unresolved. It is this "separation" that Aristotle attacked. Aristotle thought that determinate form and the matter in which it is embodied are inseparable, both belonging to the real world, and, in his opinion, Plato simply ignored this fact and introduced an unjustifiable separation between the two elements. The real universal, according to Aristotle, is the *determined* universal, and the determined universal is an inseparable aspect of the real: it is a λόγος ἔνυλος or definition embodied in matter. Plato did not see this.

(Professor Julius Stenzel made the brilliant suggestion[3] that when Aristotle criticised Plato's "separation," he was criticising Plato for his failure to see that there is no genus alongside the

[1] *Rep.*, 529–30. [2] *Sophist*, 248 e 6–249 a 2. [3] *Zahl und Gestalt*, pp. 133 ff.

species. He appeals to *Metaph.*, 1037 b 8 ff., where Aristotle attacks Plato's method of logical division for supposing that in the resulting definition the intermediate *differentiae* must be recapitulated, e.g. Plato's method of division would result in our defining man as a "two-footed animal." Aristotle objects to this on the ground that "footedness" is not something alongside "two-footedness." Now, that Aristotle objected to this method of division is true; but his criticism of the Platonic theory of Forms on the ground of the Χωρισμός it introduces, cannot be reduced to the criticism of a logical point, for Aristotle is not criticising Plato merely for putting a generic form alongside the specific form, but for putting Forms in general alongside particulars.[1] It may well be, however, that Aristotle considered that Plato's failure to see that there is no genus alongside the species, i.e. no merely determinable universal, helped to conceal from him the Χωρισμός he was introducing between Forms and particulars—and here Stenzel's suggestion is valuable; but the Χωρισμός attacked by Aristotle cannot be confined to a logical point. That is clear from the whole tenor of Aristotle's criticism.)

4. In the *Phaedrus* Plato speaks of the soul who beholds "real existence, colourless, formless and intangible, visible only to the intelligence" (ἡ ἀχρωματός τε καὶ ἀσχημάτιστος καὶ ἀναφὴς οὐσία ὄντως οὖσα, ψυχῆς, κυβερνήτῃ μόνῳ θεατὴ νῷ);[2] and which sees distinctly "absolute justice, and absolute temperance, and absolute science; not such as they appear in creation, nor under the variety of forms to which we nowadays give the name of realities, but the justice, the temperance, the science, which exist in that which is real and essential being" (τὴν ἐν τῷ ὃ ἐστιν ὂν ὄντως ἐπιστήμην οὖσαν). This would seem to me to imply that these Forms or *Ideals* are comprised in the Principle of Being, in the One, or at least that they owe their essence to the One. Of course, if we use the imagination and try to picture to ourselves absolute justice or temperance existing on its own account in a heavenly world, we shall no doubt think Plato's words childishly naïve and ludicrous; but we should ask ourselves what Plato *meant* and should beware of attributing hastily to him such an extraordinary conception. Most probably Plato means to imply, by his figurative account, that the Ideal of Justice, the Ideal of Temperance, etc., are objectively grounded in the Absolute Principle of Value, in the Good, which "contains" within itself the ideal of human nature

[1] Cf. Hardie, *A Study in Plato*, p. 75. [2] *Phaedrus*, 247 c 6–8.

and so the ideal of the virtues of human nature. The Good or Absolute Principle of Value has thus the nature of a τέλος; but it is not an unrealised τέλος, a non-existent end-to-be-achieved; it is an existent τέλος, an ontological Principle, the Supremely Real, the perfect Exemplary Cause, the Absolute or One.

5. It is to be noted that at the beginning of the *Parmenides* the question is raised what Ideas Socrates is prepared to admit.[1] In reply to Parmenides, Socrates admits that there are Ideas of "likeness" and "of the one and many," and also of "the just and the beautiful and the good," etc. In answer to a further question, he says that he is often undecided, whether he should or should not include Ideas of man, fire, water, etc.; while, in answer to the question whether he admits Ideas of hair, mud, dirt, etc., Socrates answers, "Certainly not." He admits, however, that he sometimes gets disturbed and begins to think that there is nothing without an Idea, though no sooner has he taken up this position than he "runs away," afraid that he "may fall into a bottomless pit of nonsense and perish." He returns, therefore, "to the Ideas of which I was just now speaking."

Julius Stenzel uses this discussion in an attempt to prove that εἶδος had at first for Plato a definitely valuational connotation, as was but natural in the inheritor of Socrates. It was only later that the term came to be extended to cover all class-concepts. I believe that this is, in the main, correct, and that it was largely this very extension of the term Idea (i.e. *explicit* extension, since it already contained an implicit extension) which forced on Plato's attention difficulties of the type considered in the *Parmenides*. For, as long as the term εἶδος is "laden with moral and aesthetic qualities,"[2] as long as it has the nature of a valuational τέλος, drawing men under the impulse of Eros, the problem of its internal unity or multiplicity does not so obviously arise: it is the Good and the Beautiful in One. But once Ideas of man and other particular objects of our experience are explicitly admitted, the Ideal World threatens to become a Many, a reduplication of this world. What is the relation of the Ideas to one another, and what is their relation to particular things? Is there any real unity at all? The Idea of the Good is sufficiently remote from sensible particulars not to appear as an unwelcome reduplication of the latter; but if there is an Idea of man, for instance, "separate"

[1] 130 a 8 ff.
[2] *Plato's Method of Dialectic*, p. 55 (Trs. D. J. Allan, Oxford, Clarendon Press 1940.)

from individual men, it might well appear as a mere reduplication of the latter. Moreover, is the Idea wholly present in every individual man, or is it only partially present in every individual man? Again, if it is legitimate to speak of a likeness between individual men and the Idea of Man, must you not postulate a τρίτος ἄνθρωπος, in order to account for this resemblance and so proceed on an infinite regress? This type of objection was brought against the Ideal Theory by Aristotle, but it was already anticipated by Plato himself. The difference is, that while Plato (as we shall see later) thought that he had answered the objections, Aristotle did not think that Plato had answered them.

In the *Parmenides*, therefore, the question of the relation of individual objects to the Idea is discussed, objections being raised to the Socratic explanation. According to Socrates the relation may be described in two ways: (i) As a participation (μέθεξις, μετέχειν) of the particular object in the Idea; (ii) as an imitation (μίμησις) of the Idea by the particular object, the particular objects being ὁμοιώματα and μιμήματα of the Idea, the latter being the exemplar or παράδειγμα. (It does not seem possible to refer the two explanations to different periods of Plato's philosophical development—at least, not in any rigid way—since both explanations are found together in the *Parmenides*,[1] and both thoughts occur in the *Symposium*.)[2] The objections raised by Parmenides against these Socratic theories are, no doubt, intended to be serious criticism—as, indeed, they are—and not a mere *jeu d'esprit*, as has been suggested. The objections are real objections, and it would appear that Plato tried to develop his theory of Ideas in an attempt to meet some such criticisms as that which he puts into the mouths of the Eleatics in the *Parmenides*.

Do particular objects participate in the whole Idea or only in part of it? This is the dilemma proposed by Parmenides as a logical consequence of the participation-explanation of the relation between Ideas and particular objects. If the first of the alternatives be chosen, then the Idea, which is one, would be entirely in each of many individuals. If the second of the alternatives be chosen, then the Form or Idea is unitary and divisible (or many) at the same time. In either case a contradiction is involved. Moreover, if equal things are equal by the presence of a certain amount of equality, then they are equal by what is less than

[1] *Parm.*, 132 d 1 ff.

[2] *Sympos.*, 211 b 2 (μετέχοντα). In 212 a 4, sense-objects are spoken of as εἴδωλα, which implies "imitation."

equality. Again, if something is big by participation in bigness it is big by possessing that which is less than bigness—which seems to be a contradiction. (It is to be noted that objections of this kind suppose that the Ideas are what amount to individual objects on their own account, and so they serve to show the impossibility of regarding the Idea in this way.)

Socrates suggests the imitation-theory, that particular objects are copies of the Ideas, which are themselves patterns or exemplars; the resemblance of the particular objects to the Idea constitutes its participation in it. Against this Parmenides argues that, if white things are like whiteness, whiteness is also like white things. Hence, if the likeness between white things is to be explained by postulating a Form of whiteness, the likeness between whiteness and white things should also be explained by postulating an archetype, and so on indefinitely. Aristotle argued in much the same way, but all that really follows from the criticism is that the Idea is not simply another particular object, and that the relation between the particular objects and the Idea cannot be the same as that between different particular objects.[1] The objection, then, is to the point as showing the necessity for further consideration of the true relations, but this does not show that the Ideal Theory is totally untenable.

The objection is also raised that on Socrates' theory the Ideas would be unknowable. Man's knowledge is concerned with the objects of this world, and with the relations between individual objects. We can, for example, know the relation between the individual master and the individual slave, but this knowledge is insufficient to inform us as to the relationship between absolute mastership (the Idea of Mastership) and absolute slavery (the Idea of Slavery). For that purpose we should require absolute knowledge and this we do not possess. This objection, too, shows the hopelessness of regarding the Ideal World as merely parallel to this world: if we are to know the former, then there must be some objective basis in the latter which enables us to know it. If the two worlds are merely parallel, then, just as we would know the sensible world without being able to know the Ideal World, so a divine intelligence would know the Ideal World without being able to know the sensible world.

[1] Proclus pointed out that the relation of a copy to its original is a relation not only of resemblance, but also of derivation-from, so that the relation is not symmetrical. Cf. Taylor, *Plato*, p. 358: "My reflection in the glass is a reflection of my face, but my face is not a reflection of it."

The objections raised are left unanswered in the *Parmenides*, but it is to be noticed that Parmenides was not concerned to deny the existence of an intelligible world: he freely admits that if one refuses to admit the existence of absolute Ideas at all, then philosophic thinking goes by the board. The result of the objections that Plato raises against himself in the *Parmenides* is, therefore, to impel him to further exact consideration of the nature of the Ideal World and of its relation to the sensible world. It is made clear by the difficulties raised that some principle of unity is required which will, at the same time, not annihilate the many. This is admitted in the dialogue, though the unity considered is a unity in the world of Forms, as Socrates "did not care to solve the perplexity in reference to visible objects, but only in reference to thought and to what may be called ideas."[1] The difficulties are, therefore, not solved in the *Parmenides*; but the discussion must not be regarded as a destruction of the Ideal Theory, for the difficulties simply indicate that the theory must be expounded in a more satisfactory way than Socrates has expounded it hitherto.

In the second part of the dialogue Parmenides himself leads the discussion and undertakes to exemplify his "art," the method of considering the consequences which flow from a given hypothesis and the consequences which flow from denying that hypothesis. Parmenides proposes to start from the hypothesis of the One and to examine the consequences which are seen to flow from its assertion and its denial. Subordinate distinctions are introduced, the argument is long and complicated and no satisfactory conclusion is arrived at. Into this argument one cannot enter in a book like the present one, but it is necessary to point out that this second part of the *Parmenides* is no more a refutation of the doctrine of the One than the first part was of the Ideal Theory. A real refutation of the doctrine of the One would certainly not be put into the mouth of Parmenides himself, whom Plato greatly respected. In the *Sophist* the Eleatic Stranger apologises for doing violence to "father Parmenides,"[2] but, as Mr. Hardie aptly remarks, this apology "would hardly be called for if in another dialogue father Parmenides had done violence to himself."[3] Moreover, at the end of the *Parmenides* agreement is voted as to the assertion that, "If One is not, then nothing is." The participants may not be sure of the status of the many or

[1] 135 e 1–4. [2] 241 a. [3] *A Study in Plato*, p. 106.

of their relation to the One or even of the precise nature of the One; but they are at least agreed that there *is* a One.

6. In the *Sophist* the object before the interlocutors is to define the Sophist. They have a notion, of course, what the Sophist is, but they wish to *define* the Sophist's nature, to pin him down, as it were, in a clear formula (λόγος). It will be remembered that in the *Theaetetus* Socrates rejected the suggestion that knowledge is true belief plus an account (λόγος); but in that dialogue the discussion concerned particular sensible objects, while in the *Sophist* the discussion turns on class-concepts. The answer which is given to the problem of the *Theaetetus* is, therefore, that knowledge consists in apprehending the class-concept by means of genus and difference, i.e. by *definition*. The method of arriving at definition is that of analysis or division (διαίρεσις, διαιρεῖν κατ'εἴδη), whereby the notion or name to be defined is subsumed under a wider genus or class, which latter is then divided into its natural components. One of these natural components will be the notion to be defined. Previous to the division a process of synthesis or collecting (συνάγειν εἰς ἕν, συναγωγή) should take place, through which terms that are at least *prima facie* interrelated are grouped together and compared, with a view to determining the genus from which the process of division is to start. The wider class chosen is divided into two mutually-exclusive sub-classes, distinguished from one another by the presence or absence of some peculiar characteristic; and the process is continued until the *definiendum* is finally tracked down and defined by means of its genus and differences. (There is an amusing fragment of Epicrates, the comic poet, describing the classification of a pumpkin in the Academy.)

There is no need to enter either upon the actual process of tracking down the Sophist, or upon Plato's preliminary example of the method of division (the definition of the angler); but it must be pointed out that the discussion makes it clear that the Ideas may be one and many at the same time. The class-concept "Animal," for example, is one; but at the same time it is many, in that it contains within itself the sub-classes of "Horse," "Fox," "Man," etc. Plato speaks as though the generic Form pervades the subordinate specific Form or is dispersed throughout them, "blending" with each of them, yet retaining its own unity. There is a communion (κοινωνία) between Forms, and one Form partakes of (μετέχειν) another (as in "Motion exists" it is implied that

Motion blends with Existence); but we should not suppose that one Form partakes of another in the same sense in which the individual partakes of the specific Form, for Plato would not speak of the individual blending with the specific Form. The Forms thus constitute a hierarchy, subordinate to the One as the highest and all-pervading Form; but it is to be remembered that for Plato the "higher" the Form is, the richer it is, so that his point of view is the opposite to that of the Aristotelian, for whom the more "abstract" the concept, the poorer it is.

There is one important point to be noticed. The process of division (Plato, of course, believed that the logical division detects the grades of real being) cannot be prolonged indefinitely, since ultimately you will arrive at the Form that admits of no further division. These are the *infimae species* or ἄτομα εἴδη. The Form of Man, for instance, is indeed "many" in this sense, that it contains the genus and all relative differences, but it is not many in the sense of containing further subordinate specific classes into which it could be divided. On the contrary, below the ἄτομον εἶδος Man there stand *individual men*. The ἄτομα εἴδη, therefore, constitute the lowest rung of the ladder or hierarchy of Forms, and Plato very probably considered that by bringing down the Forms, by the process of division, to the border of the sensible sphere, he was providing a connecting link between τὰ ἀορατά and τὰ ὁρατά. It may be that the relation between the individuals and the *infimae species* was to be elucidated in the *Philosopher*, the dialogue which, it is conjectured, was once intended by Plato to follow the *Statesman* and which was never written; but it cannot be said that the chasm was ever satisfactorily bridged, and the problem of the Χωρισμός remained. (Julius Stenzel put forward the suggestion that Plato adopted from Democritus the principle of dividing until the atom is reached, which, in Plato's hands, becomes the intelligible "atomic Form." It is certainly significant that geometrical shape was a feature of the atom of Democritus, while geometrical shapes play an important part in Plato's picture of the formation of the world in the *Timaeus*; but it would seem that the relation of Plato to Democritus must always remain conjectural and something of a puzzle.)[1]

I have mentioned the "blending" of the Forms, but it is also to be noticed that there are Forms which are incompatible, at least in their "particularity," and will not "blend," e.g. Motion

[1] Cf. Chapter X, *Democritus*, in *Plato's Method of Dialectic*.

and Rest. If I say: "Motion does not rest," my statement is true, since it expresses the fact that Motion and Rest are incompatible and do not blend: if, however, I say: "Motion is Rest," my statement is false, since it expresses a combination that is not objectively verified. Light is thus thrown on the nature of false judgment which perplexed Socrates in the *Theaetetus*; though more relevant to the actual problem of the *Theaetetus* is the discussion of false statement in 262 e ff. of the *Sophist*. Plato takes as an example of a true statement, "Theaetetus sits," and as an example of a false statement, "Theaetetus flies." It is pointed out that Theaetetus is an existent subject and that Flying is a real Form, so that false statement is not a statement about *nothing*. (Every significant statement is about *something*, and it would be absurd to admit non-existent facts or objective falsehoods.) The statement has a meaning, but the relation of participating between the actual "sitting" of Theaetetus and the different Form "Flying" is missing. The statement, therefore, has a meaning, but the statement as a whole does not correspond with the fact as a whole. Plato meets the objection that there can be no false statement because there is nothing for it to mean, by an appeal to the Theory of Forms (which does not appear in the *Theaetetus*, with the consequence that in that dialogue the problem could not be solved). "We can have discourse only through the weaving together of Forms."[1] It is not meant that all significant statements must concern Forms exclusively (since we can make significant statements about singular things like Theaetetus), but that every significant statement involves the use of at least one Form, e.g. "Sitting" in the true statement, "Theaetetus sits."[2]

The *Sophist* thus presents us with the picture of a hierarchy of Forms, combining among themselves in an articulated complex; but it does not solve the problem of the relation of the particulars to the "atomic Forms." Plato insists that there are εἴδωλα or things which are not non-existent, but which at the same time are not fully real; but in the *Sophist* he realises that it is no longer possible to insist on the completely unchanging character

[1] *Soph.*, 259 e 5–6.

[2] To postulate Forms of Sitting and Flying may be a logical application of Plato's principles, but it obviously raises great difficulties. Aristotle implies that the upholders of the Ideal Theory did not go beyond postulating Ideas of natural substances (*Met.* 1079 a). He also asserts that according to the Platonists there are no Ideas of Relations, and implies that they did not believe in Ideas of Negation.

of all Reality. He still holds that the Forms are changeless, but somehow or other spiritual motion must be included in the Real. "Life, soul, understanding" must have a place in what is perfectly real, since, if Reality as a whole excludes all change, intelligence (which involves life) will have no real existence anywhere at all. The conclusion is that "we must admit that what changes and change itself are real things,"[1] and that "Reality or the sum of things is both at once—all that is unchangeable and all that is in change."[2] Real being must accordingly include life, soul and intelligence, and the change implied by them; but what of the εἴδωλα, the purely sensible and perpetually changing, mere becoming? What is the relation of this half-real sphere to Real Being? This question is not answered in the *Sophist*.

7. In the *Sophist*[3] Plato clearly indicates that the whole complex of Forms, the hierarchy of genera and species, is comprised in an all-pervading Form, that of Being, and he certainly believed that in tracing out the structure of the hierarchy of Forms by means of διαίρεσις he was detecting, not merely the structure of logical Forms, but also the structure of ontological Forms of the Real. But whether successful or not in his division of the genera and species, was it of any help to him in overcoming the Χωρισμός, the separation between the particulars and the *infimae species*? In the *Sophist* he showed how division is to be continued until the ἄτομον εἶδος is reached, in the apprehension of which δόξα and αἴσθησις are involved, though it is λόγος alone that determines the "undetermined" plurality. The *Philebus* assumes the same, that we must be able to bring the division to an end by setting a limit to the unlimited and comprehending sense-particulars in the lowest class, so far as they can be comprehended. (In the *Philebus* Ideas are termed ἑνάδες or μονάδες). The important point to notice is that for Plato the sense-particulars *as such* are the unlimited and the undetermined: they are limited and determined only in so far as they are, as it were, brought within the ἄτομον εἶδος. This means that the sense-particulars in so far as they are not brought within the ἄτομον εἶδος and cannot be brought within it, are not true objects at all: they are not fully real. In pursuing the διαίρεσις as far as the ἄτομον εἶδος Plato was, in his own eyes, comprehending all Reality. This enables him to use the words: "But the form of the infinite must not be brought near to the many until one has observed its full number,

[1] 249 b 2–3. [2] 249 d 3–4. [3] Cf. 253 b 8 ff.

the number between the one and the infinite; when this has been learnt, each several individual thing may be forgotten and dismissed into the infinite."[1] In other words, the division must be continued until particulars in their intelligible reality are comprehended in the ἄτομον εἶδος: when this has been done, the remainder, i.e. the sense-particulars, in their non-intelligible aspect, as impenetrable to λόγος, may be dismissed into the sphere of what is fleeting and only semi-real, that which cannot truly be said to *be*. From Plato's own point of view, therefore, the problem of the Χωρισμός may have been solved; but from the point of view of anyone who will not accept his doctrine of sense-particulars, it is very far from being solved.

8. But though Plato may have considered that he had solved the problem of the Χωρισμός, it still remained to show how the sense-particulars come into existence at all. Even if the whole hierarchy of Forms, the complex structure comprised in the all-embracing One, the Idea of Being, or the Good is an ultimate and self-explanatory principle, the Real and the Absolute, it is none the less necessary to show how the world of appearance, which is not simply not-being, even if it is not fully being, came into existence? Does it proceed from the One? If not, what is its cause? Plato made an attempt to answer this question in the *Timaeus*, though I can here only summarise very briefly his answer, as I shall return later to the *Timaeus* when dealing with the physical theories of Plato.

In the *Timaeus* the Demiurge is pictured as conferring geometrical shapes upon the primary qualities within the Receptacle or Space, and so introducing order into disorder, taking as his model in building up the world the intelligible realm of Forms. Plato's account of "creation" is most probably not meant to be an account of creation in time or *ex nihilo*: rather is it an analysis, by which the articulate structure of the material world, the work of a rational cause, is distinguished from the "primeval" chaos, without its being necessarily implied that the chaos was ever actual. The chaos is probably primeval only in the logical, and not in the temporal or historic sense. But if this is so, then the non-intelligible part of the material world is simply assumed: it exists "alongside of" the intelligible world. The Greeks, it would seem, never really envisaged the possibility of creation out of nothing (*ex nihilo sui et subiecti*). Just as the logical process of

[1] *Philebus*, 16 d 7–e 2.

διαίρεσις stops at the ἄτομον εἶδος and Plato in the *Philebus* dismisses the merely particular εἰς τὸ ἄπειρον, so in the physical analysis of the *Timaeus* the merely particular, the non-intelligible element (that which, logically considered, cannot be comprehended under the ἄτομον εἶδος) is dismissed into the sphere of that which is "in discordant and unordered motion,"[1] the factor that the Demiurge "took over." Therefore, just as, from the viewpoint of the Platonic logic, the sense-particulars as such cannot be deduced, cannot be rendered fully intelligible (did not Hegel declare that Herr Krug's pen could not be deduced?), so, in the Platonic physics, the chaotic element, that into which order is "introduced" by Reason, is not explained: doubtless Plato thought that it was inexplicable. It can neither be *deduced* nor has it been *created out of nothing*. It is simply there (a fact of experience), and that is all that we can say about it. The Χωρισμός accordingly remains, for, however "unreal" the chaotic may be, it is not not-being *tout simple*: it is a factor in the world, a factor that Plato leaves unexplained.

9. I have exhibited the Ideas or Forms as an ordered, intelligible structure, constituting in their totality a One in Many, in such a way that each subordinate Idea is itself one in many, as far as the ἄτομον εἶδος, below which is τὸ ἄπειρον. This complex of Forms is the Logical-Ontological Absolute. I must now raise the question, whether Plato regarded the Ideas as the Ideas of God or as independent of God. For the Neo-Platonists, the Ideas were the Thoughts of God: how far can such a theory be ascribed to Plato himself? If it could be so ascribed, it would clearly go a long way towards showing how the "Ideal World" is at once a unity and a plurality—a unity as contained in the Divine Mind, or Nous, and as subordinated to the Divine Plan, a plurality as reflecting the richness of the Divine Thought-content, and as only realisable in Nature in a multitude of existent objects.

In the tenth book of the *Republic*[2] Plato says that God is the Author (Φυτουργός) of the ideal bed. More than that, God is the Author of all other things—"things" in the context meaning other essences. From this it might appear that God created the ideal bed by *thinking* it, i.e. by comprising within His intellect the Idea of the world, and so of man and of all his requirements. (Plato did not, of course, imagine that there was a material ideal bed.) Moreover, since Plato speaks of God as "king" and "truth"

[1] *Tim.*, 30 a 4–5. [2] *Rep.*, 597 b 5–7.

(the tragic poet is at the third remove ἀπὸ βασιλέως καὶ τῆς ἀληθείας), while he has already spoken of the Idea of the Good as κυρία ἀλήθειαν καὶ νοῦν παραχομένη[1] and as Author of being and essence in intelligible objects (Ideas),[2] it might well appear that Plato means to Identify God with the Idea of the Good.[3] Those who wish to believe that this was really Plato's thought, and who proceed to interpret "God" in a theistic sense, would naturally appeal to the *Philebus*,[4] where it is implied that the Mind that orders the universe is possessed of soul (Socrates certainly says that wisdom and mind cannot exist without soul), so that God would be a living and intelligent being. We should thus have a personal God, Whose Mind is the "place" of Ideas, and Who orders and rules the universe, "king of heaven and earth."[5]

That there is much to be said for this interpretation of Plato's thought, I would not deny: moreover, it is naturally attractive to all those who desire to discover a tidy system in Plato and a theistic system. But common honesty forces one to admit the very serious difficulties against this tidy interpretation. For example, in the *Timaeus* Plato pictures the Demiurge as introducing order into the world and forming natural objects according to the model of the Ideas or Forms. The Demiurge is probably a symbolic figure representing the Reason that Plato certainly believed to be operative in the world. In the *Laws* he proposes the institution of a Nocturnal Council or Inquisition for the correction and punishment of atheists. Now, "atheist" means, for Plato, first and foremost the man who denies the operation of Reason in the world. Plato certainly admits that soul and intelligence belong to the Real, but it does not seem possible to assert with certainty that, in Plato's view, the Divine Reason is the "place" of the Ideas. It might, indeed, be argued that the Demiurge is spoken of as desiring that "all things should come as near as possible to being like himself," and that "all things should be good"[6]—phrases which suggest that the separation of the Demiurge from the Ideas is a Myth and that, in Plato's real thought, he is the Good and the ultimate Source of the Ideas. That the *Timaeus* never says that the Demiurge created the Ideas or is their Source, but pictures them as distinct from him (the

[1] *Rep.*, 517 c 4. [2] *Rep.*, 509 b 6–10.
[3] The fact that Plato speaks of God as "king" and "truth," while the Idea of the Good is "the source of truth and reason," suggests that God or Reason is *not* to be identified with the Good. A Neo-Platonic interpretation is rather implied.
[4] *Phil.*, 30 c 2–e 2. [5] *Phil.*, 28 c 6 ff. [6] *Tim.*, 29 e 1–30 a 7.

Demiurge being depicted as Efficient Cause and the Ideas as Exemplary Cause), does not seem to be conclusive evidence that Plato did *not* bring them together; but it should at least make us beware of asserting positively that he *did* bring them together. Moreover, if the "Captain" and God of the sixth letter is the Demiurge or Divine Reason, what of the "Father"? If the "Father" is the One, then it would not look as though the One and the whole hierarchy of the Ideas can be explained as thoughts of the Demiurge.[1]

But if the Divine Reason is not the ultimate, is it possible that the One is the ultimate, not only as ultimate Exemplary Cause, but also as ultimate Productive Cause, being itself "beyond" mind and soul as it is "beyond" essence? If so, can we say that the Divine Reason proceeds in some way (timelessly, of course) from the One, and that this Reason either contains the Ideas as thoughts or exists "alongside" the Ideas (as depicted in the *Timaeus*)? In other words, can we interpret Plato on Neo-Platonic lines?[2] The remark about the "Captain" and the "Father" in the sixth letter might be understood in support of this interpretation, while the fact that the Idea of the Good is never spoken of as a *soul* might mean that the Good is beyond soul, i.e. more than soul, not less than soul. The fact that in the *Sophist* Plato says, through the mouth of the Eleatic Stranger, that "Reality or the sum of things" must include soul, intelligence and life,[3] implies that the One or total Reality (the Father of *Ep.* 6) comprises not only the Ideas but also mind. If so, what is the relation of Mind to the World-soul of the *Timaeus*? The World-soul and the Demiurge are distinct in that dialogue (for the Demiurge is depicted as "making" the World-soul); but in the *Sophist* it is said that intelligence must have life, and that both these must have soul "in which they reside."[4] It is, however, possible that the making of the World-soul by the Demiurge is not to be taken literally at all, especially as it is stated in the *Phaedrus* that soul is a beginning and uncreated,[5] and that the World-soul and the Demiurge represent together the Divine Reason immanent in the world. If this were so, then we should have the One, the Supreme Reality, embracing and in some sense the Source (though not the Creator in time) of the Divine Reason (=Demiurge=

[1] Though in *Timaeus*, 37 c, the "Father" means the Demiurge.

[2] The Neo-Platonists held that the Divine Reason was not ultimate, but proceeded from the One.

[3] *Soph.*, 248 e 6–249 d 4. [4] 249 a 4–7. [5] 245 c 5–246 a 2.

World-soul) and the Forms. We might then speak of the Divine Reason as the "Mind of God" (if *we* equated God with the One) and the Forms as Ideas of God; but we should have to bear in mind that such a conception would bear a closer resemblance to later Neo-Platonism than to specifically Christian philosophy.

That Plato had some idea of what he meant hardly needs to be stressed, but in view of the evidence at our disposal we must avoid dogmatic pronouncements as to what he *did* mean. Therefore, although the present writer is inclined to think that the second interpretation bears some resemblance to what Plato actually thought, he is very far from putting it forward as certainly the authentic philosophy of Plato.

10. We must now touch briefly on the vexed question of the mathematical aspect of the Ideal Theory.[1] According to Aristotle,[2] Plato declared that:

(i) The Forms are Numbers;
(ii) Things exist by participation in Numbers;
(iii) Numbers are composed of the One and the great-and-small or "indeterminate duality" (ἀοριστος δυάς) instead of, as the Pythagoreans thought, the unlimited (ἄπειρον) and limit (πέρας);
(iv) τὰ μαθηματικά occupy an intermediate position between Forms and things.

With the subject of τὰ μαθηματικά or the "intermediates" I have already dealt when treating of the Line: it remains, therefore, to consider the following questions:

(i) Why did Plato identify Forms with Numbers and what did he mean?
(ii) Why did Plato say that things exist by participation in numbers?
(iii) What is meant by composition from the One and the great-and-small?

With these questions I can only deal very briefly. Not only would an adequate treatment require a much greater knowledge of mathematics, both ancient and modern, than the present writer possesses; but it is also doubtful if, with the material at our disposal, even the mathematically-gifted specialist could give a really adequate and definitive treatment.

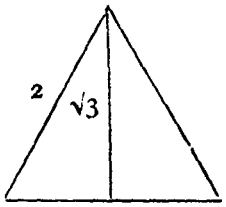
[1] My debt to Professor Taylor's treatment of the topic will be obvious to all those who have read his articles in *Mind* (Oct. 1926 and Jan. 1927). Cf. Appendix to *Plato*.

[2] *Metaph.*, A, 6, 9; M and N.

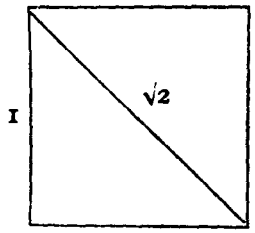
(i) Plato's motive in identifying Forms with Numbers seems to be that of rationalising or rendering intelligible the mysterious and transcendental world of Forms. To render intelligible in this case means to find the *principle of order*.

(ii) Natural objects embody the principle of order to some extent: they are, for example, instances of the logical universal and tend towards the realisation of their form: they are the handiwork of intelligence and exhibit design.

(*a*) This truth is expressed in the *Timaeus* by saying that the sensible characters of bodies are dependent on the geometrical structure of their corpuscles. This geometrical structure is determined by that of their faces, and that of their faces by the structure of the two types of triangles (isosceles right-angled and right-angled scalene) from which they are built up. The ratios of the sides of the triangles to one another may be expressed numerically.



Half-equilateral or right-angled scalene.



Half-square or right-angled isosceles.

(*b*) Another expression of the same truth is the doctrine of the *Epinomis* that the apparently mazy movements of the heavenly bodies (the primary objects of official cult) really conform to mathematical law and so express the wisdom of God.[1]

(*c*) Natural bodies, therefore, embody the principle of order and may, to a greater or less extent, be "mathematicised." On the other hand, they cannot be entirely "mathematicised"—they are not Numbers—for they embody also contingency, an irrational element, "matter." They are thus not said to *be* Numbers, but to *participate* in Numbers.

(iii) This partly irrational character of natural objects gives us the key to the understanding of the "great and the small."

(*a*) The triplet of numbers which gives the ratio of the sides to one another is, in the case of the isosceles right-angled triangle,

[1] 990 c 5–991 b 4.

1, 1, $\sqrt{2}$, and in the case of the right-angled scalene, 1, $\sqrt{3}$, 2. In either case, then, there is an irrational element which expresses the *contingency* in natural objects.

(*b*) Taylor points out that in a certain sequence of fractions—nowadays derived from a "continual fraction," but actually alluded to by Plato himself[1] and by Theo of Smyrna[2]—alternate terms converge upwards to $\sqrt{2}$ as limit and upper bound, while alternate other terms converge downwards to $\sqrt{2}$ as limit and lower bound. The terms of the whole sequence, therefore, in their original order, are in consequence alternately "greater and less" than $\sqrt{2}$, while jointly converging to $\sqrt{2}$ as their unique limit. We have, then, the characteristics of the great and the small or the indeterminate duality. The "endlessness" of the continued fraction, the "irrationality," seems to be identified with the material element, the element of non-being, *in all that becomes*. It is a mathematical expression of the Heraclitean flux-character of natural entities.

This may seem fairly clear as regards natural bodies. But what are we to make of Aristotle's dictum that "from the great and the small, by participation in the One, come the Forms, i.e. the Numbers"?[3] In other words, how can we explain the extension of the form-matter composition to the integers themselves?

If we take the series $1 + \frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{4} + \frac{1}{8} + \ldots + \frac{1}{2n} + \ldots$ we have a series that converges to the number 2. It is clear, then, that an infinite series of rational fractions may converge towards a rational limit, and examples could be given in which the μέγα καὶ μικρόν are involved. Plato would seem to have extended this composition from the μέγα καὶ μικρόν to the integers themselves, passing over, however, the fact that 2 as the limit of convergence cannot be identified with the integer 2, since the integers are *presupposed* as a series from which the convergents are formed. In the Platonic Academy the integers were derived or "educed" from One by the help of the ἀόριστος δυάς, which seems to have been identified with the *integer* 2, and to have been given the function of "doubling." The result is that the integers are derived in a non-rational series. On the whole we may say that, pending new light from philologically exact mathematical history, the theory of the composition of the integers from the One and the great-and-small will continue to look like a puzzling excrescence on the Platonic theory of Ideas.

[1] *Rep.*, 546 c. [2] *Expositio*, ed. Hiller, 43, 5–45, 8. [3] *Metaph.*, 987 b 21–2.

11. In regard to the whole tendency to pan-mathematisation I cannot but regard it as unfortunate. That the real is rational is a presupposition of all dogmatic philosophy, but it does not follow that the whole of reality can be rationalised by us. The attempt to reduce all reality to mathematics is not only an attempt to rationalise all reality—which is the task of philosophy, it may be said—but presupposes that all reality can be rationalised *by us*, which is an assumption. It is perfectly true that Plato admits an element in Nature that cannot be submitted to mathematisation, and so to rationalisation, but his attempt to rationalise reality and the extension of this attempt to the spiritual sphere has a flavour about it which may well remind us of Spinoza's deterministic and mechanistic view of reality (expressed in his *Ethica more geometrico demonstrata*) and of Hegel's attempt to comprehend the inner essence of ultimate Reality or God within the formulae of logic.

It may at first sight appear strange that the Plato who composed the *Symposium*, with its ascent to Absolute Beauty under the inspiration of Eros, should have been inclined to pan-mathematicism; and this apparent contrast might seem to support the view that the Socrates of the Platonic dialogues does not give Plato's opinions, but his own, that while Socrates invented the Ideal Theory as it appears in the dialogues, Plato "arithmetised" it. Yet, apart from the fact that the "mystical" and predominantly religious interpretation of the *Symposium* is very far from having been demonstrated as the certain interpretation, the apparent contrast between the *Symposium*—assuming for the moment that the "ascent" is a religious and mystical one—and Plato's mathematical interpretation of the Forms, as related to us by Aristotle, would hardly seem to be a compelling argument for the view that the Platonic Socrates is the historic Socrates, and that Plato reserved most of his personal views for the Academy, and, in the dialogues, for expression by other *dramatis personae* than the figure of Socrates. If we turn to Spinoza, we find a man who, on the one hand, was possessed by the vision of the unity of all things in God, and who proposed the ideal intuition of the *amor intellectualis Dei*, and who, on the other hand, sought to extend the mechanical aspect of Physics to all reality. Again, the example of Pascal should be sufficient to show us that mathematical genius and a deeply religious, even mystical, temperament are not at all incompatible.

Moreover, pan-mathematicism and idealism might even be held to lend support to one another. The more Reality is mathematicised, the more, in a sense, it is transferred on to an ideal plane, while, conversely, the thinker who desires to find the true reality and being of Nature in an ideal world might easily grasp the proffered hand of mathematics as an aid in the task. This would apply especially in the case of Plato, since he had before him the example of the Pythagoreans, who combined not only an interest in mathematics, but also a trend towards pan-mathematicism with religious and psychological interests. We are, therefore, in no way entitled to declare that Plato *could not* have combined in himself religious and transcendentalist tendencies with a tendency to pan-mathematicism, since, whether incompatible or not from the abstract viewpoint, history has shown that they are not incompatible from the psychological standpoint. If the Pythagoreans were possible, if Spinoza and Pascal were possible, then there is no reason why we should say, i.e. *a priori*, that Plato could not have written a mystical book and delivered the lecture on the Good in which, we learn, he spoke of arithmetic and astronomy and identified the One and the Good. But, though we cannot assert this *a priori*, it still remains to inquire whether in actual fact Plato meant such a passage as the speech of Socrates in the *Symposium* to be understood in a religious sense.

12. By what process does the mind arrive at the apprehension of the Ideas, according to Plato? I have already spoken briefly of the Platonic dialectic and method of διαίρεσις, and nobody will deny the importance of dialectic in the Platonic theory; but the question arises whether Plato did or did not envisage a religious, even a mystical, approach to the One or Good. *Prima facie* at least the *Symposium* contains mystical elements, and, if we come to the dialogue with our minds full of the interpretation given it by Neo-Platonist and Christian writers, we shall probably find in it what we are seeking. Nor can this interpretation be set aside *ab initio*, for certain modern scholars of great and deserved repute have lent their powerful support thereto.

Thus, referring to Socrates' speech in the *Symposium*, Professor Taylor comments: "In substance, what Socrates is describing is the same spiritual voyage which St. John of the Cross describes, for example, in the well-known song, *En una noche oscura*, which opens his treatise on the *Dark Night*, and Crashaw hints at more obscurely all through his lines on *The Flaming Heart*, and

Bonaventura charts for us with precision in the *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*."[1] Others, however, will have none of this; for them Plato is no mystic at all, or if he does display any mystical leanings, it is only in the weakness of old age that he does so. Thus Professor Stace declares, that "the Ideas are rational, that is to say, they are apprehended through reason. The finding of the common element in the manifold is the work of inductive reason, and through this alone is the knowledge of the Ideas possible. This should be noted by those persons who imagine that Plato was some sort of benevolent mystic. The imperishable One, the absolute reality, is apprehended, not by intuition or in any kind of mystic ecstasy, but only by rational cognition and laborious thought."[2] Again, Professor C. Ritter says that he would like "to direct a critical remark against the recent attempts, oft repeated, to stamp Plato as a mystic. These are wholly based on forged passages of the *Epistles*, which I can only consider as inferior achievements of a spiritual poverty which seeks to take refuge in occultism. I am astonished that anyone can hail them as enlightened wisdom, as the final result of Platonic philosophising."[3] Professor Ritter is, needless to say, perfectly well aware that certain passages in the certainly authentic works of Plato lend themselves to interpretation in the mystical sense; but, in his view, such passages are not only poetical and mythical in character, but were understood as such by Plato himself. In his earlier works Plato throws out suggestions, is feeling his way, as it were, and sometimes clothes his half-formed thoughts in poetical and mythical language; but when, in later dialogues, he applies himself to a more scientific treatment of his epistemological and ontological doctrines, he no longer brings in priestesses or uses poetic symbolism.

It would seem that, if we regard the Good predominantly in its aspect as Ideal or τέλος, Eros might well be understood as simply the impulse of man's higher nature towards the good and virtue (or, in the language of the doctrine of pre-existence and reminiscence, as the natural attraction of man's higher nature towards the Ideal which he beheld in the state of pre-existence). Plato, as we have seen, would not accept a merely relativistic ethic: there are absolute standards and norms, absolute ideals. There is thus an ideal of justice, an ideal of temperance, an ideal

[1] *Plato*, p. 225. [2] *Critical Hist.*, pp. 190–1.
[3] *The Essence of Plato's Philosophy*, p. 11.

of courage, and these ideals are real and absolute, since they do not vary but are the unchanging standards of conduct. They are not "things," for they are ideal; yet they are not merely subjective, because they "rule," as it were, man's acts. But human life is not lived out atomistically, apart from Society and the State, nor is man a being entirely apart from nature; and so we can arrive at the apprehension of an all-embracing Ideal and τέλος, to which all particular Ideals are subordinate. This universal Ideal is the Good. It is apprehended by means of dialectic, i.e. *discursively*; but in man's higher nature there is an attraction towards the truly good and beautiful. If man mistakenly takes sensible beauty and good, e.g. the beauty of physical objects, as his true good, then the impulse of attraction of Eros is directed towards these inferior goods, and we have the earthly and sensual man. A man may, however, be brought to see that the soul is higher and better than the body, and that beauty of soul is of more value than beauty of body. Similarly, he may be brought to see the beauty in the formal sciences[1] and the beauty of the Ideals: the power of Eros then attracts him "towards the wide ocean of intellectual beauty" and "the sight of the lovely and majestic forms which it contains."[2] Finally, he may come to apprehend how all the particular ideals are subordinate to one universal Ideal or τέλος, the Good-in-itself, and so to enjoy "the science" of this universal beauty and good. The rational soul is akin to the Ideal,[3] and so is able to contemplate the Ideal and to delight in its contemplation once the sensual appetite has been restrained.[4] "There is none so worthless whom Love cannot impel, as it were by a divine inspiration, towards virtue."[5] The true life for man is thus the philosophic life or the life of wisdom, since it is only the philosopher who attains true universal science and apprehends the rational character of Reality. In the *Timaeus* the Demiurge is depicted as forming the world according to the Ideal or Exemplary Pattern, and as endeavouring to make it as much like the Ideal as the refractory matter at his disposal will permit. It is for the philosopher to apprehend the Ideal and to endeavour to model his own life and that of others according to the Pattern. Hence the place accorded to the Philosopher-King in the *Republic*.

Eros or Love is pictured in the *Symposium*[6] as "a great god," holding an intermediate place between the divine and the mortal.

[1] Cf. *Philebus*, 51 b 9–d 1. [2] *Sympos.*, 210 d 3–5. [3] Cf. *Phaedo*.
[4] Cf. *Phaedrus*. [5] *Sympos.*, 179 a 7–8. [6] 201 d 8 ff.

Eros, in other words, "the child of Poverty and plenty," is *desire*, and desire is for what is not yet possessed, but Eros, though poor, i.e. not yet possessing, is the "earnest desire for the posession of happiness and that which is good." The term "Eros" is often confined to one species of Eros—and that by no means the highest —but it is a term of wider connotation than physical desire, and is, in general, "the desire of generation in the beautiful, both with relation to the body and the soul." Moreover, since Eros is the desire that good be for ever present with us, it must of necessity be also the desire for immortality.[1] By the lower Eros men are compelled to seek immortality through the production of children: through a higher Eros poets like Homer and statesmen like Solon leave a more enduring progeny "as the pledges of that love which subsisted between them and the beautiful." Through contact with Beauty itself the human being becomes immortal and produces true virtue.

Now all this might, it seems, be understood of a purely intellectualist, in the sense of discursive, process. None the less, it is true that the Idea of the Good or the Idea of Beauty is an ontological Principle, so there can be no *a priori* reason why it should not itself be the object of Eros and be apprehended intuitively. In the *Symposium* the soul at the summit of the ascent is said to behold Beauty "on a sudden," while in the *Republic* the Good is asserted to be seen last of all and only with an effort—phrases which might imply an intuitional apprehension. What we might call the "logical" dialogues may give little indication of any mystical approach to the One; but that does not necessarily mean that Plato never envisaged any such approach, or that, if he ever envisaged it, he had rejected it by the time he came to write the *Parmenides*, the *Theaetetus* and the *Sophist*. These dialogues deal with definite problems, and we have no right to expect Plato to present all aspects of his thought in any one dialogue. Nor does the fact that Plato never proposes the One or the Good as the object of official religious cult necessarily militate against the possibility of his admitting an intuitional and mystical approach to the One. In any case we would scarcely expect Plato to propose the radical transformation of the popular Greek religion (though in the *Laws* he does propose its purification, and hints that true religion consists in a virtuous life and recognition of Reason's operation in the universe, e.g. in the movements of the heavenly

[1] 206 a 7–207 a 4.

bodies); while, if the One is "beyond" being and soul, it might never occur to him that it could be the object of a popular cult. After all, Neo-Platonists, who certainly admitted an "ecstatic" approach to the One, did not hesitate to lend their support to the traditional and popular religion.

In view of these considerations, it would appear that we are forced to conclude that (*a*) we are certain as to the *dialectical* approach, and (*b*) we are uncertain as to any mystical approach, while not denying that some passages of Plato's writings could be understood as implying such an approach, and may *possibly* have been meant by Plato to be so understood.

13. It is evident that the Platonic Theory of Forms constitutes an enormous advance on pre-Socratic Philosophy. He broke away from the *de facto* materialism of the pre-Socratics, asserting the existence of immaterial and invisible Being, which is not but a shadow of this world but is real in a far deeper sense than the material world is real. While agreeing with Heraclitus, that sensible things are in a state of flux, of becoming, so that they can never really be said to *be*, he saw that this is but one side of the picture: there is also true Being, a stable and abiding Reality, which can be known, which is indeed the supreme object of knowledge. On the other hand, Plato did not fall into the position of Parmenides, who by equating the universe with a static One, was forced to deny all change and becoming. For Plato the One is transcendent, so that becoming is not denied but is fully admitted in the "created" world. Moreover, Reality itself is not without Mind and life and soul, so that there is spiritual movement in the Real. Again, even the transcendent One is not without the Many, just as the objects of this world are not entirely without unity, for they participate in or imitate the Forms and so partake in order to some extent. They are not fully real, but they are not mere Not-being; they have a share in being, though true Being is not material. Mind and its effect, order, are present in the world: Mind or Reason permeates, as it were, this world and is not a mere *Deus ex machina*, like the Nous of Anaxagoras.

But if Plato represents an advance on the pre-Socratics, he represents an advance also on the Sophists and on Socrates himself. On the Sophists, since Plato, while admitting the relativism of bare αἰσθησις, refused, as Socrates had before him, to acquiesce in the relativity of science and moral values. On Socrates himself, since Plato extended his investigations beyond the sphere of

ethical standards and definitions into those of logic and ontology. Moreover, while there is no certain indication that Socrates attempted any systematic unification of Reality, Plato presents us with a Real Absolute. Thus while Socrates and the Sophists represent a reaction to the foregoing systems of cosmology and to the speculations concerning the One and the Many (though in a true sense Socrates' pre-occupation with definiteness concerns the One and the Many), Plato took up again the problems of the Cosmologists, though on a much higher plane and without abandoning the position won by Socrates. He may thus be said to have attempted the synthesis of what was valuable, or appeared to him valuable, in the pre-Socratic and Socratic philosophies.

It must, of course, be admitted that the Platonic Theory of Forms is unsatisfactory. Even if the One or Good represents for him the ultimate Principle, which comprises all the other Forms, there remains the Χωρισμός between the intelligible and the purely sensible world. Plato may have thought that he had solved the problem of the Χωρισμός from the epistemological standpoint, by his doctrine of the union of λόγος, δόξα and αἴσθησις in the apprehension of the ἄτομα εἴδη; but, ontologically speaking, the sphere of pure Becoming remains unexplained. (It is, however, doubtful if the Greeks *ever* "explained" it.) Thus Plato does not appear to have cleared up satisfactorily the meaning of μέθεξις and μίμησις. In the *Timaeus*[1] he says explicitly that the Form never enters "into anything else anywhere," a statement which shows clearly that Plato did *not* regard the Form or Idea as an intrinsic constituent of the physical object. Therefore, in view of Plato's own statements, there is no point in trying to delete the difference between him and Aristotle. Plato may well have apprehended important truths to which Aristotle failed to do justice, but he certainly did not hold the same view of the universal as that held by Aristotle. Consequently, "participation" for Plato should not be taken to mean that there is an "ingredience" of "eternal objects" into "events." "Events" or physical objects are thus, for Plato, no more than imitations or mirror-images of the Ideas, and the conclusion is inescapable that the sensible world exists "alongside" the intelligible world, as the latter's shadow and fleeting image. The Platonic Idealism is a grand and sublime philosophy which contains much truth (for the purely sensible world is indeed neither the only world nor yet the

[1] 52 a 1–4

highest and most "real" world); but, since Plato did not claim that the sensible world is mere illusion and not-being, his philosophy inevitably involves a Χωρισμός, and it is useless to attempt to slur over the fact. After all, Plato is not the only great philosopher whose system has landed him in difficulties in regard to "particularity," and to say that Aristotle was right in detecting the Χωρισμός in the Platonic philosophy is not to say that the Aristotelian view of the universal, when taken by itself, obviates all difficulties. It is far more probable that these two great thinkers emphasised (and perhaps over-emphasised) different aspects of reality which need to be reconciled in a more complete synthesis.

But, whatever conclusions Plato may have arrived at, and whatever imperfections or errors there may be in his Theory of Ideas, we must never forget that Plato meant to establish ascertained truth. He firmly held that we can, and do, apprehend essences in thought, and he firmly held that these essences are not purely subjective creations of the human mind (as though the ideal of justice, for instance, were purely man's creation and relative in character): we do not create them, we discover them. We judge of things according to standards, whether moral and aesthetic standards or generic and specific types: all judgment necessarily implies such standards, and if the scientific judgment is objective, then these standards must have objective reference. But they are not found, and cannot be found, in the sense-world as such: therefore they must be transcendent of the fleeting world of sense-particulars. Plato really did not raise the "critical problem," though he undoubtedly believed that experience is inexplicable, unless the objective existence of the standards is maintained. We should not attribute to Plato the position of a Neo-Kantian, for even if (which we do not mean to admit) the truth underlying the doctrines of pre-existence and reminiscence is the Kantian *a priori*, there is no evidence that Plato himself used these "myths" as figurative expressions for the doctrine of a purely subjective *a priori*. On the contrary, all the evidence goes to show that Plato believed in the truly objective reference of concepts. Reality can be known and Reality is rational; what cannot be known is not rational, and what is not fully real is not fully rational. This Plato held to the last, and he believed that if our experience (in a wide sense) is to be explained or rendered coherent, it can only be explained on the basis of his theory. If

he was no Kantian, he was, on the other hand, no mere romancer or mythologist: he was a *philosopher*, and the theory of Forms was put forward as a philosophic and rational theory (a philosophic "hypothesis" for the explanation of experience), not as an essay in mythology or popular folklore, nor as the mere expression of the longing for a better world than this one.

It is, then, a great mistake to change Plato into a poet, as though he were simply an "escapist" who desired to create a supercorporeal world, an ideal world, wherein he could dwell away from the conditions of daily experience. If Plato could have said with Mallarmé, "La chair est triste, hélas! et j'ai lu tous les livres, Fuir! là-bas fuir . . . ,"[1] it would have been because he believed in the reality of a supersensual and intelligible world, which it is given to the philosopher to *discover*, not to create. Plato did not seek to transmute "reality" into dream, creating his own poetical world, but to rise from this inferior world to the superior world of the pure Archetypal Ideas. Of the subsistent reality of these Ideas he was profoundly convinced. When Mallarmé says: "Je dis: une fleur, et hors de l'oubli où ma voix relègue aucun contour, en tant que quelque chose d'autre, que les calices sus, musicalement se lève, idée même et suave, l'absente de tous bouquets," he is thinking of the creation of the ideal flower, not of the discovery of the Archetypal Flower in the Platonic sense. Just as in a symphony the instruments may transmute a landscape into music, so the poet transmutes the concrete flowers of experience into idea, into the music of dream-thought. Moreover, in actual practice Mallarmé's emptying-out of particular circumstances served rather the purpose of widening the associative, evocative and allusive scope of the idea or image. (And because these were so personal, it is so difficult to understand his poetry.) In any case, however, all this is foreign to Plato, who, whatever his artistic gifts may have been, is primarily a philosopher, not a poet.

Nor are we entitled to regard Plato's aim as that of transmuting reality in the fashion of Rainer Maria Rilke. There may be truth in the contention that we build up a world of our own by clothing it, as it were, from within ourselves—the sunlight on the wall may mean more to us than it means "in itself," in terms of atoms and electrons and light-waves, because of our subjective impressions, and the allusions, associations, overtones and undertones

[1] Stéphane Mallarmé, *Poems*. (Trans. by Roger Fry. Chatto & Windus, 1936.)

that we supply—but Plato's effort was not to enrich, beautify and transmute this world by subjective evocations, but to pass beyond the sensible world to the world of thought, the Transcendental Reality. Of course, it still remains open to us, if we are so inclined, to discuss the psychological origins of Plato's thought (it *might* be that he was psychologically an escapist); but, if we do so, we must at the same time remember that this is not equivalent to an interpretation of what Plato meant. Whatever "subconscious" motives he may or may not have had, he certainly meant to pursue a serious, philosophic and scientific inquiry.

Nietzsche accused Plato of being an enemy to this world, of setting up a transcendental world out of enmity to this world, of contrasting a "There" with a "Here" out of dislike of the world of experience and of human life and out of moral presuppositions and interests. That Plato was influenced by disappointments in actual life, e.g. by the political conduct of the Athenian State or by his disappointment in Sicily, is probably true; but he was not actively hostile to this world; on the contrary, he desired to train statesmen of the true type, who would, as it were, carry on the work of the Demiurge in bringing order into disorder. He was hostile to life and this world, only in so far as they are disordered and fragmentary, out of harmony with or not expressing what he believed to be stable realities and stable norms of surpassing value and universal significance. The point is not so much what influences contributed to the formation of Plato's metaphysic, whether as causes, conditions or occasions, as the question: "Did Plato prove his position or did he not?"—and with this question a man like Nietzsche does not concern himself. But we cannot afford to dismiss *a priori* the notion that what there is of order and intelligibility in this world has an objective foundation in an invisible and transcendent Reality, and I believe that Plato not only attained a considerable measure of truth in his metaphysic, but also went a long way towards showing that it *was* the truth. If a man is going to talk at all, he is certain to make valuational judgments, judgments which presuppose objective norms and standards, values which can be apprehended with varying degrees of insight, values which do not "actualise" themselves but depend for their actualisation on the human will, co-operating with God in the realisation of value and the ideal in human life. We have, of course, no direct intuition of the Absolute, as far as natural knowledge is concerned (and in so far as the Platonic theory implies

such a knowledge it is inadmissible, while in so far as it identifies true knowledge with direct apprehension of the Absolute it might seem to lead, unwittingly, to scepticism), but by rational reflec tion we can certainly come to the knowledge of objective (and indeed transcendentally-grounded) values, ideals and ends, and this after all is Plato's main point.

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MEDIAEVAL PHILOSOPHY

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1. IN this second volume of my history of philosophy I had originally hoped to give an account of the development of philosophy throughout the whole period of the Middle Ages, understanding by mediaeval philosophy the philosophic thought and systems which were elaborated between the Carolingian renaissance in the last part of the eighth century A.D. (John Scotus Eriugena, the first outstanding mediaeval philosopher was born about 810) and the end of the fourteenth century. Reflection has convinced me, however, of the advisability of devoting two volumes to mediaeval philosophy. As my first volume[1] ended with an account of neo-Platonism and contained no treatment of the philosophic ideas to be found in the early Christian writers, I considered it desirable to say something of these ideas in the present volume. It is true that men like St. Gregory of Nyssa and St. Augustine belonged to the period of the Roman Empire, that their philosophic affiliations were with Platonism, understood in the widest sense, and that they cannot be termed mediaevals; but the fact remains that they were Christian thinkers and exercised a great influence on the Middle Ages. One could hardly understand St. Anselm or St. Bonaventure without knowing something of St. Augustine, nor could one understand the thought of John Scotus Eriugena without knowing something of the thought of St. Gregory of Nyssa and of the Pseudo-Dionysius. There is scarcely any need, then, to apologise for beginning a history of mediaeval philosophy with a consideration of thinkers who belong, so far as chronology is concerned, to the period of the Roman Empire.

The present volume, then, begins with the early Christian period and carries the history of mediaeval philosophy up to the end of the thirteenth century, including Duns Scotus (about 1265–1308). In my third volume I propose to treat of the philosophy of the fourteenth century, laying special emphasis on Ockhamism. In

[1] *A History of Philosophy*, Vol. I, Greece and Rome, London, 1946.

that volume I shall also include a treatment of the philosophies of the Renaissance, of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and of the 'Silver Age' of Scholastic thought, even though Francis Suarez did not die until the year 1617, twenty-one years after the birth of Descartes. This arrangement may appear to be an arbitrary one, and to some extent it is. But it is extremely doubtful if it is possible to make any hard and fast dividing line between mediaeval and modern philosophy, and a good case could be made out for including Descartes with the later Scholastics, contrary to tradition as this would be. I do not propose, however, to adopt this course, and if I include in the next volume, the third, some philosophers who might seem to belong properly to the 'modern period', my reason is largely one of convenience, to clear the decks, so that in the fourth volume I may develop in a systematic manner the interconnection between the leading philosophical systems from Francis Bacon in England and Descartes in France up to and including Kant. Nevertheless, whatever method of division be adopted, one has to remember that the compartments into which one divides the history of philosophic thought are not watertight, that transitions are gradual, not abrupt, that there is overlapping and interconnection, that succeeding systems are not cut off from one another with a hatchet.

2. There was a time when mediaeval philosophy was considered as unworthy of serious study, when it was taken for granted that the philosophy of the Middle Ages was so subservient to theology that it was practically indistinguishable therefrom and that, in so far as it was distinguishable, it amounted to little more than a barren logic-chopping and word-play. In other words, it was taken for granted that European philosophy contained two main periods, the ancient period, which to all intents and purposes meant the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle, and the modern period, when the speculative reason once more began to enjoy freedom after the dark night of the Middle Ages when ecclesiastical authority reigned supreme and the human reason, chained by heavy fetters, was compelled to confine itself to the useless and fanciful study of theology, until a thinker like Descartes at length broke the chains and gave reason its freedom. In the ancient period and the modern period philosophy may be considered a free man, whereas in the mediaeval period it was a slave.

Apart from the fact that mediaeval philosophy naturally shared in the disesteem with which the Middle Ages in general were

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commonly regarded, one factor which was partly responsible for the attitude adopted towards mediaeval thinkers was doubtless the language used concerning Scholasticism by men like Francis Bacon and René Descartes. Just as Aristotelians are prone to evaluate Platonism in terms of Aristotle's criticism, so admirers of the movement apparently initiated by Bacon and Descartes were prone to look on mediaeval philosophy through their eyes, unaware of the fact that much of what Francis Bacon, for instance, has to say against the Scholastics could not legitimately be applied to the great figures of mediaeval thought, however applicable it may have been to later and 'decadent' Scholastics, who worshipped the letter at the expense of the spirit. Looking on mediaeval philosophy from the very start in this light historians could perhaps scarcely be expected to seek a closer and first-hand acquaintance with it: they condemned it unseen and unheard, without knowledge either of the rich variety of mediaeval thought or of its profundity: to them it was all of a piece, an arid playing with words and a slavish dependence on theologians. Moreover, insufficiently critical, they failed to realise the fact that, if mediaeval philosophers were influenced by an external factor, theology, modern philosophers were also influenced by external factors, even if by other external factors than theology. It would have seemed to most of these historians a nonsensical proposition were one to suggest to them that Duns Scotus, for example, had a claim to be considered as a great British philosopher, at least as great as John Locke, while in their praise of the acumen of David Hume they were unaware that certain thinkers of the late Middle Ages had already anticipated a great deal of the criticism which used to be considered the peculiar contribution to philosophy of the eminent Scotsman.

I shall cite one example, the treatment accorded to mediaeval philosophy and philosophers by a man who was himself a great philosopher, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel. It is an interesting example, since Hegel's dialectical idea of the history of philosophy obviously demanded that mediaeval philosophy should be portrayed as making an essential contribution to the development of philosophic thought, while Hegel personally was no mere vulgar antagonist of mediaeval philosophy. Now, Hegel does indeed admit that mediaeval philosophy performed one useful function, that of expressing in philosophic terms the 'absolute content' of Christianity, but he insists that it is only formalistic repetition

of the content of faith, in which God is represented as something 'external', and if one remembers that for Hegel faith is the mode of religious consciousness and is definitely inferior to the philosophic or speculative standpoint, the standpoint of pure reason, it is clear that in his eyes mediaeval philosophy can be philosophy only in name. Accordingly he declares that Scholastic philosophy is really theology. By this Hegel does not mean that God is not the object of philosophy as well as of theology: he means that mediaeval philosophy considered the same object as is considered by philosophy proper but that it treated that object according to the categories of theology instead of substituting for the external connections of theology (for example, the relation of the world to God as external effect to free creative Cause) the systematic, scientific, rational and necessary categories and connections of philosophy. Mediaeval philosophy was thus philosophy according to content, but theology according to form, and in Hegel's eyes the history of mediaeval philosophy is a monotonous one, in which men have tried in vain to discern any distinct stages of real progress and development of thought.

In so far as Hegel's view of mediaeval philosophy is dependent on his own particular system, on his view of the relation of religion to philosophy, of faith to reason, of immediacy to mediacy, I cannot discuss it in this volume; but I wish to point out how Hegel's treatment of mediaeval philosophy is accompanied by a very real ignorance of the course of its history. It would be possible no doubt for an Hegelian to have a real knowledge of the development of mediaeval philosophy and yet to adopt, precisely because he was an Hegelian, Hegel's general standpoint in regard to it; but there can be no shadow of doubt, even allowing for the fact that the philosopher did not himself edit and publish his lectures on the history of philosophy, that Hegel did not possess the real knowledge in question. How could one, for instance, attribute a real knowledge of mediaeval philosophy to a writer who includes Roger Bacon under the heading 'Mystics' and simply remarks 'Roger Bacon treated more especially of physics, but remained without influence. He invented gunpowder, mirrors, telescopes, and died in 1297'? The fact of the matter is that Hegel relied on authors like Tennemann and Brucker for his information concerning mediaeval philosophy, whereas the first valuable studies on mediaeval philosophy do not antedate the middle of the nineteenth century.

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In adducing the instance of Hegel I am not, of course, concerned to blame the philosopher: I am rather trying to throw into relief the great change that has taken place in our knowledge of mediaeval philosophy through the work of modern scholars since about 1880. Whereas one can easily understand and pardon the misrepresentations of which a man like Hegel was unconsciously guilty, one would have little patience with similar misrepresentations to-day, after the work of scholars like Baeumker, Ehrle, Grabmann, De Wulf, Pelster, Geyer, Mandonnet, Pelzer, etc. After the light that has been thrown on mediaeval philosophy by the publication of texts and the critical editing of already published works, after the splendid volumes brought out by the Franciscan Fathers of Quaracchi, after the publications of so many numbers of the *Beiträge* series, after the production of histories like that of Maurice De Wulf, after the lucid studies of Etienne Gilson, after the patient work done by the Mediaeval Academy of America, it should no longer be possible to think that mediaeval philosophers were 'all of a piece', that mediaeval philosophy lacked richness and variety, that mediaeval thinkers were uniformly men of low stature and of mean attainments. Moreover, writers like Gilson have helped us to realise the continuity between mediaeval and modern philosophy. Gilson has shown how Cartesianism was more dependent on mediaeval thought than was formerly supposed. A good deal still remains to be done in the way of edition and interpretation of texts (one needs only to mention William of Ockham's Commentary on the *Sentences*), but it has now become possible to see the currents and development, the pattern and texture, the high lights and low lights of mediaeval philosophy with a synoptic eye.

3. But even if mediaeval philosophy was in fact richer and more varied than has been sometimes supposed, is it not true to say that it stood in such a close relation to theology that it is practically indistinguishable therefrom? Is it not, for example, a fact that the great majority of mediaeval philosophers were priests and theologians, pursuing philosophic studies in the spirit of a theologian or even an apologist?

In the first place it is necessary to point out that the relation of theology to philosophy was itself an important theme of mediaeval thought and that different thinkers adopted different attitudes in regard to this question. Starting with the endeavour to understand the data of revelation, so far as this is possible to human reason,

early mediaevals, in accordance with the maxim *Credo, ut intelligam*, applied rational dialectic to the mysteries of faith in an attempt to understand them. In this way they laid the foundations of Scholastic theology, since the application of reason to theological data, in the sense of the data of revelation, is and remains theology: it does not become philosophy. Some thinkers indeed, in their enthusiastic desire to penetrate mysteries by reason to the utmost degree possible, appear at first sight to be rationalists, to be what one might call Hegelians before Hegel. Yet it is really an anachronism to regard such men as 'rationalists' in the modern sense, since when St. Anselm, for example, or Richard of St. Victor, attempted to prove the mystery of the Blessed Trinity by 'necessary reasons' they had no intention of acquiescing in any reduction of the dogma or of impairing the integrity of divine revelation. (To this subject I shall return in the course of the work.) So far they were certainly acting as theologians, but such men, who did not make, it is true, any very clear delimitation of the spheres of philosophy and theology, certainly pursued philosophical themes and developed philosophical arguments. For instance, even if St. Anselm is primarily important as one of the founders of Scholastic theology, he also contributed to the growth of Scholastic philosophy, for example, by his rational proofs of God's existence. It would be inadequate to dub Abelard a philosopher and St. Anselm a theologian without qualification. In any case in the thirteenth century we find a clear distinction made by St. Thomas Aquinas between theology, which takes as its premisses the data of revelation, and philosophy (including, of course, what we call 'natural theology'), which is the work of the human reason unaided positively by revelation. It is true that in the same century St. Bonaventure was a conscious and determined upholder of what one might call the integralist, Augustinian view; but, though the Franciscan Doctor may have believed that a purely philosophical knowledge of God is vitiated by its very incompleteness, he was perfectly well aware that there are philosophical truths which are ascertainable by reason alone. The difference between him and St. Thomas has been stated thus.[1] St. Thomas held that it would be possible, *in principle*, to excogitate a satisfactory philosophical system, which, in respect of knowledge of God for instance, would be incomplete but not false,

[1] This bald statement, however, though sponsored by M. Gilson, requires a certain modification. See pp. 245–9.

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whereas St. Bonaventure maintained that this very incompleteness or inadequacy has the character of a falsification, so that, though a true natural philosophy would be possible without the light of faith, a true metaphysic would not be possible. If a philosopher, thought St. Bonaventure, proves by reason and maintains the unity of God, without at the same time knowing that God is Three Persons in One Nature, he is attributing to God a unity which is not the divine Unity.

In the second place, St. Thomas was perfectly serious when he gave philosophy its 'charter'. To a superficial observer it might appear that when St. Thomas asserted a clear distinction between dogmatic theology and philosophy, he was merely asserting a formalistic distinction, which had no influence on his thought and which he did not take seriously in practice; but such a view would be far from the truth, as can be seen by one example. St. Thomas believed that revelation teaches the creation of the world in time, the world's non-eternity; but he maintained and argued stoutly that the philosopher as such can prove neither that the world was created from eternity nor that it was created in time, although he can show that it depends on God as Creator. In holding to this point of view he was at variance with, for example, St. Bonaventure, and the fact that he maintained the point of view in question shows clearly that he seriously accepted in practice his theoretical delimitation of the provinces of philosophy and dogmatic theology.

In the third place, if it were really true to say that mediaeval philosophy was no more than theology, we should expect to find that thinkers who accepted the same faith would accept the same philosophy or that the differences between them would be confined to differences in the way in which they applied dialectic to the data of revelation. In point of fact, however, this is very far from being the case. St. Bonaventure, St. Thomas Aquinas, and Duns Scotus, Giles of Rome, and, one may pretty safely say, William of Ockham accepted the same faith, but their philosophical ideas were by no means the same on all points. Whether or not their philosophies were equally compatible with the exigencies of theology is, of course, another question (William of Ockham's philosophy could scarcely be considered as altogether compatible with these exigencies); but that question is irrelevant to the point at issue, since, whether they were all compatible with orthodox theology or not, these philosophies existed and were not the same.

The historian can trace the lines of development and divergence in mediaeval philosophy, and, if he can do this, there must clearly be such a thing as mediaeval philosophy: without existence it could not have a history.

We shall have to consider different views on the relation between philosophy and theology in the course of this work, and I do not want to dwell any more on the matter at present; but it may be as well to admit from the very start that, owing to the common background of the Christian faith, the world presented itself for interpretation to the mediaeval thinker more or less in a common light. Whether a thinker held or denied a clear distinction between the provinces of theology and philosophy, in either case he looked on the world as a Christian and could hardly avoid doing so. In his philosophic arguments he might prescind from Christian revelation, but the Christian outlook and faith were none the less there at the back of his mind. Yet that does not mean that his philosophic arguments were not philosophic arguments or that his rational proofs were not rational proofs: one would have to take each argument or proof on its own merits or demerits and not dismiss them as concealed theology on the ground that the writer was a Christian.

4. Having argued that there really was such a thing as mediaeval philosophy or at any rate that there could be such a thing, even if the great majority of mediaeval philosophers were Christians and most of them theologians into the bargain, I want finally to say something about the aim of this book (and of the succeeding volume) and the way in which it treats its subject.

I certainly do not intend to attempt the task of narrating all the known opinions of all known mediaeval philosophers. In other words, the second and third volumes of my history are not designed to constitute an encyclopaedia of mediaeval philosophy. On the other hand, it is not my intention to give simply a sketch or series of impressions of mediaeval philosophy. I have endeavoured to give an intelligible and coherent account of the development of mediaeval philosophy and of the phases through which it passed, omitting many names altogether and choosing out for consideration those thinkers who are of special importance and interest for the content of their thought or who represent and illustrate some particular type of philosophy or stage of development. To certain of these thinkers I have devoted a considerable amount of space, discussing their opinions at some length. This

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fact may possibly tend to obscure the general lines of connection and development, but, as I have said, it was not my intention to provide simply a sketch of mediaeval philosophy, and it is probably only through a somewhat detailed treatment of the leading philosophical systems that one can bring out the rich variety of mediaeval thought. To place in clear relief the main lines of connection and development and at the same time to develop at some length the ideas of selected philosophers is certainly not an easy task, and it would be foolish to suppose that my inclusions and omissions or proportional allotment of space will be acceptable to everybody: to miss the trees for the wood or the wood for the trees is easy enough, but to see both clearly at the same time is not so easy. However, I consider it a task worth attempting, and while I have not hesitated to consider at some length the philosophies of St. Bonaventure, St. Thomas, Duns Scotus and Ockham, I have tried to make intelligible the general development of mediaeval philosophy from its early struggles, through its splendid maturity, to its eventual decline.

If one speaks of a 'decline', it may be objected that one is speaking as philosopher and not as historian. True enough, but if one is to discern an intelligible pattern in mediaeval philosophy, one must have a principle of selection and to that extent at least one must be a philosopher. The word 'decline' has indeed a valuational colouring and flavour, so that to use such a word may seem to constitute an overstepping of the legitimate territory of the historian. Possibly it is, in a sense; but what historian of philosophy was or is *merely* an historian in the narrowest meaning of the term? No Hegelian, no Marxist, no Positivist, no Kantian writes history without a philosophic viewpoint, and is the Thomist alone to be condemned for a practice which is really necessary, unless the history of philosophy is to be rendered unintelligible by being made a mere string of opinions?

By 'decline', then, I mean decline, since I frankly regard mediaeval philosophy as falling into three main phases. First comes the preparatory phase, up to and including the twelfth century, then comes the period of constructive synthesis, the thirteenth century, and finally, in the fourteenth century, the period of destructive criticism, undermining and decline. Yet from another point of view I should not hesitate to admit that the last phase was an inevitable phase and, in the long run, may be of benefit, as stimulating Scholastic philosophers to develop and

establish their principles more firmly in face of criticism and, moreover, to utilise all that subsequent philosophy may have to offer of positive value. From one point of view the Sophistic phase in ancient philosophy (using the term 'Sophist' in more or less the Platonic sense) constituted a decline, since it was characterised by, among other things, a flagging of constructive thought; but it was none the less an inevitable phase in Greek philosophy, and, in the long run, may be regarded as having produced results of positive value. No one at least who values the thought of Plato and Aristotle can regard the activity and criticism of the Sophists as an unmitigated disaster for philosophy.

The general plan of this volume and of its successor is thus the exhibition of the main phases and lines of development in mediaeval philosophy. First of all I treat briefly of the Patristic period, going on to speak of those Christian thinkers who had a real influence on the Middle Ages: Boethius, the Pseudo-Dionysius and, above all, St. Augustine of Hippo. After this more or less introductory part of the volume I proceed to the preparatory phase of mediaeval thought proper, the Carolingian renaissance, the establishment of the Schools, the controversy concerning universal concepts and the growing use of dialectic, the positive work of St. Anselm in the eleventh century, the schools of the twelfth century, particularly those of Chartres and St. Victor. It is then necessary to say something of Arabian and Jewish philosophy, not so much for its own sake, since I am primarily concerned with the philosophy of mediaeval Christendom, as for the fact that the Arabs and Jews constituted an important channel whereby the Aristotelian system in its fullness became known to the Christian West. The second phase is that of the great syntheses of the thirteenth century, the philosophies of St. Bonaventure, St. Thomas Aquinas and Duns Scotus in particular. The succeeding phase, that of the fourteenth century, contains the new directions and the destructive criticism of the Ockhamist School in a wide sense. Finally, I have given a treatment of the thought which belongs to the period of transition between mediaeval and modern philosophy. The way will then be clear to start a consideration of what is generally called 'modern philosophy' in the fourth volume of this history.

In conclusion it may be as well to mention two points. The first is that I do not conceive it to be the task of the historian of philosophy to substitute his own ideas or those of recent or contemporary philosophers for the ideas of past thinkers, as though

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the thinkers in question did not know what they meant. When Plato stated the doctrine of reminiscence, he was not asserting neo-Kantianism, and though St. Augustine anticipated Descartes by saying *Si fallor, sum*, it would be a great mistake to try to force his philosophy into the Cartesian mould. On the other hand, some problems which have been raised by modern philosophers were also raised in the Middle Ages, even if in a different setting, and it is legitimate to draw attention to similarity of question or answer. Again, it is not illegitimate to ask if a given mediaeval philosopher could, out of the resources of his own system, meet this or that difficulty which a later philosopher has raised. Therefore, although I have tried to avoid the multiplication of references to modern philosophy, I have on occasion permitted myself to make comparisons with later philosophies and to discuss the ability of a mediaeval system of philosophy to meet a difficulty which is likely to occur to a student of modern thought. But I have strictly rationed my indulgence in such comparisons and discussions, not only out of considerations of space but also out of regard for historical propriety.

The second point to be mentioned is this. Largely owing to the influence of Marxism there is a certain demand that an historian of philosophy should draw attention to the social and political background of his period and throw light on the influence of social and political factors on philosophic development and thought. But apart from the fact that to keep one's history within a reasonable compass one must concentrate on philosophy itself and not on social and political events and developments, it is ridiculous to suppose that all philosophies or all parts of any given philosophy are equally influenced by the social and political *milieu*. To understand a philosopher's political thought it is obviously desirable to have some knowledge of the actual political background, but in order to discuss St. Thomas's doctrine on the relation of essence to existence or Scotus's theory of the univocal character of the concept of being, there is no need at all to introduce references to the political or economic background. Moreover, philosophy is influenced by other factors as well as politics and economics. Plato was influenced by the advance of Greek mathematics; mediaeval philosophy, though distinguishable from theology, was certainly influenced by it; consideration of the development of physics is relevant to Descartes's view of the material world; biology was not without influence on Bergson, and so on. I regard

it, therefore, as a great mistake to dwell so exclusively on economics and political development, and to explain the advance of other sciences ultimately by economic history, that one implies the truth of the Marxist theory of philosophy. Apart, then, from the fact that considerations of space have not permitted me to say much of the political, social and economic background of mediaeval philosophy, I have deliberately disregarded the unjustifiable demand that one should interpret the 'ideological superstructure' in terms of the economic situation. This book is a history of a certain period of mediaeval philosophy: it is not a political history nor a history of mediaeval economics.

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PART I

PRE-MEDIAEVAL INFLUENCES

CHAPTER II

THE PATRISTIC PERIOD

Christianity and Greek philosophy—Greek Apologists (Aristides, St. Justin Martyr, Tatian, Athenagoras, Theophilus)—Gnosticism and writers against Gnosticism (St. Irenaeus, Hippolytus)—Latin Apologists (Minucius Felix, Tertullian, Arnobius, Lactantius)—Catechetical School of Alexandria (Clement, Origen)—Greek Fathers (St. Basil, Eusebius, St. Gregory of Nyssa)—Latin Fathers (St. Ambrose)—St. John Damascene—Summary.

1. CHRISTIANITY came into the world as a revealed religion: it was given to the world by Christ as a doctrine of redemption and salvation and love, not as an abstract and theoretical system, and He sent His Apostles to preach, not to occupy professors' chairs. Christianity was 'the Way', a road to God to be trodden in practice, not one more philosophical system added to the systems and schools of antiquity. The Apostles and their successors were bent on converting the world, not on excogitating a philosophical system. Moreover, so far as their message was directed to the Jews, the Apostles had to meet theological rather than philosophical attacks, while, in regard to the non-Jews, we are not told, apart from the account of St. Paul's famous sermon at Athens, of their being confronted with, or of their approaching, Greek philosophers in the academic sense.

However, as Christianity made fast its roots and grew, it aroused the suspicion and hostility, not merely of the Jews and the political authorities, but also of pagan intellectuals and writers. Some of the attacks levelled against Christianity were due simply to ignorance, credulous suspicion, fear of what was unknown, misrepresentation; but other attacks were delivered on the theoretical plane, on philosophical grounds, and these attacks had to be met. This meant that philosophical as well as theological arguments had to be used. There are, then, philosophical elements in the writings of early Christian apologists and Fathers; but it would obviously be idle to look for a philosophical system, since the

CHAPTER LI

CONCLUDING REVIEW

Theology and philosophy—'Christian philosophy'—The Thomist synthesis—Various ways of regarding and interpreting mediaeval philosophy.

ANY general review of mediaeval philosophy must obviously be left to the conclusion of the next volume; but it may be worth while to indicate here some general aspects of the course of philosophy treated of in the present book, even though the omission of Ockhamism, which will be considered in the third volume, restricts the scope of one's reflections.

1. One can regard the development of philosophy in the Christian world from the days of the Roman Empire up to the thirteenth-century syntheses from the point of view of its relation to theology. In the first centuries of the Christian era there was scarcely any philosophy in the modern sense, in the sense, that is, of an autonomous science distinct from theology. The Fathers were aware, of course, of the distinction between reason and faith, between scientific conclusions and the data of revelation; but to distinguish reason and faith is not necessarily the same as to make a clear distinction between philosophy and theology. Christian apologists and writers who were anxious to show the reasonable character of the Christian religion, employed reason to show that there is, for example, but one God, and to that extent they may be said to have developed philosophical themes; but their aim was apologetic, and not primarily philosophic. Even those writers who adopted a hostile attitude towards Greek philosophy had to employ reason for apologetic purposes and they gave their attention to themes which are considered to belong to the province of philosophy; but though we can isolate those arguments and discussions which fall under the heading of philosophy, it would be idle to pretend that a Christian apologist of this kind was a professed philosopher; he may have borrowed from the philosophers to some extent, but he regarded 'philosophy' pretty well as a perverter of the truth and as a foe of Christianity. As to the Christian writers who adopted a predominantly favourable attitude to Greek philosophy, these tended to look on Greek philosophy as a preparation for Christian wisdom, the latter comprising not only the revealed

mysteries of faith but all truth about the world and human life looked at through the eyes of a Christian. Inasmuch as the Fathers not only applied reason to the understanding, correct statement and defence of the data of revelation, but also treated of themes which had been considered by Greek philosophers, they helped not only to develop theology, but also to provide material for the construction of a philosophy which would be compatible with Christian theology; but they were theologians and exegetes, not philosophers in the strict sense, save occasionally and incidentally; and even when they did pursue philosophic themes, they were rounding out, as it were, the total Christian wisdom rather than constructing a distinct philosophy or branch of philosophy. This is true even of St. Augustine, for although one can reconstruct a philosophy from his writings, he was above all a theologian and was not concerned to build up a philosophical system as such.

Fathers of the Church, like St. Gregory of Nyssa and St. Augustine, who in their writings utilised elements borrowed from neo-Platonism, found in neo-Platonism material which helped them in their development of a 'philosophy' of the spiritual life, to which, as Christians and saints, they paid much attention. It was only natural that they should speak of the soul, of its relation to the body, and of its ascent to God, in terms strongly reminiscent of Platonism and neo-Platonism; but since they could not (and in any case would not wish to) consider the soul's ascent to God in abstraction from theology and revelation, their philosophy, which concentrated so much on the soul and its ascent to God, was inevitably intertwined with and integrated into their theology. To treat St. Augustine's doctrine of illumination, for example, as a purely philosophic doctrine is not easy; it really ought to be looked at in the light of his general doctrine concerning the soul's relation to God and its ascent to God.

The general attitude of the Fathers set the tone, so to speak, for what we call 'Augustinianism'. St. Anselm, for instance, was a theologian, but he saw that the existence of the God who revealed the mysteries of the Christian religion needs in some way to be proved, and so he developed a natural theology, or helped towards the development of natural theology, though it would be a mistake to picture him as sitting down to elaborate a system of philosophy as such. *Fides quaerens intellectum* may, to speak rather crudely, work forwards or backwards. Working forwards from the data of revelation and applying reasoning to theological dogmas, in order

to understand them as far as is possible, it produces Scholastic theology; working backwards, in the sense of considering the presuppositions of revelation, it develops the proofs of God's existence. But the mind at work in either case is really the mind of the theologian, even though in the second case it works within the province and with the methods of philosophy.

If the spirit of Augustinianism, born of the writings of the Fathers, was that of *fides quaerens intellectum*, it might also be called a spirit of *homo quaerens Deum*. This aspect of Augustinianism is especially marked in St. Bonaventure, whose thought was steeped so deeply in the affective spirituality of Franciscanism. A man may contemplate creatures, the world without and the world within, and discern their natures; but his knowledge is of little worth unless he discerns in nature the *vestigium Dei* and in himself the *imago Dei*, unless he can detect the operation of God in his soul, an operation which is itself hidden but is rendered visible in its effects, in its power. A number of 'Augustinians' no doubt maintained the doctrine of illumination, for example, out of conservatism and a respect for tradition; but in the case of a man like St. Bonaventure the retention of the doctrine was something much more than traditionalism. It has been said that of two doctrines, of which one attributes more to God and the other less, the Augustinian chooses the one which attributes more to God and less to the creature; but this is true only in so far as the doctrine is felt to harmonise with and express spiritual experience and in so far as it harmonises with and can be integrated into the general theological outlook.

If one understands the motto *fides quaerens intellectum* as expressing the spirit of Augustinianism and as indicating the place of philosophy in the mind of the Augustinian, it might be objected that such a description of Augustinianism is far too wide and that one might even have to class as Augustinians thinkers whom no one could reasonably call Augustinians. The passage from faith to 'understanding', to Scholastic theology on the one hand and to philosophy on the other hand, was ultimately the result of the fact that Christianity was given to the world as a revealed doctrine of salvation, not as a philosophy in the academic sense, nor even as a Scholastic philosophy. Christians believed first of all, and only afterwards, in the desire to defend, to explain and to understand what they believed, did they develop theology and, in subordination to theology, philosophy. In a sense this was the attitude not

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only of the early Christian writers and Fathers, but also of all those mediaeval thinkers who were primarily theologians. They believed first of all, and then they attempted to understand. This would be true of St. Thomas himself. But how could one call St. Thomas an Augustinian? Is it not better to confine the term 'Augustinian' to certain philosophical doctrines? Once one has done that, one has a means for distinguishing Augustinians from non-Augustinians: otherwise, one is involved in hopeless confusion.

There is a great deal of truth in this contention, and it must be admitted that in order to be able to discriminate between Augustinians and non-Augustinians in regard to the content of their philosophies, it is desirable to be clear first of all about what doctrines one is prepared to recognise as Augustinian and why; but I am speaking at present of the relation between theology and philosophy, and in regard to this point I maintain that, with an important qualification to be mentioned shortly, there is no essential difference in attitude between St. Augustine himself and the great theologian-philosophers of the thirteenth century. St. Thomas Aquinas certainly made a formal and methodological distinction between philosophy and theology, a distinction which was not clearly made by St. Gregory of Nyssa, St. Augustine, or St. Anselm; but the attitude of *fides quaerens intellectum* was none the less the attitude of St. Thomas. *On this point,* therefore, I should be willing to rank St. Thomas as an 'Augustinian'. In regard to doctrinal content one must adopt another criterion, it is true. St. Bonaventure too made a formal distinction between theology and philosophy, though he clung to and emphasised doctrines generally recognised as 'Augustinian', whereas St. Thomas rejected them, and in regard to these doctrines one can call the philosophy of Bonaventure 'Augustinian' and the philosophy of Thomas non-Augustinian. Again, St. Bonaventure, as we have seen, emphasised far more than St. Thomas the insufficiency of independent philosophy, so that it has even been said that the unity of Bonaventure's system must be sought on the theological and not on the philosophical level. All the same, St. Thomas himself did not believe that a purely independent philosophy would be, in actual fact and practice, completely satisfactory, and he, like St. Bonaventure, was primarily a theologian. There is a great deal to be said for M. Gilson's contention that for St. Thomas the sphere of philosophy is the sphere of *le révélable*

(in the sense in which M. Gilson uses the term, and not, obviously enough, in every sense).

The 'important qualification' I mentioned above is this. Owing to the discovery of the complete Aristotle and his adoption by St. Thomas, so far as adoption was consistent with theological orthodoxy, St. Thomas provided the material for an independent philosophy. As I have suggested when treating of St. Thomas, the utilisation of the Aristotelian system helped philosophy to become self-conscious and to aspire after independence and autonomy. When philosophical material was comparatively scanty, as in the Patristic period and in the earlier centuries of the mediaeval era, there could be little question of an autonomous philosophy going its own way (it is not necessary to take the phenomenon of the *dialectici* very seriously); but once Aristotelianism, which appeared at least to be a complete philosophical system, elaborated independently of theology, had arrived on the scene and had won its right to be there, a parting of the ways was morally inevitable: philosophy had grown up, and would soon demand its birthright and wander out of the house. But this was by no means the intention of St. Thomas, who had meant to utilise Aristotelianism in the construction of a vast theologico-philosophical synthesis, in which theology should constitute the ultimate measuring-rod. Yet children, when they grow up, do not always behave exactly as their parents expected or wished. Bonaventure, Albert, Thomas utilised and incorporated an increasing amount of the new philosophical materials, and all the while they were rearing a child who would soon go his own way; but the three men, though differing from one another on many points of philosophical doctrine, were really at one in the ideal of a Christian synthesis. They belonged to the *Sancti*, not to the ***philosophi***; and if one wishes to find a radical contrast between mediaeval thinkers in regard to their view of the relation between theology and philosophy, one should contrast not so much St. Anselm and St. Bonaventure on the one hand with St. Thomas on the other as St. Anselm, St. Bonaventure, St. Thomas and Scotus on the one hand with the Latin Averroists and, in the fourteenth century, the Ockhamist School on the other. The ***philosophi*** and radical Peripatetics stand over against the Fathers and theologians and *Sancti*.

2. What has already been said brings one to the question of 'Christian philosophy'. Can one speak of the 'Christian philosophy'

of the Middle Ages, and if so, in what sense? If philosophy is a legitimate and autonomous province of human study and knowledge ('autonomous' in the sense that the philosopher has his own method and subject-matter), it would appear that it is not and cannot be 'Christian'. It would sound absurd to speak of 'Christian biology' or 'Christian mathematics': a biologist or a mathematician can be a Christian, but not his biology or his mathematics. Similarly, it might be said, a philosopher can be a Christian, but not his philosophy. His philosophy may be true and compatible with Christianity; but one does not call a scientific statement Christian simply because it is true and compatible with Christianity. Just as mathematics can be neither pagan nor Moslem nor Christian, though mathematicians can be pagans or Moslems or Christians, so philosophy can be neither pagan nor Moslem nor Christian, though philosophers can be pagans or Moslems or Christians. The relevant question about a scientific hypothesis is whether it is true or false, confirmed by observation and experiment or refuted, not whether it is proposed by a Christian or a Hindoo or an atheist; and the relevant question about a philosophic doctrine is whether it is true or false, more or less adequate as an explanation of the facts it is supposed to explain, not whether it is expounded by a believer in Zeus, a follower of Mahomet or a Christian theologian. The most that the phrase 'Christian philosophy' can legitimately mean is a philosophy compatible with Christianity; if it means more than that, one is speaking of a philosophy which is not simply philosophy, but which is, partly at least, theology.

This is a reasonable and understandable point of view, and it certainly represents one aspect of St. Thomas's attitude towards philosophy, an aspect expressed in his formal distinction between theology and philosophy. The philosopher starts with creatures, the theologian with God; the philosopher's principles are those discerned by the natural light of reason, the theologian's are revealed; the philosopher treats of the natural order, the theologian primarily of the supernatural order. But if one adheres closely to this aspect of Thomism, one is placed in a somewhat difficult position. St. Bonaventure did not think that any satisfactory metaphysic can be achieved save in the light of the Faith. The philosophic doctrine of exemplary ideas, for example, is closely linked up with the theological doctrine of the Word. Is one to say, then, that St. Bonaventure had no philosophy properly speaking, or is one to sort out the theological elements from the

philosophical elements? And if so, does not one run the risk of constructing a 'Bonaventurian philosophy' which St. Bonaventure himself would hardly have recognised as an adequate expression of his thought and intentions? Is it not perhaps simpler to allow that St. Bonaventure's idea of philosophy *was* that of a Christian philosophy, in the sense of a general Christian synthesis such as earlier Christian writers endeavoured to achieve? An historian is entitled to adopt this point of view. If one speaks simply as a philosopher who is convinced that philosophy either stands on its own feet or is not philosophy at all, one will not admit the existence of a 'Christian philosophy'; or, in other words, if one speaks simply as a 'Thomist', one will be forced to criticise any other and different conception of philosophy. But if one speaks as an historian, looking on from outside, as it were, one will recognise that there were two conceptions of philosophy, the one that of St. Bonaventure, the conception of a Christian philosophy, the other that of St. Thomas and Scotus, the conception of a philosophy which could not properly be called Christian, save in the sense that it was compatible with theology. From this point of view one can say that St. Bonaventure, even though he made a formal distinction between theology and philosophy, continued the tradition of the Fathers, whereas with St. Thomas philosophy received a charter. In this sense Thomism was 'modern' and looked forward to the future. As a system of self-sufficient philosophy Thomism can enter into competition and discussion with other philosophies, because it can prescind from dogmatic theology altogether, whereas a Christian philosophy of the Bonaventurian type can hardly do so. The true Bonaventurian could, of course, argue with modern philosophers on particular points, the proofs of God's existence, for example; but the total system could hardly enter the philosophical arena on equal terms, precisely because it is not simply a philosophical system but a Christian synthesis.

Yet is there not a sense in which the philosophies of St. Augustine and St. Bonaventure and St. Albert and St. Thomas can all be called Christian? The problems which they discussed were in large measure set by theology, or by the necessity of defending Christian truth. When Aristotle argued to the existence of an unmoved mover, he was answering a problem set by metaphysics (and by physics); but when St. Anselm and St. Bonaventure and St. Thomas proved God's existence, they were showing the rational

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foundation for the acceptance of a revelation in which they already believed. St. Bonaventure was concerned also to show God's immanent activity within the soul; and even though St. Thomas employed Aristotle's own argument, he was not answering simply an abstract problem nor was he interested simply in showing that there is an unmoved mover, an ultimate cause of motion; he was interested in proving the existence of God, a Being who meant a great deal more to St. Thomas than an unmoved mover. His arguments can naturally be considered in themselves and, from the philosophic standpoint, they must be so considered; but he approached the question from the viewpoint of a theologian, looking on the proof of God's existence as a *praeambulum fidei*. Moreover, although St. Thomas certainly spoke of philosophy or metaphysics as the science of being as being, and though his declaration that the rational knowledge of God is the highest part of philosophy, that to which other parts lead, can certainly be regarded as suggested by Aristotle's words, in his *Summae* (which are of the greatest importance from the philosophical, as well as from the theological standpoint) he follows the order suggested by theology, and his philosophy fits closely into his theology, making a synthesis. St. Thomas did not approach philosophical problems in the spirit of a professor of the Parisian faculty of arts; he approached them in the spirit of a Christian theologian. Moreover, in spite of his Aristotelianism and in spite of his repetition of Aristotelian statements, I think it can be maintained that for St. Thomas philosophy is not so much a study of being in general as a study of God, God's activity and God's effects, so far as the natural reason will take us; so that God is the centre of his philosophy as of his theology, the same God, though attained in different ways. I have suggested earlier on that St. Thomas's formal charter to philosophy meant that philosophy would in the end go her own way, and I think that this is true; but that is not to say that St. Thomas envisaged or desired the 'separation' of philosophy from theology. On the contrary, he attempted a great synthesis, and he attempted it as a Christian theologian who was also a philosopher; he would doubtless have considered that what would have appeared to him as the vagaries and errors of philosophers in later centuries were largely due to those very causes in view of which he declared revelation to be morally necessary.

3. More chapters have been devoted to the philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas than to any other philosopher, and rightly so,

since Thomism is unquestionably the most imposing and comprehensive synthesis considered in this book. I may have emphasised those aspects of Thomism which are of non-Aristotelian origin, and one should, I think, bear these aspects in mind, lest one forget that Thomism is a synthesis and not simply a literal adoption of Aristotelianism; but none the less Thomism *can*, of course, be regarded as the culminating process of a movement in the Christian West towards the adoption and utilisation of Greek philosophy as represented by Aristotle. Owing to the fact that philosophy in the time of the Fathers meant, to all intents and purposes, neo-Platonism, to utilise Greek philosophy meant, for the Fathers, to utilise neo-Platonism: St. Augustine, for instance, did not know much of the historic system of Aristotle, as distinct from neo-Platonism. Moreover, the spiritual character of neo-Platonism appealed to the mind of the Fathers. That the categories of neo-Platonism should continue to dominate Christian thought in the early Middle Ages was only natural, in view of the fact that the Fathers had utilised them and that they were consecrated through the prestige attaching to the writings of the Pseudo-Dionysius, believed to be St. Paul's convert. Furthermore, even when the *corpus* of Aristotle's writings had become available in Latin translations from the Greek and the Arabic, the differences between Aristotelianism proper and neo-Platonism proper were by no means clearly recognised: they could not be clearly recognised so long as the *Liber de causis* and the *Elementatio theologica* were ascribed to Aristotle, especially when the great Moslem commentators had themselves drawn copiously on neo-Platonism. That Aristotle had criticised Plato was, of course, perfectly clear from the *Metaphysics*; but the precise nature and scope of the criticism was not so clear. The adoption and utilisation of Aristotle did not mean, therefore, the negation and rejection of all neo-Platonism, and though St. Thomas recognised that the *Liber de causis* was not the work of Aristotle, one can regard his interpretation of Aristotle in a manner consonant with Christianity, not merely as an interpretation *in meliorem partem* (which it was, from the viewpoint of anyone who is both a Christian and an historian), but also as following from the general conception of Aristotle in his time. St. Bonaventure certainly thought that Aristotle's criticism of Plato involved a rejection of exemplarism (and in my opinion St. Bonaventure was quite right); but St. Thomas did not think so, and he interpreted Aristotle accordingly. One might be tempted to

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think that St. Thomas was simply whitewashing Aristotle; but one should not forget that 'Aristotle' for St. Thomas meant rather more than Aristotle means to the modern historian of Greek philosophy; he was, to a certain extent at least, an Aristotle seen through the eyes of commentators and philosophers who were themselves not pure Aristotelians. Even the radical Aristotelians by intention, the Latin Averroists, were not pure Aristotelians in the strict sense. If one adopts this point of view, one will find it easier to understand how Aristotle could appear to St. Thomas as 'the Philosopher', and one will realise that when St. Thomas baptised Aristotelianism he was not simply substituting Aristotelianism for neo-Platonism, but that he was completing that process of absorbing Greek philosophy which had begun in the early days of the Christian era. In a sense we can say that neo-Platonism, Augustinianism, Aristotelianism and the Moslem and Jewish philosophies came together and were fused in Thomism, not in the sense that selected elements were juxtaposed mechanically, but in the sense that a true fusion and synthesis was achieved under the regulating guidance of certain basic ideas. Thomism, in the fullest sense, is thus a synthesis of Christian theology and Greek philosophy (Aristotelianism, united with other elements, or Aristotelianism, interpreted in the light of later philosophy) in which philosophy is regarded in the light of theology and theology itself is expressed, to a considerable extent, in categories borrowed from Greek philosophy, particularly from Aristotle.

I have asserted that Thomism is a synthesis of Christian theology and Greek philosophy, which might seem to imply that Thomism in the narrower sense, that is, as denoting simply the Thomist philosophy, is a synthesis of Greek philosophy and that it is nothing else but Greek philosophy. In the first place, it seems preferable to speak of Greek philosophy rather than of Aristotelianism, for the simple reason that St. Thomas's philosophy was a synthesis of Platonism (using the term in a wide sense, to include neo-Platonism) and of Aristotelianism, though one should not forget that the Moslem and Jewish philosophers were also important influences in the formation of his thought. In the first volume of my history I have argued that Plato and Aristotle should be regarded as complementary thinkers, in some respects at least, and that a synthesis is needed. St. Thomas Aquinas achieved this synthesis. We cannot speak of his philosophy, therefore, as simply Aristotelianism; it is rather a synthesis of

Greek philosophy, harmonised with Christian theology. In the second place, Thomism is a real synthesis and is not a mere juxtaposition of heterogeneous elements. For example, St. Thomas did not take over the Platonic-Plotinian-Augustinian tradition of exemplary ideas and merely juxtapose it with the Aristotelian doctrine of substantial form: he gave each element its ontological status, making the substantial form subordinate to the exemplary idea, and explaining in what sense one is entitled to speak of 'ideas' in God. Again, if he adopted the (originally) Platonic notion of participation, he did not employ it in a manner which would conflict with the Aristotelian elements of his metaphysic. St. Thomas went beyond the Aristotelian hylomorphism and discerned in the real distinction between essence and existence a profounder application of the principle of potentiality and act. This distinction enabled him to use the Platonic notion of participation to explain finite being, while at the same time his view of God as *ipsum esse subsistens* rather than as mere unmoved mover enabled him to use the idea of participation in such a way as to throw into relief the idea of creation, which was to be found neither in Plato nor in Aristotle. Needless to say, St. Thomas did not take participation, in the full sense, as a premiss; the complete idea of participation could not be obtained until God's existence had been proved, but the material for the elaboration of that idea was provided by the real distinction between essence and existence.

4. Some of the viewpoints adopted in this book may appear to be somewhat inconsistent; but one must remember that it is possible to adopt different viewpoints in regard to the history of mediaeval philosophy, or indeed in regard to the history of philosophy in any epoch. Apart from the fact that one will naturally adopt a different viewpoint and interpret the development of philosophy in a different light according as one is a Thomist, a Scotist, a Kantian, an Hegelian, a Marxist or a Logical Positivist, it is possible even for the same man to discern different principles or modes of interpretation, none of which he would be willing to reject as totally illegitimate and yet for none of which he would be prepared to claim complete truth and adequacy.

Thus it is possible, and from certain viewpoints perfectly legitimate, to adopt the linear or progressive mode of interpretation. It is possible to view the absorption and utilisation of Greek philosophy by Christian thinkers as starting practically from zero in the early years of the Christian era, as increasing through the

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thought of the Fathers up to the Scholasticism of the early Middle Ages, as being suddenly, comparatively speaking, enriched through the translations from the Arabic and the Greek, and as developing through the thought of William of Auvergne, Alexander of Hales, St. Bonaventure and St. Albert the Great, until it reached its culmination in the Thomist synthesis. According to this line of interpretation it would be necessary to regard the philosophy of St. Bonaventure as a stage in the development of Thomism, and not as a parallel and heterogeneous philosophy. One would regard the achievement of St. Thomas, not so much as an adoption of Aristotle in place of Augustine or of neo-Platonic Platonism, but rather as a confluence and synthesis of the various currents of Greek philosophy, and of Islamic and Jewish philosophy, as well as of the original ideas contributed by Christian thinkers. Mediaeval philosophy before St. Thomas one would regard, not as 'Augustinianism' as opposed to Aristotelianism, but as pre-Thomist Scholasticism or as the Scholasticism of the earlier Middle Ages. This line of interpretation seems to me to be perfectly legitimate, and it has the very great advantage of not leading to a distorted idea of Thomism as pure Aristotelianism. It would even be possible and legitimate to look on Thomism as an Aristotelianised Platonism rather than as a Platonised Aristotelianism. What has been said of the 'synthetic' character of Thomism and of its relation to Greek, and Islamic, philosophy in general rather than to Aristotelianism in particular supports this line of interpretation, which was also suggested by what was said in the first volume of this history concerning the complementary character of the Platonic and Aristotelian philosophies.

On the other hand, if one follows this line of interpretation exclusively, one runs the risk of missing altogether the rich variety of mediaeval philosophy and the individuality of the different philosophers. The spirit of St. Bonaventure was not the same as that of Roger Bacon nor the same as that of St. Thomas, and French historians like M. Gilson have done us a great service in drawing attention to and throwing into relief the peculiar genius of individual thinkers. This 'individualisation' of mediaeval philosophers is all the more to be welcomed in view of the fact that the Christian thinkers shared a common theological background, so that their philosophical differences were expressed within a comparatively restricted field, with the result that mediaeval philosophy might seem to consist of a series of repetitions on salient

points and a series of differences on relatively insignificant points. If one said simply that St. Bonaventure postulated a special illumination and that St. Thomas rejected it, the difference between them would not present so much interest as it does if St. Bonaventure's theory of illumination is linked up with his total thought and if St. Thomas's denial of any special illumination is seen against the background of his system in general. But one cannot depict the total thought of Bonaventure or the general system of Thomas without setting in relief the peculiar spirit of each thinker. It may very well be true that M. Gilson, as I suggested earlier in this book, has exaggerated the differences between St. Bonaventure and St. Thomas, and that it is possible to look on St. Bonaventure's philosophy as a stage in the evolution of Thomism rather than as a parallel and different philosophy; but it is also possible for different men to have different conceptions of what philosophy is, and if a man does not accept the Thomist point of view, he will probably be no more inclined to look on Bonaventure as an incomplete Thomas than a Platonist would be inclined to look on Plato as an incomplete Aristotle. It is, I think, a mistake to insist so much on the linear type of interpretation that one rules out as illegitimate the type of interpretation represented by M. Gilson or, conversely, so to insist upon the individual characteristics and spirits of different thinkers as to lose sight of the general evolution of thought towards a complete synthesis. Narrowness of vision can hardly produce adequate understanding.

Again, while it is possible to view the development of mediaeval philosophy as a development towards the Thomist synthesis and to regard pre-Thomist philosophies as stages in that development, and while it is possible to concentrate more on the peculiarities of different philosophies and the individual geniuses of different thinkers, it is also possible to see and to throw into relief different general lines of development. Thus it is possible to distinguish different types of 'Augustinianism' instead of being content with one portmanteau word; to distinguish, for example, the typically Franciscan Augustinianism of St. Bonaventure from the Aristotelianised Augustinianism of Richard of Middleton or the Avicennian Augustinianism of Henry of Ghent and, in a certain measure, of Duns Scotus. It is possible to trace the respective influences on mediaeval thought of Avicenna, Averroes and Avicebron, and to attempt a corresponding classification. Hence phrases such as *augustinisme avicennisant, augustinisme avicebronisant,*

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avicennisme latin, of which French historians have made use. An investigation of such influences is certainly of value; but the classification produced by such an investigation cannot be regarded as a *complete* and entirely adequate classification of mediaeval philosophies, since insistence on the influence of the past tends to obscure original contributions, while it depends largely on what points of his philosophy one happens to have in mind whether one classes a philosopher as falling under the influence of Avicenna or Averroes or Avicebron.

Again, one can regard the development of mediaeval philosophy in regard to the relation of Christian thought to 'humanism', to Greek thought and culture and science in general. Thus if St. Peter Damian was a representative of the negative attitude towards humanism, St. Albert the Great and Roger Bacon represented a positive attitude, while from the political point of view Thomism represents a harmonisation of the natural and humanistic with the supernatural which is absent in the characteristic political theory of Giles of Rome. St. Thomas, again, through the greater part he attributes to human activity in knowledge and action compared with some of his predecessors and contemporaries, may be said to represent a humanistic tendency.

In fine, mediaeval philosophy can be considered under several aspects, each of which has its own justification, and it ought to be so considered if one is to attain anything like an adequate view of it; but any more extensive treatment of mediaeval philosophy in general must be reserved until the conclusion of the next volume, when the philosophy of the fourteenth century has been discussed. In the present volume the great synthesis of St. Thomas naturally and rightly occupies the central position, though, as we have seen, mediaeval philosophy and the philosophy of St. Thomas are not synonymous. The thirteenth century was the century of speculative thought, and the century was exceptionally rich in speculative thinkers. It was the century of original thinkers, whose thought had not yet become hardened into the dogmatic traditions of philosophical Schools. But though the great thinkers of the thirteenth century differed from one another in their philosophical doctrines and criticised one another, they did so against a background of commonly accepted metaphysical principles. One must distinguish criticism concerning the application of accepted metaphysical principles from criticism of the very foundations of metaphysical systems. The former was practised by all the great

speculative thinkers of the Middle Ages; but the latter did not appear until the fourteenth century. I have concluded this volume with a consideration of Duns Scotus, who, from the chronological point of view, stands at the juncture of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries; but even if one can discern in his philosophy the faint beginnings of the more radical spirit of criticism which was to characterise the Ockhamist movement of the fourteenth century, his criticism of his contemporaries and predecessors did not involve a denial of the metaphysical principles commonly accepted in the thirteenth century. Looking back on the Middle Ages, we may tend to see in the system of Scotus a bridge between the two centuries, between the age of St. Thomas and the age of Ockham; but Ockham himself certainly did not see in Scotus a kindred spirit, and I think that even if Scotus's philosophy did prepare the way for a more radical criticism his system must be regarded as the last of the great mediaeval speculative syntheses. It can hardly be denied, I think, that certain of Scotus's opinions in rational psychology, in natural theology and in ethics look forward, as it were, to the Ockhamist critique of metaphysics and the peculiar Ockhamist view of the nature of the moral law; but if one considers Scotus's philosophy in itself, without reference to a future which we know but he did not, we are forced to realise that it was just as much a metaphysical system as any of the great systems of the thirteenth century. It seemed to me, then, that Scotus's place was in this volume rather than in the next. In the next volume I hope to treat of fourteenth-century philosophy, of the philosophies of the Renaissance and of the revival of Scholasticism in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

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APPENDIX I

Honorific titles applied in the Middle Ages to philosophers treated of in this volume.

RHABANUS MAURUS:	Praeceptor Germaniae.
ABELARD:	Peripateticus Palatinus.
ALAN OF LILLE:	Doctor universalis.
AVERROES:	Commentator.
ALEXANDER OF HALES:	Doctor irrefragibilis.
ST. BONAVENTURE:	Doctor seraphicus.
ST. ALBERT THE GREAT:	Doctor universalis.
ST. THOMAS AQUINAS:	Doctor angelicus and Doctor communis.
ROGER BACON:	Doctor mirabilis.
RICHARD OF MIDDLETON:	Doctor solidus.
RAYMOND LULL:	Doctor illuminatus.
GILES OF ROME:	Doctor fundatissimus.
HENRY OF GHENT:	Doctor solemnis.
DUNS SCOTUS:	Doctor subtilis.

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CHAPTER XV

ST. ANSELM OF CANTERBURY

St. Anselm as philosopher—Proofs of God's existence in the Monologium—*The proof of God's existence in the* Proslogium—*Idea of truth and other Augustinian elements in St. Anselm's thought.*

1. ST. ANSELM was born at Aosta in Piedmont in 1033. After preliminary studies in Burgundy, at Avranches and afterwards at Bec he entered the Benedictine Order and later became Prior of Bec (1063), and subsequently abbot (1078). In 1093 he became Archbishop of Canterbury in succession to his former teacher, friend and religious superior Lanfranc, and in that post he died (1109).

In general the thought of St. Anselm is rightly said to belong to the Augustinian tradition. Like the great African Doctor, he devoted his chief intellectual effort to the understanding of the doctrine of the Christian faith and the statement of his attitude which is contained in the *Proslogium*[1] bears the unmistakable stamp of the Augustinian spirit. 'I do not attempt, O Lord, to penetrate Thy profundity, for I deem my intellect in no way sufficient thereunto, but I desire to understand in some degree Thy truth, which my heart believes and loves. For I do not seek to understand, in order that I may believe; but I believe, that I may understand. For I believe this too, that unless I believed, I should not understand.' This *Credo, ut intelligam* attitude is common to both Augustine and Anselm, and Anselm is in full accord with Augustine when he remarks in the *Cur Deus Homo*[2] that it is negligence if we make no attempt to understand what we believe. In practice, of course, this means for Anselm an application of dialectic or reasoning to the dogmas of faith, not in order to strip them of mystery but in order to penetrate them, develop them and discern their implications, so far as this is possible to the human mind, and the results of this process, for instance his book on the Incarnation and Redemption (*Cur Deus Homo*), make Anselm of importance in the history of theological development and speculation.

Now, the application of dialectic to the data of theology remains

[1] *P.L.*, 158, 227. [2] *Ibid.*, 158, 362.

theology, and St. Anselm would scarcely earn a place in the history of philosophy through his theological speculation and developments, except indeed as the application of philosophical categories to revealed dogmas necessarily involves some treatment and development of those philosophical categories. In point of fact, however, the use of the *Credo, ut intelligam* motto was not confined by Anselm, any more than by Augustine, to the understanding of those truths exclusively which have been revealed and not discovered dialectically, but was extended to truths like the existence of God, which are indeed believed but which can be reached by human reasoning. Besides, then, his work as dogmatic theologian there is also his work as natural theologian or metaphysician to be considered, and on this count alone St. Anselm deserves a place in the history of philosophy, since he contributed to the development of that branch of philosophy which is known as natural theology. Whether his arguments for the existence of God are considered valid or invalid, the fact that he elaborated these arguments systematically is of importance and gives his work a title to serious consideration by the historian of philosophy.

St. Anselm, like St. Augustine, made no clear distinction between the provinces of theology and philosophy, and his implied attitude of mind may be illustrated as follows. The Christian should try to understand and to apprehend rationally all that he believes, so far as this is possible to the human mind. Now, we believe in God's existence and in the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity. We should, therefore, apply our understanding to the understanding of both truths. From the point of view of one who, like the Thomist, makes a clear distinction between philosophy and dogmatic theology the application of reasoning to the first truth, God's existence, will fall within the province of philosophy, while the application of reasoning to the second truth, the Trinity, will fall within the province of theology, and the Thomist will hold that the first truth is demonstrable by human reasoning, while the second truth is not demonstrable by human reasoning, even though the human mind is able to make true statements about the mystery, once revealed, and to refute the objections against it which human reasoning may raise. But, if one puts oneself in the position of St. Anselm, that is, in a state of mind anterior to the clear distinction between philosophy and theology, it is easy to see how the fact that the first truth is demonstrable, coupled with the desire to understand all that we believe, the attempt to satisfy

this desire being regarded as a duty, naturally leads to an attempt to demonstrate the second truth as well, and in point of fact St. Anselm speaks of demonstrating the Trinity of Persons by 'necessary reasons'[1] and of showing in the same way that it is impossible for a man to be saved without Christ.[2] If one wishes to call this 'rationalism', as has been done, one should first of all be quite clear as to what one means by rationalism. If by rationalism one means an attitude of mind which denies revelation and faith, St. Anselm was certainly no rationalist, since he accepted the primacy of faith and the fact of authority and only then went on to attempt to understand the data of faith. If, however, one is going to extend the term 'rationalism' to cover the attitude of mind which leads to the attempt to prove mysteries, not because the mysteries are not accepted by faith or would be rejected if one could not prove them, but because one desires to understand all that one believes, without having first clearly defined the ways in which different truths are accessible to us, then one might, of course, call the thought of St. Anselm 'rationalism' or an approximation to rationalism. But it would show an entire misunderstanding of Anselm's attitude, were one to suppose that he was prepared to reject the doctrine of the Trinity, for example, if he was unable to find *rationes necessariae* for it: he believed the doctrine first of all, and only then did he attempt to understand it. The dispute about Anselm's rationalism or non-rationalism is quite beside the point, unless one first grasps quite clearly the fact that he had no intention of impairing the integrity of the Christian faith: if we insist on interpreting St. Anselm as though he lived after St. Thomas and had clearly distinguished the separate provinces of theology and philosophy, we shall only be guilty of an anachronism and of a misinterpretation.

2. In the *Monologium*[3] St. Anselm develops the proof of God's existence from the degrees of perfection which are found in creatures. In the first chapter he applies the argument to goodness, and in the second chapter to 'greatness', meaning, as he tells us, not quantitative greatness, but a quality like wisdom, the more of which a subject possesses, the better, for greater quantitative size does not prove qualitative superiority. Such qualities are found in varying degrees in the objects of experience, so that the argument proceeds from the empirical observation of degrees of,

[1] *De fide Trin.*, 4; *P.L.*, 158, 272. [2] *Cur Deus Homo*; *P.L.*, 158, 361.
[3] *P.L.*, 158.

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for example, goodness, and is therefore an *a posteriori* argument. But judgement about different degrees of perfection (St. Anselm assumes, of course, that the judgement is objectively grounded) implies a reference to a standard of perfection, while the fact that things participate objectively in goodness in different degrees shows that the standard is itself objective, that there is, for example, an absolute goodness in which all good things participate, to which they approximate more or less nearly, as the case may be.

This type of argument is Platonic in character (though Aristotle also argued, in his Platonic phase, that where there is a better, there must be a best) and it reappears in the *Via quarta* of St. Thomas Aquinas. It is, as I have said, an *a posteriori* argument: it does not proceed from the idea of absolute goodness to the existence of absolute goodness but from observed degrees of goodness to the existence of absolute goodness and from degrees of wisdom to the existence of absolute wisdom, the absolute goodness and wisdom being then identified as God. The developed form of the argument would necessitate, of course, a demonstration both of the objectivity of the judgement concerning the differing degrees of goodness and also of the principle on which St. Anselm rests the argument, the principle, namely that if objects possess goodness in a limited degree, they must have their goodness from absolute goodness itself, which is good *per se* and not *per aliud*. It is also to be noted that the argument can be applied only to those perfections which do not *of themselves* involve limitation and finiteness: it could not be applied to quantitative size, for instance. (Whether the argument is valid and demonstrative or not, it is scarcely the province of the historian to decide.)

In the third chapter of the *Monologium* St. Anselm applies the same sort of argument to being. Whatever exists, exists either through something or through nothing. The latter supposition is absurd; so whatever exists, must exist through something. This means that all existing things exist either through one another or through themselves or through one cause of existence. But that X should exist through Y, and Y through X, is unthinkable: the choice lies between a plurality of uncaused causes or one such cause. So far indeed the argument is a simple argument from causality, but St. Anselm goes on to introduce a Platonic element when he argues that if there is a plurality of existent things which have being of themselves, i.e. are self-dependent and uncaused, there is a form of being-of-itself in which all participate,

and at this point the argument becomes similar to the argument already outlined, the implication being that, when several beings possess the same form, there must be a unitary being external to them which *is* that form. There can, therefore, be but one self-existent or ultimate Being, and this must be the best and highest and greatest of all that is.

In chapters seven and eight St. Anselm considers the relation between the caused and the Cause and argues that all finite objects are made out of nothing, *ex nihilo*, not out of a preceding matter nor out of the Cause as matter. He explains carefully that to say that a thing is made *ex nihilo* is not to say that it is made out of nothing as its material: it means that something is created *non ex aliquo*, that, whereas before it had no existence outside the divine mind, it now has existence. This may seem obvious enough, but it has sometimes been maintained that to say that a creature is made *ex nihilo* is either to make nothing something or to lay oneself open to the observation that *ex nihilo nihil fit*, whereas St. Anselm makes it clear that *ex nihilo* does not mean *ex nihilo tamquam materia* but simply *non ex aliquo*.

As to the attributes of the *Ens a Se*, we can predicate of it only those qualities, to possess which is *absolutely* better than not to possess them.[1] For example, to be gold is better for gold than to be lead, but it would not be better for a man to be made of gold. To be corporeal is better than to be nothing at all, but it would not be better for a spirit to be corporeal rather than incorporeal. To be gold is better than not to be gold only *relatively*, and to be corporeal rather than non-corporeal is better only *relatively*. But it is *absolutely* better to be wise than not to be wise, living than non-living, just than not-just. We must, then, predicate wisdom, life, justice, of the supreme Being, but we cannot predicate corporeity or gold of the supreme Being. Moreover, as the supreme Being does not possess His attributes through participation, but through His own essence, He *is* Wisdom, Justice, Life, etc.,[2] and furthermore, since the supreme Being cannot be composed of elements (which would then be logically anterior, so that He would not be the supreme Being), these attributes are identical with the divine essence, which is simple.[3] Again, God must necessarily transcend space in virtue of His simplicity and spirituality, and time, in virtue of His eternity.[4] He is wholly present in everything but not locally or *determinate*, and all things

[1] Ch. 15. [2] Ch. 16. [3] Ch. 17. [4] Ch. 20–4.

are present to His eternity, which is not to be conceived as endless time but as *interminabilis vita simul perfecte tota existens*.[1] We may call Him substance, if we refer to the divine essence, but not if we refer to the category of substance, since He is incapable of change or of sustaining accidents.[2] In fine, if we apply to Him any name that we also apply to creatures, *valde procul dubio intelligenda est diversa significatio*.

St. Anselm proceeds, in the *Monologium*, to give reasons for the Trinity of Persons in one Nature, without giving any clear indication that he is conscious of leaving the province of one science to enter that of another, and into this subject, interesting as it may be to the theologian, we cannot follow him. Enough has been said, however, to show that St. Anselm made a real contribution to natural theology. The Platonic element is conspicuous and, apart from remarks here and there, there is no considered treatment of analogy; but he gives *a posteriori* arguments for God's existence which are of a much more systematic character than those of St. Augustine and he also deals carefully with the divine attributes, God's immutability, eternity, etc. It is clear, then, how erroneous it is to associate his name with the 'Ontological Argument' in such a way as to imply that St. Anselm's only contribution to the development of philosophy was an argument the validity of which is at least questionable. His work may have not exercised any very considerable influence on contemporary thinkers and those who immediately followed him, because of their preoccupation with other matters (dialectical problems, reconciling the opinions of the Fathers, and so on), but looked at in the light of the general development of philosophy in the Middle Ages he must be acknowledged as one of the main contributors to Scholastic philosophy and theology, on account both of his natural theology and of his application of dialectic to dogma.

3. In the *Proslogium* St. Anselm develops the so-called 'ontological argument', which proceeds from the idea of God to God as a reality, as existent. He tells us that the requests of his brethren and consideration of the complex and various arguments of the *Monologium* led him to inquire whether he could not find an argument which would be sufficient, by itself alone, to prove all that we believe concerning the Divine Substance, so that one argument would fulfil the function of the many complementary arguments of his former *opusculum*. At length he thought that he

[1] Ch. 24. [2] Ch. 26.

had discovered such an argument, which for convenience sake may be put into syllogistic form, though St. Anselm himself develops it under the form of an address to God.

> God is that than which no greater can be thought:
> But that than which no greater can be thought must exist, not only mentally, in idea, but also extramentally:
> Therefore God exists, not only in idea, mentally, but also extramentally.
> The *Major Premiss* simply gives the idea of God, the idea which a man has of God, even if he denies His existence.
> The *Minor Premiss* is clear, since if that than which no greater can be thought existed only in the mind, it would not be that than which no greater can be thought. A greater could be thought, i.e. a being that existed in extramental reality as well as in idea.

This proof starts from the idea of God as that than which no greater can be conceived, i.e. as absolutely perfect: that is what is *meant* by God.

Now, if such a being had only ideal reality, existed only in our subjective idea, we could still conceive a greater being, namely a being which did not exist simply in our idea but in objective reality. It follows, then, that the idea of God as absolute perfection is necessarily the idea of an existent Being, and St. Anselm argues that in this case no one can at the same time have the idea of God and yet deny His existence. If a man thought of God as, for instance, a superman, he would be quite right to deny 'God's' existence in that sense, but he would not really be denying the objectivity of the idea of God. If, however, a man had the right idea of God, conceived the meaning of the term 'God', he could indeed deny His existence with his lips, but if he realises what the denial involves (i.e. saying that the Being which must exist of its essence, the necessary Being, does not exist) and yet asserts the denial, he is guilty of a plain contradiction: it is only the fool, the *insipiens*, who has said *in his heart*, 'there is no God.' The absolutely perfect Being is a Being the essence of which is to exist or which necessarily involves existence, since otherwise a more perfect being could be conceived; it is the necessary Being; and a necessary being which did not exist would be a contradiction in terms.

St. Anselm wanted his argument to be a demonstration of all that we believe concerning the divine Nature, and, since the argument concerns the absolutely perfect Being, the attributes of God are contained implicitly in the conclusion of the argument. We

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have only to ask ourselves what is implied by the idea of a Being than which no greater can be thought, in order to see that God must be omnipotent, omniscient, supremely just and so on. Moreover, when deducing these attributes in the *Proslogium*, St. Anselm gives some attention to the clarification of the notions in question. For example, God cannot lie: is not this a sign of lack of omnipotence? No, he answers, to be able to lie should be called impotence rather than power, imperfection rather than perfection. If God could act in a manner inconsistent with His essence, that would be a lack of power on His part. Of course, it might be objected that this *presupposes* that we already know what God's essence is or involves, whereas what God's essence is, is precisely the point to be shown; but St. Anselm would presumably reply that he has already established that God is all-perfect and so that He is both omnipotent and truthful: it is merely a question of showing what the omnipotence of perfection really means and of exposing the falsity of a wrong idea of omnipotence.

The argument given by St. Anselm in the *Proslogium* was attacked by the monk Gaunilo in his *Liber pro Insipiente adversus Anselmi in Proslogio ratiocinationem*, wherein he observed that the idea we have of a thing is no guarantee of its extramental existence and that St. Anselm was guilty of an illicit transition from the logical to the real order. We might as well say that the most beautiful islands which are possible must exist somewhere, because we can conceive them. The Saint, in his *Liber Apologeticus contra Gaunilonem respondentem pro Insipiente*, denied the parity, and denied it with justice, since, if the idea of God is the idea of an all-perfect Being and if absolute perfection involves existence, this idea is the idea of an existent, and necessarily existent Being, whereas the idea of even the most beautiful islands is not the idea of something which must exist: even in the purely logical order the two ideas are not on a par. If God is possible, i.e. if the idea of the all-perfect and necessary Being contains no contradiction, God must exist, since it would be absurd to speak of a *merely possible necessary Being* (it is a contradiction in terms), whereas there is no contradiction in speaking of merely possible beautiful islands. The main objection to St. Anselm's proof, which was raised against Descartes and which Leibniz tried to answer, is that we do not know *a priori* that the idea of God, the idea of infinite and absolute Perfection, is the idea of a *possible* Being. *We* may not see any contradiction in the idea, but, say the

objectors, this 'negative' possibility is not the same as 'positive' possibility; it does not show that there really is no contradiction in the idea. That there is no contradiction in the idea is clear only when we have shown *a posteriori* that God exists.

The argument of the *Proslogium* aroused little immediate interest; but in the thirteenth century it was employed by St. Bonaventure, with a less logical and more psychological emphasis, while it was rejected by St. Thomas. Duns Scotus used it as an incidental aid. In the 'modern' era it has had a distinguished, if chequered career. Descartes adopted and adapted it, Leibniz defended it in a careful and ingenious manner, Kant attacked it. In the Schools it is generally rejected, though some individual thinkers have maintained its validity.

4. Among the Augustinian characteristics of St. Anselm's philosophy one may mention his theory of truth. When he is treating of truth in the judgement,[1] he follows the Aristotelian view in making it consist in this, that the judgement or proposition states what actually exists or denies what does not exist, the thing signified being the cause of the truth, the truth itself residing in the judgement (correspondence-theory); but when, after treating of truth (rectitude) in the will,[2] he goes on to speak of the truth of being or essence[3] and makes the truth of things to consist in being what they 'ought' to be, that is, in their embodiment of or correspondence to their idea in God, the supreme Truth and standard of truth, and when he concludes from the eternal truth of the judgement to the eternity of the cause of truth, God,[4] he is treading in the footsteps of Augustine. God, therefore, is the eternal and subsistent Truth, which is cause of the ontological truth of all creatures. The eternal truth is only cause and the truth of the judgement is only effect, while the ontological truth of things is at once effect (of eternal Truth) and cause (of truth in the judgement). This Augustinian conception of ontological truth, with the exemplarism it presupposes, was retained by St. Thomas in the thirteenth century, though he laid far more emphasis, of course, on the truth of the judgement. Thus, whereas St. Thomas's characteristic definition of truth is *adaequatio rei et intellectus*, that of St. Anselm is *rectitudo sola mente perceptibilis*.[5]

In his general way of speaking of the relation of soul to body and in the absence of a theory of hylomorphic composition of the

[1] *Dialogus de Veritate*, 2; *P.L.*, 158. [2] *Dial.*, 4. [3] *Ibid.*, 7 ff.
[4] *Ibid.*, 10. [5] *Ibid.*, 11.

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two, Anselm follows the Platonic-Augustinian tradition, though, like Augustine himself, he was perfectly well aware that soul and body form one man, and he affirms the fact. Again, his words in the *Proslogium*[1] on the divine light recall the illumination-theory of Augustine: *Quanta namque est lux illa, de qua micat omne verum, quod rationali menti lucet.*

In general perhaps one might say that though the philosophy of Anselm stands in the line of the Augustinian tradition, it is more systematically elaborated than the corresponding elements of Augustine's thought, his natural theology, that is, and that in the methodic application of dialectic it shows the mark of a later age.

[1] Ch. 14.

CHAPTER XXXI

ST. THOMAS AQUINAS—I

Life—Works—Mode of exposing St. Thomas's philosophy—The spirit of St. Thomas's philosophy.

1. THOMAS AQUINAS was born in the castle of Roccasecca, not far from Naples, at the end of 1224 or beginning of 1225, his father being the Count of Aquino. At the age of five years he was placed by his parents in the Benedictine Abbey of Monte Cassino as an oblate, and it was there that the future Saint and Doctor made his first studies, remaining in the monastery from 1230 to 1239, when the Emperor Frederick II expelled the monks. The boy returned to his family for a few months and then went to the University of Naples in the autumn of the same year, being then fourteen years old. In the city there was a convent of Dominican friars, and Thomas, attracted by their life, entered the Order in the course of the year 1244. This step was by no means acceptable to his family, who no doubt wished the boy to enter the abbey of Monte Cassino, as a step to ecclesiastical preferment, and it may have partly been due to this family opposition that the Dominican General resolved to take Thomas with him to Bologna, where he was himself going for a General Chapter, and then to send him on to the University of Paris. However, Thomas was kidnapped by his brothers on the way and was kept a prisoner at Aquino for about a year. His determination to remain true to his Order was proof against this trial, and he was able to make his way to Paris in the autumn of 1245.

Thomas was probably at Paris from 1245 until the summer of 1248, when he accompanied St. Albert the Great to Cologne, where the latter was to found a house of studies (*studium generale*) for the Dominican Order, remaining there until 1252. During this period, first at Paris, then at Cologne, Thomas was in close contact with Albert the Great, who realised the potentialities of his pupil, and while it is obvious that his taste for learning and study must in any case have been greatly stimulated by intimate contact with a professor of such erudition and such intellectual curiosity, we can hardly suppose that St. Albert's attempt to utilise what was valuable in Aristotelianism was without direct influence on his

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pupil's mind. Even if St. Thomas did not at this early date in his career conceive the idea of completing what his master had begun, he must at least have been profoundly influenced by the latter's open-mindedness. Thomas did not possess the all-embracing curiosity of his master (or one might say perhaps that he had a better sense of mental economy), but he certainly possessed greater powers of systematisation, and it was only to be expected that the meeting of the erudition and open-mindedness of the older man with the speculative power and synthesising ability of the younger would result in splendid fruit. It was St. Thomas who was to achieve the expression of the Christian ideology in Aristotelian terms, and who was to utilise Aristotelianism as an instrument of theological and philosophical analysis and synthesis; but his sojourn at Paris and Cologne in company with St. Albert was undoubtedly a factor of prime importance in his intellectual development. Whether or not we choose to regard St. Albert's system as incomplete Thomism is really irrelevant: the main fact is that St. Albert (*mutatis mutandis*) was Thomas's Socrates.

In 1252 St. Thomas returned from Cologne to Paris and continued his course of studies, lecturing on the Scriptures as *Baccalaureus Biblicus* (1252–4) and on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard as *Baccalaureus Sententiarius* (1254–6), at the conclusion of which period he received his Licentiate, the licence or permission to teach in the faculty of theology. In the course of the same year he became *Magister* and lectured as Dominican professor until 1259. Of the controversy which arose concerning the Dominican and Franciscan chairs in the university mention has already been made. In 1259 he left Paris for Italy and taught theology at the *studium curiae* attached to the Papal court until 1268. Thus he was at Anagni with Alexander IV (1259–61), at Orvieto with Urban IV (1261–4), at Santa Sabina in Rome (1265–7), and at Viterbo with Clement IV (1267–8). It was at the court of Urban IV that he met the famous translator, William of Moerbeke, and it was Urban who commissioned Thomas to compose the Office for the feast of Corpus Christi.

In 1268 Thomas returned to Paris and taught there until 1272, engaging in controversy with the Averroists, as also with those who renewed the attack on the religious Orders. In 1272 he was sent to Naples in order to erect a Dominican *studium generale*, and he continued his professorial activity there until 1274, when Pope Gregory X summoned him to Lyons to take part in the

Council. The journey was begun but never completed, as St. Thomas died on the way on March 7th, 1274, at the Cistercian monastery of Fossanuova, between Naples and Rome. He was forty-nine years of age at the time of his death, having behind him a life devoted to study and teaching. It had not been a life of much external activity or excitement, if we except the early incident of his imprisonment, the more or less frequent journeys and the controversies in which the Saint was involved; but it was a life devoted to the pursuit and defence of truth, a life also permeated and motivated by a deep spirituality. In some ways Thomas Aquinas was rather like the professor of legend (there are several stories concerning his fits of abstraction, or rather concentration, which made him oblivious to his surroundings), but he was a great deal more than a professor or theologian, for he was a Saint, and even if his devotion and love are not allowed to manifest themselves in the pages of his academic works, the ecstasies and mystical union with God of his later years bear witness to the fact that the truths of which he wrote were the realities by which he lived.

2. St. Thomas's Commentary on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard dates probably from 1254 to 1256, the *De principiis naturae* from 1255, the *De ente et essentia* from 1256 and the *De Veritate* from between 1256 and 1259. It may be that the *Quaestiones quodlibetales* 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11 were also composed before 1259, i.e. before Thomas left Paris for Italy. The *In Boethium de Hebdomadibus* and the *In Boethium de Trinitate* are also to be assigned to this period. While in Italy St. Thomas wrote the *Summa contra Gentiles*, the *De Potentia*, the *Contra errores Graecorum*, the *De emptione et venditione* and the *De regimine principum*. To this period belong also a number of the Commentaries on Aristotle: for example, those on the *Physics* (probably), the *Metaphysics*, the *Nicomachean Ethics*, the *De Anima*, the *Politics* (probably). On his return to Paris, where he became engaged in controversy with the Averroists, St. Thomas wrote the *De aeternitate mundi contra murmurantes* and the *De unitate intellectus contra Averroistas*, the *De Malo* (probably), the *De spiritualibus creaturis*, the *De anima* (i.e. the *Quaestio disputata*), the *De unione Verbi incarnati*, as well as the *Quaestiones quodlibetales* 1 to 6 and the commentaries on the *De causis*, the *Meteorologica*[1] and the *Perihermeneias*, also

[1] The supplement to the Commentary on the *Meteorologica* seems to have been completed by an anonymous writer, drawing on Peter of Auvergne.

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belong to this period, while during his stay at Naples St. Thomas wrote the *De mixtione elementorum*, the *De motu cordis*, the *De virtutibus*, and the commentaries on Aristotle's *De Caelo* and *De generatione et corruptione*. As to the *Summa Theologica*, this was composed between 1265 (at the earliest) and 1273, the *Pars prima* being written in Paris, the *Prima secundae* and *Secunda secundae* in Italy, and the *Tertia pars* in Paris between 1272 and 1273. The *Supplementum*, made up from previous writings of St. Thomas, was added by Reginald of Piperno, St. Thomas's secretary from the year 1261. One must add that Peter of Auvergne completed the commentary on the *De Caelo* and that on the *Politics* (from Book 3, *lectio* 7), while Ptolemy of Lucca was responsible for part of the *De regimine principum*, St. Thomas having written only the first book and the first four chapters of the second book. The *Compendium theologiae*, an unfinished work, was a product of the later years of St. Thomas's life, but it is not certain if it was written before or after his return to Paris in 1268.

A number of works have been attributed to St. Thomas which were definitely not written by him, while the authenticity of certain other small works is doubtful, for example, the *De natura verbi intellectus*. The chronology which has been given above is not universally agreed upon, Mgr. Martin Grabmann and Père Mandonnet, for instance, ascribing certain works to different years. On this subject the relevant works mentioned in the Bibliography can be consulted.

3. To attempt to give a satisfactory outline of the 'philosophical system' of the greatest of the Schoolmen is to attempt a task of considerable magnitude. It does not indeed appear to me an acute question whether one should attempt a systematic or a genetic exposition, since the literary period of St. Thomas's life comprises but twenty years and though there were modifications and some development of opinion in that period, there was no such considerable development as in the case of Plato and still less was there any such succession of phases or periods as in the case of Schelling.[1] To treat the thought of Plato genetically might well be considered desirable (though actually, for purposes of convenience and clarity, I adopted a predominantly systematic form of exposition in my first volume) and to treat the thought of Schelling genetically is essential; but there is no real reason against

[1] Recent research, however, tends to show that there was more development in St. Thomas's thought than is sometimes supposed.

presenting the system of St. Thomas systematically: on the contrary, there is every reason why one should present it systematically.

The difficulty lies rather in answering the question, what precise form the systematic exposition should take and what emphasis and interpretation one should give to the component parts of its content. St. Thomas was a theologian and although he distinguished the sciences of revealed theology and philosophy, he did not himself elaborate a systematic exposition of philosophy by itself (there is theology even in the *Summa contra Gentiles*), so that the method of exposition is not already decided upon by the Saint himself.

Against this it may be objected that St. Thomas certainly did fix the starting-point for an exposition of his philosophy, and M. Gilson, in his outstanding work on St. Thomas,[1] argues that the right way of exposing the Thomistic philosophy is to expose it according to the order of the Thomistic theology. St. Thomas was a theologian and his philosophy must be regarded in the light of its relation to his theology. Not only is it true to say that the loss of a theological work like the *Summa Theologica* would be a major disaster in regard to our knowledge of St. Thomas's philosophy, whereas the loss of the Commentaries on Aristotle, though deplorable, would be of less importance; but also St. Thomas's conception of the content of philosophy or of the object which the philosopher (i.e. theologian-philosopher) considers, was that of *le révélable*, that which could have been revealed but has not been revealed and that which has been revealed but need not have been revealed, in the sense that it can be ascertained by the human reason, for example, the fact that God is wise. As M. Gilson rightly remarks, the problem for St. Thomas was not how to introduce philosophy into theology without corrupting the essence and nature of *philosophy*, but how to introduce philosophy without corrupting the essence and nature of *theology*. Theology treats of the revealed, and revelation must remain intact; but some truths are taught in theology which can be ascertained without revelation (God's existence, for example), while there are other truths which have not been revealed but which might have been revealed and which are of importance for a total view of God's creation. St. Thomas's philosophy should thus be regarded in the light of its relation to theology, and it is a mistake to collect

[1] *Le Thomisme*, 5th edition, Paris, 1944.

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the philosophical items from St. Thomas's works, including his theological works, and construct a system out of them according to one's own idea of what a philosophical system should be, even though St. Thomas would very likely have refused to recognise such a system as corresponding with his actual intentions. To reconstruct the Thomistic system in such a way is legitimate enough for a philosopher, but it is the part of the historian to stick to St. Thomas's own method.

M. Gilson argues his point with his customary lucidity and cogency, and it seems to me that his point must, in general, be admitted. To begin an historical exposition of St. Thomas's philosophy by a theory of knowledge, for example, especially if the theory of knowledge were separated from psychology or the doctrine of the soul, would scarcely represent St. Thomas's own procedure, though it would be legitimate in an exposition of 'Thomism' which did not pretend to be primarily historical. On the other hand, St. Thomas certainly wrote some philosophical works before he composed the *Summa Theologica*, and the proofs of the existence of God in the latter work obviously presuppose a good many philosophical ideas. Moreover, as those philosophical ideas are not mere ideas, but are, on the principles of St. Thomas's own philosophy, abstracted from experience of the concrete, there seems to me ample justification for starting with the concrete sensible world of experience and considering some of St. Thomas's theories about it before going on to consider his natural theology. And this is the procedure which I have actually adopted.

Another point. St. Thomas was an extremely clear writer; but none the less there have been and are divergences of interpretation in regard to certain of his doctrines. To discuss fully the *pros* and *cons* of different interpretations is, however, not possible in a general history of philosophy: one can do little more than give the interpretation which commends itself in one's own eyes. At the same time, as far as the present writer is concerned, he is not prepared to state that on points where a difference of interpretation has arisen, he can give what is the indubitably correct interpretation. After all, concerning which great philosopher's system is there complete and universal agreement of interpretation? Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, Leibniz, Kant, Hegel? In the case of some philosophers, especially in the case of those who have expressed their thought clearly and carefully, like St. Thomas, there is a pretty generally accepted interpretation as to the main

body of the system; but it is doubtful if the consent ever is or ever will be absolute and universal. A philosopher may write clearly and yet not express his final thought on all problems which arise in connection with his system, especially as some of those problems may not have occurred to him: it would be absurd to expect of any philosopher that he should have answered all questions, settled all problems, even that he should have rounded off and sealed his system in such a way that there could be no possible ground for divergence of interpretation. The present writer has the greatest respect and reverence for the genius of St. Thomas Aquinas, but he does not see that anything is to be gained by confusing the finite mind of the Saint with Absolute Mind or by claiming for his system what its author himself would certainly never have dreamed of claiming.

4. The philosophy of St. Thomas is essentially realist and concrete. St. Thomas certainly adopts the Aristotelian statement that first philosophy or metaphysic studies being as being; but it is perfectly clear that the task he sets himself is the explanation of existent being, so far as this is attainable by the human mind. In other words, he does not presuppose a notion from which reality is to be deduced; but he starts from the existent world and inquires what its being is, how it exists, what is the condition of its existence. Moreover, his thought concentrates on the supreme Existence, on the Being which does not merely possess existence, but is Its own existence, which is the very plenitude of existence, *ipsum esse subsistens*: his thought remains ever in contact with the concrete, the existent, both with that which has existence as something derived, something received, and with that which does not receive existence but is existence. In this sense it is true to say that Thomism is an 'existential philosophy', though it is very misleading, in my opinion, to call St. Thomas an 'existentialist', since the *Existenz* of the existentialists is not the same thing as St. Thomas's *esse*; nor is St. Thomas's method of approach to the problem of existence the same as that of the philosophers who are now called existentialists.

It has been maintained that St. Thomas, by bringing *esse* to the forefront of the philosophic stage, advanced beyond the philosophies of essence, particularly beyond Plato and the philosophies of Platonic inspiration. There is certainly truth in this contention: although Plato did not disregard the question of existence, the salient characteristic of his philosophy is the explanation of the

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world in terms of essence rather than of existence, while even for Aristotle, God, although pure Act, is primarily Thought, or Idea, the Platonic Good rendered 'personal'. Moreover, although Aristotle endeavoured to explain form and order in the world and the intelligible process of development, he did not explain the existence of the world; apparently he thought that no explanation was needed. In neo-Platonism again, though the derivation of the world is accounted for, the general scheme of emanation is primarily that of an emanation of essences, though existence is certainly not left out of account: God is primarily the One or the Good, not *ipsum esse subsistens*, not the *I am who am*. But one should remember that creation out of nothing was not an idea at which any Greek philosopher arrived without dependence on Judaism or Christianity and that without this idea the derivation of the world tends to be explained as a necessary derivation of essences. Those Christian philosophers who depended on and utilised neo-Platonic terminology spoke of the world as flowing from or emanating from God, and even St. Thomas used such phrases on occasion; but an orthodox Christian philosopher, whatever his terminology, regards the world as created freely by God, as receiving *esse* from *ipsum esse subsistens*. When St. Thomas insisted on the fact that God is subsistent existence, that His essence is not primarily goodness or thought but existence, he was but rendering explicit the implications of the Jewish and Christian view of the world's relation to God. I do not mean to imply that the idea of creation cannot be attained by reason; but the fact remains that it was not attained by the Greek philosophers and could hardly be attained by them, given their idea of God.

Of St. Thomas's general relation to Aristotle I shall speak later; but it may be as well to point out now one great effect which Aristotelianism had on St. Thomas's philosophical outlook and procedure. One might expect that St. Thomas, being a Christian, a theologian, a friar, would emphasise the soul's relation to God and would begin with what some modern philosophers call 'subjectivity', that he would place the interior life in the foreground even of his philosophy, as St. Bonaventure did. In point of fact, however, one of the chief characteristics of St. Thomas's philosophy is its 'objectivity' rather than its 'subjectivity'. The immediate object of the human intellect is the essence of the material thing, and St. Thomas builds up his philosophy by reflection on sense-experience. In the proofs which he gives of God's existence

the process of argument is always from the sensible world to God. No doubt certain of the proofs could be applied to the soul itself as a starting-point and be developed in a different way; but in actual fact this was not the way of St. Thomas, and the proof which he calls the *via manifestior* is the one which is most dependent on Aristotle's own arguments. This Aristotelian 'objectivity' of St. Thomas may appear disconcerting to those for whom 'truth is subjectivity'; but at the same time it is a great source of strength, since it means that his arguments can be considered in themselves, apart from St. Thomas's own life, on their own merits or demerits, and that observations about 'wishful thinking' are largely irrelevant, the relevant question being the objective cogency of the arguments themselves. Another result is that St. Thomas's philosophy appears 'modern' in a sense in which the philosophy of St. Bonaventure can hardly do. The latter tends to appear as essentially bound up with the general mediaeval outlook and with the Christian spiritual life and tradition, so that it seems to be on a different plane from the 'profane' philosophies of modern times, whereas the Thomistic philosophy can be divorced from Christian spirituality and, to a large extent, from the mediaeval outlook and background, and can enter into direct competition with more recent systems. A Thomistic revival has taken place, as everybody knows; but it is a little difficult to imagine a Bonaventurian revival, unless one were at the same time to change the conception of philosophy, and in this case the modern philosopher and the Bonaventurian would scarcely speak the same language.

Nevertheless, St. Thomas was a Christian philosopher. As already mentioned, St. Thomas follows Aristotle in speaking of metaphysics as the science of being as being; but the fact that his thought centres round the concrete and the fact that he was a Christian theologian led him to emphasise also the view that 'first philosophy is wholly directed to the knowledge of God as the last end' and that 'the knowledge of God is the ultimate end of every human cognition and operation'.[1] But actually man was created for a profounder and more intimate knowledge of God than he can attain by the exercise of his natural reason in this life, and so revelation was morally necessary in order that his mind might be raised to something higher than his reason can attain to in this life and that he should desire and zealously strive towards

[1] *Contra Gent.*, 3, 25.

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something 'which exceeds the whole state of this life.'[1] Metaphysics has its own object, therefore, and a certain autonomy of its own, but it points upwards and needs to be crowned by theology: otherwise man will not realise the end for which he was created and will not desire and strive towards that end. Moreover, as the primary object of metaphysics, God, exceeds the apprehension of the metaphysician and of the natural reason in general, and as the full knowledge or vision of God is not attainable in this life, the conceptual knowledge of God is crowned in this life by mysticism. Mystical theology does not enter the province of philosophy, and St. Thomas's philosophy can be considered without reference to it; but one should not forget that for St. Thomas philosophical knowledge is neither sufficient nor final.

[1] *Contra Gent.*, 1, 5.

CHAPTER XXXIV

ST. THOMAS AQUINAS—IV: PROOFS OF GOD'S EXISTENCE

Need of proof—St. Anselm's argument—Possibility of proof—The first three proofs—The fourth proof—The proof from finality—The 'third way' fundamental.

1. BEFORE actually developing his proofs of God's existence St. Thomas tried to show that the provision of such proofs is not a useless superfluity, since the idea of God's existence is not, properly speaking, an innate idea nor is 'God exists' a proposition the opposite of which is inconceivable and cannot be thought. To us indeed, living in a world where atheism is common, where powerful and influential philosophies eliminate or explain away the notion of God, where multitudes of men and women are educated without any belief in God, it seems only natural to think that God's existence requires proof. Kierkegaard and those philosophers and theologians who follow him may have rejected natural theology in the ordinary sense; but normally speaking we should not dream of asserting that God's existence is what St. Thomas calls a *per se notum*. St. Thomas, however, did not live in a world where theoretic atheism was common, and he felt himself compelled to deal not only with statements of certain early Christian writers which seemed to imply that knowledge of God is innate in man, but also with the famous argument of St. Anselm which purports to show that the non-existence of God is inconceivable. Thus in the *Summa Theologica*[1] he devotes an article to answering the question *utrum Deum esse sit per se notum*, and two chapters in the *Summa contra Gentiles*[2] to the consideration *de opinione dicentium quod Deum esse demonstrari non potest, quum sit per se notum*.

St. John Damascene[3] asserts that the knowledge of God's existence is naturally innate in man; but St. Thomas explains that this natural knowledge of God is confused and vague and needs elucidation to be made explicit. Man has a natural desire of happiness (*beatitudo*), and a natural desire supposes a natural knowledge; but although true happiness is to be found only in God, it does not follow that every man has a natural knowledge

[1] Ia, 2, 1. [2] 1, 10–11. [3] *De fide orthodoxa*, 1, 3.

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of God as such: he has a vague idea of happiness since he desires it, but he may think that happiness consists in sensual pleasure or in the possession of wealth, and further reflection is required before he can realise that happiness is to be found only in God. In other words, even if the natural desire for happiness may form the basis for a proof of God's existence, a proof is none the less required. Again, in a sense it is *per se notum* that there is truth, since a man who asserts that there is no truth inevitably asserts that it is true that there is no truth, but it does not follow that the man knows that there is a primal or first Truth, a Source of truth, God: further reflection is necessary if he is to realise this. Once again, although it is true that without God we can know nothing, it does not follow that in knowing anything we have an actual knowledge of God, since God's influence, which enables us to know anything, is not the object of direct intuition but is known only by reflection.[1]

In general, says St. Thomas, we must make a distinction between what is *per se notum secundum se* and what is *per se notum quoad nos*. A proposition is said to be *per se nota secundum se* when the predicate is included in the subject, as in the proposition that man is an animal, since man is precisely a rational animal. The proposition that God exists is thus a proposition *per se nota secundum se*, since God's essence is His existence and one cannot know God's nature, what God is, without knowing God's existence, that He is; but a man has no *a priori* knowledge of God's nature and only arrives at knowledge of the fact that God's essence is His existence after he has come to know God's existence, so that even though the proposition that God exists is *per se nota secundum se*, it is not *per se nota quoad nos*.

2. In regard to the 'ontological' or *a priori* proof of God's existence given by St. Anselm, St. Thomas answers first of all that not everyone understands by God 'that than which no greater can be thought'. Possibly this observation, though doubtless true, is not altogether relevant, except in so far as St. Anselm considered that everyone understands by 'God' that Being whose existence

[1] It may appear that St. Thomas's attitude in regard to 'innate' knowledge of God does not differ substantially from that of St. Bonaventure. In a sense this is true, since neither of them admitted an explicit innate idea of God; but St. Bonaventure thought that there is a kind of initial implicit awareness of God, or at least that the idea of God can be rendered explicit by interior reflection alone, whereas the proofs actually given by St. Thomas all proceed by way of the external world. Even if we press the 'Aristotelian' aspect of Bonaventure's epistemology, it remains true that there is a difference of emphasis and approach in the natural theology of the two philosophers.

he intended to prove, namely the supremely perfect Being. It must not be forgotten that Anselm reckoned his argument to be an argument or proof, not the statement of an immediate intuition of God. He then argues, both in the *Summa contra Gentiles* and in the *Summa Theologica*, that the argument of St. Anselm involves an illicit process or transition from the ideal to the real order. Granted that God is conceived as the Being than which no greater can be thought, it does not follow necessarily that such a Being exists, apart from its being conceived, that is, outside the mind. This, however, is not an adequate argument, when taken by itself at least, to disprove the Anselmian reasoning, since it neglects the peculiar character of God, of the Being than which no greater can be thought. Such a Being is its own existence and if it is possible for such a Being to exist, it must exist. The Being than which no greater can be thought is the Being which exists necessarily, it is the necessary Being, and it would be absurd to speak of a merely possible necessary Being. But St. Thomas adds, as we have seen, that the intellect has no *a priori* knowledge of God's nature. In other words, owing to the weakness of the human intellect we cannot discern *a priori* the positive possibility of the supremely perfect Being, the Being the essence of which is existence, and we come to a knowledge of the fact that such a Being exists not through an analysis or consideration of the idea of such a Being, but through arguments from its effects, *a posteriori*.

3. If God's existence cannot be proved *a priori*, through the idea of God, through His essence, it remains that it must be proved *a posteriori*, through an examination of God's effects. It may be objected that this is impossible since the effects of God are finite while God is infinite, so that there is no proportion between the effects and the Cause and the conclusion of the reasoning process will contain infinitely more than the premisses. The reasoning starts with sensible objects and should, therefore, end with a sensible object, whereas in the proofs of God's existence it proceeds to an Object infinitely transcending all sensible objects.

St. Thomas does not deal with this objection at any length, and it would be an absurd anachronism to expect him to discuss and answer the Kantian Critique of metaphysics in advance; but he points out that though from a consideration of effects which are disproportionate to the cause we cannot obtain a perfect knowledge of the cause, we can come to know that the cause exists. We can argue from an effect to the existence of a cause, and if the

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effect is of such a kind that it can proceed only from a certain kind of cause, we can legitimately argue to the existence of a cause of that kind. (The use of the word 'effect' must not be taken as begging the question, as a *petitio principii*: St. Thomas argues from certain facts concerning the world and argues that these facts require a sufficient ontological explanation. It is true, of course, that he presupposes that the principle of causality is not purely subjective or applicable only within the sphere of 'phenomena' in the Kantian sense; but he is perfectly well aware that it has to be shown that sensible objects are effects, in the sense that they do not contain in themselves their own sufficient ontological explanation.)

A modern Thomist, wishing to expound and defend the natural theology of the Saint in the light of post-mediaeval philosophic thought, would rightly be expected to say something in justification of the speculative reason, of metaphysics. Even if he considered that the onus of proof falls primarily on the opponent of metaphysics, he could not neglect the fact that the legitimacy and even the significance of metaphysical arguments and conclusions have been challenged, and he would be bound to meet this challenge. I cannot see, however, how an historian of mediaeval philosophy in general can justly be expected to treat St. Thomas as though he were a contemporary and fully aware not only of the Kantian criticism of the speculative reason, but also of the attitude towards metaphysics adopted by the logical positivists. Nevertheless, it is true that the Thomist theory of knowledge itself provides, apparently at least, a strong objection against natural theology. According to St. Thomas the proper object of the human intellect is the *quidditas* or essence of the material object: the intellect starts from the sensible objects, knows in dependence on the phantasm and is proportioned, in virtue of its embodied state, to sensible objects. St. Thomas did not admit innate ideas nor did he have recourse to any intuitive knowledge of God, and if one applies strictly the Aristotelian principle that there is nothing in the intellect which was not before in the senses (*Nihil in intellectu quod non prius fuerit in sensu*), it might well appear that the human intellect is confined to knowledge of corporeal objects and cannot, owing to its nature or at least its present state, transcend them. As this objection arises out of the doctrine of Thomas himself, it is relevant to inquire if the Saint attempted to meet it and, if so, how he met it. With the Thomist theory of

human knowledge I shall deal later;[1] but I shall give immediately a brief statement of what appears to be St. Thomas's position on this point without development or references.

Objects, whether spiritual or corporeal, are knowable only in so far as they partake of being, are in act, and the intellect as such is the faculty of apprehending being. Considered simply in itself, therefore, the intellect has as its object all being; the primary object of intellect is being. The fact, however, that a particular kind of intellect, the human intellect, is embodied and is dependent on sense for its operation, means that it must start from the things of sense and that, naturally speaking, it can come to know an object which transcends the things of sense (consideration of self-knowledge is here omitted) only in so far as sensible objects bear a relation to that object and manifest it. Owing to the fact that the human intellect is embodied its natural and proper object, proportionate to its present state, is the corporeal object; but this does not destroy the primary orientation of the intellect to being in general, and if corporeal objects bear a discernible relation to an object which transcends them, the intellect can know that such an object exists. Moreover, in so far as material objects reveal the character of the Transcendent, the intellect can attain some knowledge of its nature; but such a knowledge cannot be adequate or perfect, since sense-objects cannot reveal adequately or perfectly the nature of the Transcendent. Of our natural knowledge of God's nature I shall speak later:[2] let it suffice to point out here that when St. Thomas says that the corporeal object is the natural object of the human intellect, he means that the human intellect in its present state is orientated towards the essence of the corporeal object, but that just as the embodied condition of the human intellect does not destroy its primary character as intellect, so its orientation, in virtue of its embodied state, towards the corporeal object does not destroy its primary orientation towards being in general. It can therefore attain to some natural knowledge of God, in so far as corporeal objects are related to Him and reveal Him; but this knowledge is necessarily imperfect and inadequate and cannot be intuitive in character.

4. The first of the five proofs of God's existence given by St. Thomas is that from motion, which is found in Aristotle[3] and was utilised by Maimonides and St. Albert. We know through sense-perception that some things in the world are moved, that motion

[1] See Ch. XXXVIII. [2] See Ch. XXXV. [3] *Metaph.*, Bk. 12; *Physics*, Bk. 8.

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is a fact. Motion is here understood in the wide Aristotelian sense of reduction of potency to act, and St. Thomas, following Aristotle, argues that a thing cannot be reduced from potency to act except by something which is already in act. In this sense 'every thing which is moved is moved by another'. If that other is itself moved, it must be moved by yet another agent. As an infinite series is impossible, we come in the end to an unmoved mover, a first mover, 'and all understand that this is God'.[1] This argument St. Thomas calls the *manifestior via*.[2] In the *Summa contra Gentiles*[3] he develops it at considerable length.

The second proof, which is suggested by the second book of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*[4] and which was used by Avicenna, Alan of Lille and St. Albert, also starts from the sensible world, but this time from the order or series of efficient causes. Nothing can be the cause of itself, for in order to be this, it would have to exist before itself. On the other hand, it is impossible to proceed to infinity in the series of efficient causes: therefore there must be a first efficient cause, 'which all men call God'.

The third proof, which Maimonides took over from Avicenna and developed, starts from the fact that some beings come into existence and perish, which shows that they can not be and can be, that they are contingent and not necessary, since if they were necessary they would always have existed and would neither come into being nor pass away. St. Thomas then argues that there must exist a necessary being, which is the reason why contingent beings come into existence. If there were no necessary being, nothing at all would exist.

There are several remarks which must be made, though very briefly, concerning these three proofs. First of all, when St. Thomas says that an infinite series is impossible (and this principle is utilised in all three proofs), he is not thinking of a series stretching back in time, of a 'horizontal' series, so to speak. He is not saying, for example, that because the child owes its life to its parents and its parents owe their lives to their parents and so on, there must have been an original pair, who had no parents but were directly created by God. St. Thomas did not believe that it can be proved philosophically that the world was not created from eternity: he admits the abstract possibility of the world's creation from eternity and this cannot be admitted without the possibility of a beginningless series being admitted at the same time. What he

[1] *S.T.*, Ia, 2, 3, *in corpore*. [2] *Ibid.* [3] 1, 13. [4] C. 2.

denies is the possibility of an infinite series in the order of actually depending causes, of an infinite 'vertical' series. Suppose that the world had actually been created from eternity. There would be an infinite horizontal or historic series, but the whole series would consist of contingent beings, for the fact of its being without beginning does not make it necessary. The whole series, therefore, must depend on something outside the series. But if you ascend upwards, without ever coming to a stop, you have no explanation of the existence of the series: one must conclude with the existence of a being which is not itself dependent.

Secondly, consideration of the foregoing remarks will show that the so-called mathematical infinite series has nothing to do with the Thomist proofs. It is not the possibility of an infinite series as such which St. Thomas denies, but the possibility of an infinite series in the ontological order of dependence. In other words, he denies that the movement and contingency of the experienced world can be without any ultimate and adequate ontological explanation.

Thirdly, it might seem to be rather cavalier behaviour on St. Thomas's part to assume that the unmoved mover or the first cause or the necessary being is what we call God. Obviously if anything exists at all, there must be a necessary Being: thought must arrive at this conclusion, unless metaphysics is rejected altogether; but it is not so obvious that the necessary being must be the personal Being whom we call God. That a purely philosophical argument does not bring us to the full revealed notion of God needs no elaboration; but, even apart from the full notion of God as revealed by Christ and preached by the Church, does a purely philosophical argument give us a personal Being at all? Did St. Thomas's belief in God lead him perhaps to find more in the conclusion of the argument than was actually there? Because he was looking for arguments to prove the existence of the God in whom he believed, was he not perhaps over-hasty in identifying the first mover, the first cause and the necessary being with the God of Christianity and religious experience, the personal Being to whom man can pray? I think that we must admit that the actual phrases which St. Thomas appends to the proofs given in the *Summa Theologica* (*et hoc omnes intelligunt Deum, causam efficientem primam quam omnes Deum nominant, quod omnes dicunt Deum*) constitute, if considered in isolation, an over-hasty conclusion; but, apart from the fact that the *Summa Theologica* is a

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summary (and mainly) theological text-book, these phrases should not be taken in isolation. For example, the actual summary proof of the existence of a necessary being contains no explicit argument to show whether that being is material or immaterial, so that the observation at the end of the proof that this being is called by everyone God might seem to be without sufficient warrant; but in the first article of the next question St. Thomas asks if God is material, a body, and argues that He is not. The phrases in the question should, therefore, be understood as expressions of the fact that God is recognised by all who believe in Him to be the first Cause and necessary Being, not as an unjustifiable suppression of further argument. In any case the proofs are given by St. Thomas simply in outline: it is not as though he had in mind the composition of a treatise against professed atheists. If he had to deal with Marxists, he would doubtless treat the proofs in a different, or at least in a more elaborate and developed manner: as it is, his main interest is to give a proof of the *praeambula fidei*. Even in the *Summa contra Gentiles* the Saint was not dealing primarily with atheists, but rather with the Mohammedans, who had a firm belief in God.

5. The fourth proof is suggested by some observations in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*[1] and is found substantially in St. Augustine and St. Anselm. It starts from the degrees of perfection, of goodness, truth, etc., in the things of this world, which permit of one making such comparative judgements as 'this is more beautiful than that', 'this is better than that'. Assuming that such judgements have an objective foundation, St. Thomas argues that the degrees of perfection necessarily imply the existence of a best, a most true, etc., which will be also the supreme being (*maxime ens*).

So far the argument leads only to a relatively best. If one can establish that there actually are degrees of truth, goodness and being, a hierarchy of being, then there must be one being or several beings which are comparatively or relatively supreme. But this is not enough to prove the existence of God, and St. Thomas proceeds to argue that what is supreme in goodness, for example, must be the cause of goodness in all things. Further, inasmuch as goodness, truth and being are convertible, there must be a supreme Being which is the cause of being, goodness, truth, and so of all perfection in every other being; *et hoc dicimus Deum*.

[1] 2, 1; 4, 4.

As the term of the argument is a Being which transcends all sensible objects, the perfections in question can obviously be only those perfections which are capable of subsisting by themselves, pure perfections, which do not involve any necessary relation to extension or quantity. The argument is Platonic in origin and presupposes the idea of participation. Contingent beings do not possess their being of themselves, nor their goodness or ontological truth; they receive their perfections, share them. The ultimate cause of perfection must itself be perfect: it cannot receive its perfection from another, but must be its own perfection: it is self-existing being and perfection. The argument consists, then, in the application of principles already used in the foregoing proofs to pure perfections: it is not really a departure from the general spirit of the other proofs, in spite of its Platonic descent. One of the main difficulties about it, however, is, as already indicated, to show that there actually are objective degrees of being and perfection before one has shown that there actually exists a Being which is absolute and self-existing Perfection.

6. The fifth way is the teleological proof, for which Kant had a considerable respect on account of its antiquity, clarity and persuasiveness, though, in accordance with the principles of the *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, he refused to recognise its demonstrative character.

St. Thomas argues that we behold inorganic objects operating for an end, and as this happens always or very frequently, it cannot proceed from chance, but must be the result of intention. But inorganic objects are without knowledge: they cannot, then, tend towards an end unless they are directed by someone who is intelligent and possessed of knowledge, as 'the arrow is directed by the archer'. Therefore there exists an intelligent Being, by whom all natural things are directed to an end; *et hoc dicimus Deum*. In the *Summa contra Gentiles* the Saint states the argument in a slightly different manner, arguing that when many things with different and even contrary qualities co-operate towards the realisation of one order, this must proceed from an intelligent Cause or Providence; *et hoc dicimus Deum*. If the proof as given in the *Summa Theologica* emphasises the internal finality of the inorganic object, that given in the *Summa contra Gentiles* emphasises rather the co-operation of many objects in the realisation of the one world order or harmony. By itself the proof leads to a Designer or Governor or Architect of the universe, as Kant

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observed; further reasoning is required in order to show that this Architect is not only a 'Demiurge', but also Creator.

7. The proofs have been stated in more or less the same bold and succinct way in which St. Thomas states them. With the exception of the first proof, which is elaborated at some length in the *Summa contra Gentiles*, the proofs are given only in very bare outline, both in the *Summa Theologica* and in the *Summa contra Gentiles*. No mention has been made, however, of Aquinas's (to our view) somewhat unfortunate physical illustrations, as when he says that fire is the cause of all hot things, since these illustrations are really irrelevant to the validity or invalidity of the proofs as such. The modern disciple of St. Thomas naturally has not only to develop the proofs in far greater detail and to consider difficulties and objections which could hardly have occurred to St. Thomas, but also to justify the very principles on which the general line of proof rests. Thus, in regard to the fifth proof given by St. Thomas, the modern Thomist must take some account of recent theories which profess to render intelligible the genesis of the order and finality in the universe without recourse to the hypothesis of any spiritual agent distinct from the universe, while in regard to all the proofs he has not only, in face of the Kantian Critique, to justify the line of argument on which they rest, but he has to show, as against the logical positivists, that the word 'God' has some significance. It is not, however, the task of the historian to develop the proofs as they would have to be developed to-day, nor is it his task to justify those proofs. The way in which St. Thomas states the proofs may perhaps cause some dissatisfaction in the reader; but it must be remembered that the Saint was primarily a theologian and that, as already mentioned, he was concerned not so much to give an exhaustive treatment of the proofs as to prove in a summary fashion the *praeambula fidei*. He, therefore, makes use of traditional proofs, which either had or seemed to have some support in Aristotle and which had been employed by some of his predecessors.

St. Thomas gives five proofs, and among these five proofs he gives a certain preference to the first, to the extent at least of calling it the *via manifestior*. However, whatever we may think of this assertion, the fundamental proof is really the third proof or 'way', that from contingency. In the first proof the argument from contingency is applied to the special fact of motion or change, in the second proof to the order of causality or causal

production, in the fourth proof to degrees of perfection and in the fifth proof to finality, to the co-operation of inorganic objects in the attainment of cosmic order. The argument from contingency itself is based on the fact that everything must have its sufficient reason, the reason why it exists. Change or motion must have its sufficient reason in an unmoved mover, the series of secondary causes and effects in an uncaused cause, limited perfection in absolute perfection, and finality and order in nature in an Intelligence or Designer. The 'interiority' of the proofs of God's existence as given by St. Augustine or St. Bonaventure is absent from the five ways of St. Thomas; but one could, of course, apply the general principles to the self, if one so wished. As they stand, the five proofs of St. Thomas may be said to be an explicitation of the words of the *Book of Wisdom*[1] and of St. Paul in *Romans*[2] that God can be known from His works, as transcending His works.

[1] Ch. 13. [2] Ch. 1.

CHAPTER XXXV

ST. THOMAS AQUINAS—V: GOD'S NATURE

The negative way—The affirmative way—Analogy—Types of analogy—A difficulty—The divine ideas—No real distinction between the divine attributes—God as existence itself.

1. ONCE it has been established that the necessary Being exists, it would seem only natural to proceed to the investigation of God's nature. It is very unsatisfactory simply to know that a necessary Being exists, unless at the same time we can know what sort of a Being the necessary Being is. But a difficulty at once arises. We have in this life no intuition of the divine essence; we are dependent for our knowledge on sense-perception, and the ideas which we form are derived from our experience of creatures. Language too is formed to express these ideas and so refers primarily to our experience and would seem to have objective reference only within the sphere of our experience. How, then, can we come to know a Being which transcends sense-experience? How can we form ideas which express in any way the nature of a Being which transcends the range of our experience, the world of creatures? How can the words of any human language be at all applicable to the Divine Being?

St. Thomas was well aware of this difficulty, and indeed the whole tradition of Christian philosophy, which had undergone the influence of the writings of the Pseudo-Dionysius, himself dependent on neo-Platonism, would have helped, if help had been needed, to prevent him indulging in any over-confidence in the power of the human reason to penetrate the divine essence. Rationalism of the Hegelian type was quite foreign to his mind, and we find him saying that we cannot come to know of God *quid sit*, what He is (His essence), but only *an sit* or *quod sit*, that He is (His existence). This statement, if taken alone, would seem to involve complete agnosticism as regards the divine nature, but this is not St. Thomas's meaning, and the statement must be interpreted according to his general doctrine and his explanation of it. Thus in the *Summa contra Gentiles*[1] he says that 'the divine substance exceeds by its immensity every form which our intellect

[1] I, 14.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Continuity and novelty: the early phase of modern philosophy in its relation to mediaeval and Renaissance thought—Continental rationalism: its nature, its relation to scepticism and to neo-Stoicism, its development—British empiricism: its nature and its development—The seventeenth century—The eighteenth century—Political philosophy—The rise of the philosophy of history—Immanuel Kant.

1. MODERN philosophy is generally said to have begun with Descartes (1596–1650) or with Francis Bacon (1561–1626) in England and with Descartes in France. It is not perhaps immediately evident with what justification the term 'modern' is applied to the thought of the seventeenth century. But its use clearly implies that there is a break between mediaeval and post-mediaeval philosophy and that each possesses important characteristics which the other does not possess. And the seventeenth-century philosophers were certainly convinced that there was a sharp division between the old philosophical traditions and what they themselves were trying to do. Men like Francis Bacon and Descartes were thoroughly persuaded that they were making a new start.

If for a long time the views of Renaissance and post-Renaissance philosophers were accepted at their face value, this was partly due to a conviction that in the Middle Ages there was really nothing which merited the name of philosophy. The flame of independent and creative philosophical reflection which had burned so brightly in ancient Greece was practically extinguished until it was revived at the Renaissance and rose in splendour in the seventeenth century.

But when at last more attention came to be paid to mediaeval philosophy, it was seen that this view was exaggerated. And some writers emphasized the continuity between mediaeval and post-mediaeval thought. That phenomena of continuity can be observed in the political and social spheres is obvious enough. The patterns of society and of political organization in the seventeenth century clearly did not spring into being without any historical

antecedents. We can observe, for instance, the gradual formation of the various national States, the emergence of the great monarchies and the growth of the middle class. Even in the field of science the discontinuity is not quite so great as was once supposed. Recent research has shown the existence of a limited interest in empirical science within the mediaeval period itself. And attention was drawn in the third volume of this *History*[1] to the wider implications of the impetus theory of motion as presented by certain fourteenth-century physicists. Similarly, a certain continuity can be observed within the philosophical sphere. We can see philosophy in the Middle Ages gradually winning recognition as a separate branch of study. And we can see lines of thought emerging which anticipate later philosophical developments. For example, the characteristic philosophical movement of the fourteenth century, generally known as the nominalist movement,[2] anticipated later empiricism in several important respects. Again, the speculative philosophy of Nicholas of Cusa,[3] with its anticipations of some theses of Leibniz, forms a link between mediaeval, Renaissance and pre-Kantian modern thought. Again, scholars have shown that thinkers such as Francis Bacon, Descartes and Locke were subject to the influence of the past to a greater degree than they themselves realized.

This emphasis on continuity was doubtless needed as a corrective to a too facile acceptance of the claims to novelty advanced by Renaissance and seventeenth-century philosophers. It expresses an understanding of the fact that there was such a thing as mediaeval philosophy and a recognition of its position as an integral part of European philosophy in general. At the same time, if discontinuity can be over-emphasized, so can continuity. If we compare the patterns of social and political life in the thirteenth and seventeenth centuries, obvious differences in the structure of society at once strike the eye. Again, though the historical factors which contributed to the occurrence of the Reformation can be traced, the Reformation was none the less in some sense an explosion, shattering the religious unity of mediaeval Christendom. And even though the seeds of later science can be discovered in the intellectual soil of mediaeval Europe, the results of research have not been such as to necessitate any substantial change of view about the importance of Renaissance science. Similarly, when all that can legitimately be said to illustrate the continuity

[1] pp. 165–7. [2] Vol. III, chs. III–IX. [3] Vol. III, ch. XV.

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between mediaeval and post-mediaeval philosophy has been said, it remains true that there were considerable differences between them. For the matter of that, though Descartes was undoubtedly influenced by Scholastic ways of thought, he himself pointed out that the use of terms taken from Scholastic philosophy did not necessarily mean that the terms were being used in the same senses in which they had been used by the Scholastics. And though Locke was influenced in his theory of natural law by Hooker,[1] who had himself been influenced by mediaeval thought, the Lockean idea of natural law is not precisely the same as that of St. Thomas Aquinas.

We can, of course, become the slaves of words or labels. That is to say, because we divide history into periods, we may tend to lose sight of continuity and of gradual transitions, especially when we are looking at historical events from a great distance in time. But this does not mean that it is altogether improper to speak of historical periods or that no major changes take place.

And if the general cultural situation of the post-Renaissance world was in important respects different from that of the mediaeval world, it is only natural that the changes should have been reflected in philosophic thought. At the same time, just as changes in the social and political spheres, even when they seem to have been more or less abrupt, presupposed an already existing situation out of which they developed, so also new attitudes and aims and ways of thought in the field of philosophy presupposed an already existing situation with which they were in some degree linked. In other words, we are not faced with a simple choice between two sharply contrasted alternatives, the assertion of discontinuity and the assertion of continuity. Both elements have to be taken into account. There are change and novelty; but change is not creation out of nothing.

The situation, therefore, seems to be this. The old emphasis on discontinuity was largely due to failure to recognize that there was in the Middle Ages any philosophy worthy of the name. Subsequent recognition of the existence and importance of mediaeval philosophy produced an emphasis on continuity. But we now see that what is required is an attempt to illustrate both the elements of continuity and the peculiar characteristics of different periods. And what is true in regard to our consideration of different periods is true also, of course, in regard to different

[1] See vol. III, pp. 322–4.

individual thinkers. Historians are beset by the temptation to depict the thought of one period as simply a preparatory stage for the thought of the next period, and the system of one thinker as no more than a stepping-stone to the system of another thinker. The temptation is, indeed, inevitable; for the historian contemplates a temporal succession of events, not an eternal and immutable reality. Moreover, there is an obvious sense in which mediaeval thought prepared the way for post-mediaeval thought; and there is plenty of ground for looking on Berkeley's philosophy as a stepping-stone between the philosophies of Locke and Hume. But if one succumbs entirely to this temptation, one misses a great deal. Berkeley's philosophy is much more than a mere stage in the development of empiricism from Locke to Hume; and mediaeval thought has its own characteristics.

Among the easily discernible differences between mediaeval and post-mediaeval philosophy there is a striking difference in forms of literary expression. For one thing, whereas the mediaevals wrote in Latin, in the post-mediaeval period we find an increasing use of the vernacular. It would not, indeed, be true to say that no use was made of Latin in the pre-Kantian modern period. Both Francis Bacon and Descartes wrote in Latin as well as in the vernacular. So too did Hobbes. And Spinoza composed his works in Latin. But Locke wrote in English, and in the eighteenth century we find a common use of the vernacular. Hume wrote in English, Voltaire and Rousseau in French, Kant in German. For another thing, whereas the mediaevals were much given to the practice of writing commentaries on certain standard works, the post-mediaeval philosophers, whether they wrote in Latin or in the vernacular, composed original treatises in which the commentary-form was abandoned. I do not mean to imply that the mediaevals wrote only commentaries; for this would be quite untrue. At the same time commentaries on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard[1] and on the works of Aristotle and others were characteristic features of mediaeval philosophical composition, whereas when we think of the writings of seventeenth-century philosophers we think of free treatises, not of commentaries.

The growing use of the vernacular in philosophical writing accompanied, of course, its growing use in other literary fields. And we can associate this with general cultural, political and social changes and developments. But we can also see in it a symptom

[1] See vol. II, p. 168.

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of the emergence of philosophy from the confines of the Schools. The mediaeval philosophers were for the most part university professors, engaged in teaching. They wrote commentaries on the standard texts in use at the universities, and they wrote in the language of the learned, academic world. The modern philosophers in the pre-Kantian period, on the contrary, were in the majority of cases unconnected with the work of academic teaching. Descartes was never a university professor. Nor was Spinoza, though he received an invitation to Heidelberg. And Leibniz was very much a man of affairs who refused a professorship because he had quite another kind of life in view. In England Locke held minor posts in the service of the State; Berkeley was a bishop; and though Hume attempted to secure a university chair, he did not succeed in doing so. As for the French philosophers of the eighteenth century, such as Voltaire, Diderot and Rousseau, they were obviously men of letters with philosophical interests. Philosophy in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was a matter of common interest and concern among the educated and cultured classes; and it is only natural that the use of the vernacular should have replaced the use of Latin in writings designed for a wide public. As Hegel remarks, it is only when we come to Kant that we find philosophy becoming so technical and abstruse that it could no longer be considered to belong to the general education of a cultured man. And by that time the use of Latin had, of course, practically died out.

In other words, the original and creative philosophy of the early modern period developed outside the universities. It was the creation of fresh and original minds, not of traditionalists. And this is one reason, of course, why philosophical writing took the form of independent treatises, not of commentaries. For the writers were concerned with developing their own ideas, free from regard for the great names of the past and for the opinions of Greek and mediaeval thinkers.

To say, however, that in the pre-Kantian period of modern philosophy the vernacular came to be employed in place of Latin, that independent treatises were written rather than commentaries, and that the leading philosophers of the period were not university professors, does not do very much to elucidate the intrinsic differences between mediaeval and post-mediaeval philosophy. And an attempt must be made to indicate briefly some of these differences.

It is often said that modern philosophy is autonomous, the

product of reason alone, whereas mediaeval philosophy was subordinate to Christian theology, hampered by subservience to dogma. But if it is expressed in this bold way, without qualification, the judgment constitutes an over-simplification. On the one hand we find St. Thomas Aquinas in the thirteenth century asserting the independence of philosophy as a separate branch of study, while in the fourteenth century we find theology and philosophy tending to fall apart as a result of the nominalist criticism of traditional metaphysics. On the other hand we find Descartes in the seventeenth century trying to harmonize his philosophical ideas with the requirements of Catholic dogma,[1] while in the eighteenth century Berkeley explicitly says that his ultimate aim is to lead men to the saving truths of the Gospel. The facts of the case, therefore, do not warrant our stating dogmatically that all modern philosophy was free from any theological presuppositions and from the exercise of any controlling influence by the Christian faith. Such a statement would not be applicable to Descartes, Pascal, Malebranche, Locke or Berkeley, even if it fits Spinoza, Hobbes, Hume and, of course, the materialist thinkers of the eighteenth century in France. At the same time it is undoubtedly true that we can trace a progressive emancipation of philosophy from theology from the beginnings of philosophical reflection in the early Middle Ages up to the modern era. And there is an obvious difference between, say, Aquinas and Descartes, even though the latter was a believing Christian. For Aquinas was first and foremost a theologian, whereas Descartes was a philosopher and not a theologian. Indeed, practically all the leading mediaeval philosophers, including William of Ockham, were theologians, whereas the leading philosophers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were not. In the Middle Ages theology was esteemed as the supreme science; and we find theologians who were also philosophers. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries we find philosophers, some of whom were believing Christians while others were not. And though their religious beliefs doubtless exercised some influence on the philosophical systems of men such as Descartes and Locke, they were fundamentally in the same position as any philosopher today who happens to be a Christian but who is not, in the professional sense, a theologian. That is one reason why philosophers like Descartes and Locke appear to us 'modern' if we compare them with St. Thomas or St. Bonaventure.

[1] For example, his theory of substance with the dogma of transubstantiation.

One should, of course, distinguish between a recognition of the facts and an evaluation of the facts. Some would say that in proportion as philosophy was separated from its close connection with theology and was freed from any external control, it became what it ought to be, a purely autonomous branch of study. Others would say that the position accorded to philosophy in the thirteenth century was the right one. That is to say, the rights of reason were recognized; but so were the rights of revelation. And it was a benefit to philosophy if recognition of revealed truth warned it off erroneous conclusions. Here we have different evaluations of the facts. But however we evaluate the facts, it seems to me to be indisputably true that philosophy became progressively emancipated from theology, provided that the word 'emancipated' is understood in a neutral sense from the valuational point of view.

It is customary to associate the change in the position of philosophy in regard to theology with a shift of interest from theological themes to a study of man and of Nature without explicit reference to God. And there is, I think, truth in this interpretation, though there is also room for exaggeration.

The humanistic movement of the Renaissance is often mentioned in this connection. And, indeed, to say that the humanistic movement, with its extension of literary studies and its new educational ideals, was concerned primarily with man is to utter an obvious truth, in fact a tautology. But as was pointed out in the third volume of this *History*,[1] Italian humanism did not involve any very decisive break with the past. The humanists denounced barbarity in Latin style; but so had John of Salisbury in the twelfth and Petrarch in the fourteenth century. The humanists promoted a literary revival; but the Middle Ages had given to the world one of Europe's greatest literary achievements, the *Divina Commedia* of Dante. An enthusiasm for the Platonic or rather neo-Platonic tradition in philosophy accompanied Italian humanism; but neo-Platonism had also exercised an influence on mediaeval thought, even though the neo-Platonic themes in mediaeval philosophy were not based on a study of the variety of texts which were made available in the fifteenth century. Italian Platonism, in spite of its strong feeling for the harmonious development of the human personality and for the expression of the divine in Nature, can hardly be said to have constituted a direct antithesis to the

[1] Ch. XIII.

mediaeval outlook. Humanism doubtless developed, intensified, widened and placed in a much more prominent position one strand in mediaeval culture; and in this sense it involved a shift of emphasis. But it would not have been sufficient by itself to prepare the background for the early phase of modern philosophy.

A change from the theocentric character of the great mediaeval systems to the centring of interest on Nature as a unified, dynamic system can be observed much more clearly in the writings of philosophers such as Giordano Bruno[1] and Paracelsus[2] than in those of Platonists such as Marsilius Ficinus and John Pico della Mirandola.[3] But though the speculative philosophies of Nature of Bruno and kindred thinkers expressed and promoted the transition from mediaeval to modern thought, as far as the centre of interest is concerned, another factor was also required, namely, the scientific movement of the Renaissance.[4] It is not, indeed, always easy to draw a clear line of division between speculative philosophers of Nature and scientists when one is treating of the period in question. But nobody is likely to deny the propriety of placing Bruno in the first class and Kepler and Galileo in the second. And though the speculative philosophies of Nature formed part of the background of modern philosophy, the influence of the scientific movement of the Renaissance was of great importance in determining the direction of philosophical thought in the seventeenth century.

In the first place it was Renaissance science, followed later by the work of Newton, which effectively stimulated the mechanistic conception of the world. And this conception was obviously a factor which contributed powerfully to the centring of attention on Nature in the field of philosophy. For Galileo, God is creator and conserver of the world; the great scientist was far from being either an atheist or an agnostic. But Nature itself can be considered as a dynamic system of bodies in motion, the intelligible structure of which can be expressed mathematically. And even though we do not know the inner natures of the forces[5] which govern the system and which are revealed in motion susceptible of mathematical statement, we can study Nature without any immediate reference to God. We do not find here a break with

[1] Vol. III, ch. XVI. [2] *Ibid.*, ch. XVII.
[3] *Ibid.*, ch. XVIII. [4] *Ibid.*
[5] According to Galileo, there are in Nature 'primary causes', namely, forces such as gravity, which produce distinct and specific motions. The inner natures of the former are unknown, but the latter can be expressed mathematically.

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mediaeval thought in the sense that God's existence and activity are either denied or doubted. But we certainly find an important change of interest and emphasis. Whereas a thirteenth-century theologian-philosopher such as St. Bonaventure was interested principally in the material world considered as a shadow or remote revelation of its divine original, the Renaissance scientist, while not denying that Nature has a divine original, is interested primarily in the quantitatively determinable immanent structure of the world and of its dynamic process. In other words, we have a contrast between the outlook of a theologically-minded metaphysician who lays emphasis on final causality and the outlook of a scientist for whom efficient causality, revealed in mathematically-determinable motion, takes the place of final causality.

It may be said that if we compare men who were primarily theologians with men who were primarily scientists, it is so obvious that their interests will be different that it is quite unnecessary to draw attention to the difference. But the point is that the combined influence of the speculative philosophies of Nature and of Renaissance science made itself felt in the philosophy of the seventeenth century. In England, for example, Hobbes eliminated from philosophy all discourse about the immaterial or spiritual. The philosopher is concerned simply and solely with bodies, though Hobbes included under bodies in the general sense not only the human body but also the body politic or State. The continental rationalist metaphysicians from Descartes to Leibniz did not, indeed, eliminate from philosophy the study of spiritual reality. The assertion of the existence of spiritual substance and of God is integral to the Cartesian system, and in his theory of monads Leibniz, as will be seen later, practically spiritualized body. At the same time Descartes seemed to Pascal to employ God simply to get the world going, as it were, after which he had no further use for Him. Pascal's accusation may well be unjust; and in my opinion it is unjust. But it is none the less significant that Descartes' philosophy was able to give an impression which one can hardly imagine being given by the system of a thirteenth-century metaphysician.

It was not, however, simply a question of direction of interest. The development of physical science not unnaturally stimulated the ambition of using philosophy to discover new truths about the world. In England Bacon emphasized the empirical and inductive study of Nature, pursued with a view to increasing man's power

over and control of his material environment, a study which should be carried on without regard to authority or to the great names of the past. In France one of Descartes' main objections against Scholasticism was that it served, in his opinion, only to expound systematically truths already known and that it was powerless to discover new truths. In his *Novum Organum* Bacon called attention to the practical effects of certain inventions which, as he put it, had changed the face of things and the state of the world. He was conscious that new geographical discoveries, the opening up of fresh sources of wealth and, above all, the establishment of physics on an experimental basis heralded the opening of a new era. And though much of what he anticipated was not to be realized until long after his death, he was justified in noting the beginning of a process which has led to our technical civilization. Men such as Bacon and Descartes were doubtless unaware of the extent to which their minds were influenced by former ways of thought; but their consciousness of standing at the threshold of a new era was not unjustified. And philosophy was to be pressed into the service of the ideal of extending human knowledge with a view to progress in civilization. True, the Cartesian and Leibnizian ideas of the appropriate method to be employed in this process were not the same as that of Francis Bacon. But this does not alter the fact that both Descartes and Leibniz were profoundly impressed and influenced by the successful development of the new science and that they regarded philosophy as a means of increasing our knowledge of the world.

There is another important way in which the scientific development of the Renaissance influenced philosophy. At the time no very clear distinction was made between physical science and philosophy. The former was known as natural philosophy or experimental philosophy. Indeed, this nomenclature has survived in the older universities to the extent that we find at Oxford, for example, a chair of experimental philosophy, though the occupant is not concerned with philosophy as the term is now understood. None the less it is obvious that the real discoveries in astronomy and physics during the Renaissance and in the early modern period were made by men whom we would class as scientists and not as philosophers. In other words, on looking back we can see physics and astronomy attaining adult stature and pursuing their paths of progress more or less independently of philosophy, in spite of the fact that both Galileo and Newton philosophized (in

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our sense of the term). But in the period of which we are treating there was no really empirical study of psychology in the sense of a science distinct from other sciences and from philosophy. It was only natural, therefore, that the successful developments in astronomy, physics and chemistry should arouse in philosophers the idea of elaborating a science of man. True, the empirical study of the human body was already being developed. We have only to recall the discoveries in anatomy and physiology which were made by men like Vesalius, author of the *De fabrica humani corporis* (1543) and Harvey, who discovered the circulation of the blood about 1615. But for the study of psychology we have to turn to the philosophers.

Descartes, for instance, wrote a work on the passions of the soul, and he proposed a theory to explain the interaction between mind and body. Spinoza wrote on human cognition, on the passions and on the reconciliation of the apparent consciousness or awareness of freedom with the determinism demanded by his system. Among the British philosophers we find a marked interest in psychological questions. The leading empiricists, Locke, Berkeley and Hume, all deal with problems about knowledge; and they tend to treat these problems from a psychological rather than from a strictly epistemological point of view. That is to say, they tend to concentrate their attention on the question, how do our ideas arise? And this is obviously a psychological question. Again, in English empiricism we can see the growth of the associationist psychology. Further, in his introduction to the *Treatise of Human Nature* Hume speaks explicitly of the need for developing the science of man on an empirical basis. Natural philosophy, he says, has already been established on an experimental or empirical basis; but philosophers have only just begun to put the science of man on a like footing.

Now, a scientist such as Galileo, who was concerned with bodies in motion, could, of course, confine himself to the material world and to questions of physics and astronomy. But the view of the world as a mechanical system raised problems which the metaphysical philosopher could not evade. In particular since man is a being within the world, the question arises whether or not he falls wholly within the mechanical system. Obviously, there are two possible general lines of answer. On the one hand the philosopher may defend the view that man possesses a spiritual soul, endowed with the power of free choice, and that in virtue of this spiritual

and free soul he partly transcends the material world and the system of mechanical causality. On the other hand he may extend the scientific conception of the material universe to include man as a whole. Psychical processes will then be probably interpreted as epiphenomena of physical processes or, more crudely, as being themselves material, and human freedom will be denied.

Descartes was convinced of the truth of the first answer, though he spoke of mind rather than of soul. The material world can be described in terms of matter, identified with geometrical extension, and motion. And all bodies, including living bodies, are in some sense machines. But man as a whole cannot be simply reduced to a member of this mechanical system. For he possesses a spiritual mind which transcends the material world and the determining laws of efficient causality which govern this world. At the very threshold of the modern era, therefore, we find the so-called 'father of modern philosophy' asserting the existence of spiritual reality in general and of man's spiritual mind in particular. And this assertion was not merely the relic of an old tradition; it was an integral part of Descartes' system and represented part of his answer to the challenge of the new scientific outlook.

Descartes' interpretation of man gave rise, however, to a particular problem. For if man consists of two clearly distinguishable substances, his nature tends to fall apart and no longer to possess a unity. It then becomes very difficult to account for the evident facts of psycho-physical interaction. Descartes himself asserted that the mind can and does act on the body: but his theory of interaction was felt to be one of the least satisfactory features of his system. And Cartesians such as Geulincx, who are generally known as 'occasionalists', refused to admit that two heterogeneous types of substances can act on one another. When interaction apparently takes place, what really occurs is that on the occasion of a psychic event God causes the corresponding physical event, or conversely. Thus the occasionalists had recourse to the divine activity to explain the apparent facts of interaction. But it is not immediately evident how, if the mind cannot act on the body, God can do so. And in the system of Spinoza the problem of interaction was eliminated, because mind and body were regarded as two aspects of one reality. In the philosophy of Leibniz, however, the problem reappears in a somewhat different form. It is no longer the question how can there be interaction between two heterogeneous types of substances, but rather how there can be

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interaction between numerically distinct and independent monads, between, that is to say, the dominant monad which constitutes the human mind and the monads which constitute the body. And Leibniz's answer was similar to, though not precisely the same as, that of the occasionalists. God so created the monads that their activities are synchronized in a manner analogous to that in which the movements of the hands of two perfectly constructed clocks would correspond, though the one clock does not act on the other.

The occasionalists began, of course, with Descartes' idea of spiritual and material substances; and their peculiar theory presupposes this idea. But there were other philosophers who attempted to extend to man as a whole the new scientific conception of the world. In England Hobbes applied the fundamental ideas of Galileo's mechanics to all reality, that is, to all reality which can be significantly considered in philosophy. He equated substance with material substance, and he would not allow that the philosopher can envisage or treat of any other kind of reality. The philosopher, therefore, must consider man as purely material being, subject to the same laws as other bodies. Freedom is eliminated, and consciousness is interpreted as motion, reducible to changes in the nervous system.

On the Continent a number of eighteenth-century philosophers adopted a similarly crude materialism. For example, La Mettrie, author of *Man a Machine* (1748), represented man as a complicated material machine and the theory of a spiritual soul as a fable. In proposing this view he claimed Descartes as his direct ancestor. The latter had started to give a mechanistic interpretation of the world; but he had abandoned it at a certain point. He, La Mettrie, was concerned to complete the process by showing that man's psychical processes, no less than his physical processes, could be explained in terms of a mechanistic and materialist hypothesis.

The challenge of the new science, therefore, raised a problem in regard to man. True, the problem was in a sense an old problem; and in Greek philosophy we can find solutions which are analogous to the divergent solutions offered by Descartes and Hobbes in the seventeenth century. We have only to think of Plato on the one hand and of Democritus on the other. But though the problem was an old one, it was also a new one, in the sense that the development of the Galilean and Newtonian science placed it in a new

light and emphasized its importance. At the end of the period covered in Volumes IV–VI we find Immanuel Kant attempting to combine an acceptance of the validity of Newtonian science with a belief in man's moral freedom. It would, indeed, be very misleading to say that Kant restated the position of Descartes; but if we draw a general line of division between those who extended the mechanistic outlook to include man in his totality and those who did not, we must place Descartes and Kant on the same side of the line.

When we are considering the shift of interest from theological themes to a study of Nature and of man without explicit reference to God, the following point is relevant. When Hume in the eighteenth century spoke about the science of man, he included moral philosophy or ethics. And in British philosophy in general during the period between the Renaissance and the end of the eighteenth century we can observe that strong interest in ethics which has continued to be one of the leading characteristics of British thought. Further, it is generally true, though there are certainly exceptions, that the English moralists of the period endeavoured to develop an ethical theory without theological presuppositions. They do not start, as did St. Thomas Aquinas[1] in the thirteenth century, with the idea of the eternal law of God and then descend to the idea of the natural moral law, considered as an expression of the former. Instead they tend to treat ethics without reference to metaphysics. Thus British moral philosophy in the eighteenth century illustrates the tendency of post-mediaeval philosophical thought to pursue its course independently of theology.

Analogous remarks can be made about political philosophy. Hobbes in the seventeenth century certainly writes at some length about ecclesiastical matters; but this does not mean that his political theory is dependent on theological presuppositions. For Hume in the eighteenth century political philosophy is part of the science of man, and in his eyes it has no connection with theology or, indeed, with metaphysics in general. And the political theory of Rousseau in the same century was also what one may call a secularist theory. The outlook of men such as Hobbes, Hume and Rousseau was very different from that of St. Thomas Aquinas[2] and still more from that of St. Augustine.[3] We can,

[1] For St. Thomas's moral theory, see vol. II, ch. XXXIX.
[2] See vol. II, ch. XL. [3] *Ibid.*, ch. VIII.

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indeed, see their outlook prefigured in the writings of Marsilius of Padua[1] in the first half of the fourteenth century. But Marsilius was scarcely the typical political philosopher of the Middle Ages.

In this section I have emphasized the influence of physical science on the philosophy of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In the Middle Ages theology was regarded as the supreme science, but in the post-mediaeval period the natural sciences begin to occupy the centre of the stage. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, however, we are still in a period when the philosopher is confident that he, like the scientist, can add to our knowledge of the world. True, this statement stands in need of considerable qualification if we bear in mind the scepticism of David Hume. But, generally speaking, the mood is one of optimistic confidence in the power of the philosophical mind. And this confidence is stimulated and intensified by the successful development of physical science. The latter has not yet so completely dominated the scene as to produce in many minds the suspicion, or even the conviction, that philosophy can add nothing to our factual knowledge of reality. Or to put the matter in another way, if philosophy has ceased to be the handmaid of theology, it has not yet become the charwoman of science. It receives a stimulus from science, but it asserts its autonomy and independence. Whether or not the results encourage one to accept its claims, is another question. It is in any case not a question which can be profitably discussed in an introduction to the history of philosophy in the period of which we are treating.

2. It is customary to divide pre-Kantian modern philosophy into two main streams, the one comprising the rationalist systems of the Continent from Descartes to Leibniz and his disciple Christian Wolff, the other comprising British empiricism down to and including Hume. This division has been adopted here. And in this section I wish to make some introductory remarks about continental rationalism.

In the broadest sense of the term a rationalist philosopher would presumably be one who relied on the use of his reason and who did not have recourse to mystical intuitions or to feelings. But this broad sense of the term is quite insufficient for distinguishing the great continental systems of the seventeenth and

[1] See vol. III, ch. XI.

eighteenth centuries from British empiricism. Locke, Berkeley and Hume would all maintain that they relied on reasoning in their philosophical reflections. For the matter of that, the term, if understood in this broad sense, will not serve for distinguishing the metaphysics of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries from mediaeval metaphysics. Some critics may accuse St. Thomas Aquinas, for example, of wishful thinking, in the sense that in their opinion he found inadequate reasons for accepting conclusions which he already believed on non-rational grounds and which he wished to defend. But Aquinas himself was certainly convinced that his philosophy was a product of rational reflection. And if the accusation against him were valid, it would apply equally well to Descartes.

In common parlance a rationalist is now generally understood to be a thinker who denies the supernatural and the idea of the divine revelation of mysteries. But, quite apart from the fact that this use of the term presupposes that there is no rational evidence for the existence of the supernatural and no rational motives for believing that there is any divine revelation in the theological sense, it would certainly not provide us with a distinctive characteristic of continental pre-Kantian philosophy as contrasted with British empiricism. The term, as used in this sense, would fit, for example, a number of French philosophers of the eighteenth century. But it would not fit Descartes. For there is no adequate reason for denying or even doubting his sincerity either in elaborating proofs of the existence of God or in accepting the Catholic faith. If we wish to use the term 'rationalism' to distinguish the leading continental systems of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries from British empiricism, we have to assign some other meaning to it. And perhaps this can most easily be done by referring to the problem of the origin of knowledge.

Philosophers such as Descartes and Leibniz accepted the idea of innate or *a priori* truths. They did not think, of course, that a newly-born infant perceives certain truths from the moment when it comes into the world. Rather did they think that certain truths are virtually innate in the sense that experience provides no more than the occasion on which the mind by its own light perceives their truth. These truths are not inductive generalizations from experience, and their truth stands in need of no empirical confirmation. It may be that I perceive the truth of a self-evident principle only on the occasion of experience; but its truth does not

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depend on experience. It is seen to be true in itself, this truth being logically antecedent to experience even though, from the psychological point of view, we may come to an explicit perception of its truth only on the occasion of experience. According to Leibniz, such truths are prefigured, in some undetermined sense, in the mind's structure, even though they are not known explicitly from the first moment of consciousness. They are, therefore, virtually rather than actually innate.

But a belief in self-evident principles is not sufficient by itself to characterize the continental metaphysicians of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The mediaeval metaphysicians too had believed in self-evident principles, though Aquinas saw no adequate reason for calling them innate. The point which characterizes Descartes, Spinoza and Leibniz is rather their ideal of deducing from such principles a system of truths which would give information about reality, about the world. I say 'their ideal' because we cannot assume, of course, that their philosophies do in fact constitute pure deductions from self-evident principles. If they did, it would be extremely odd that their philosophies should be mutually incompatible. But their ideal was the ideal of a deductive system of truths, analogous to a mathematical system but at the same time capable of increasing our factual information. Spinoza's chief work is entitled *Ethica more geometrico demonstrata* (*Ethics demonstrated in a geometrical manner*), and it purports to expound the truth about reality and man in a quasi-mathematical manner, beginning with definitions and axioms and proceeding through the orderly proving of successive propositions to the building up of a system of conclusions, the truth of which is known with certainty. Leibniz conceived the notion of a universal symbolic language and of a universal logical method or calculus, by means of which we could not only systematize all existing knowledge but also deduce hitherto unknown truths. And if the fundamental principles are said to be virtually innate, the entire system of deducible truths can be considered as the self-unfolding of the reason itself.

It is obvious that the rationalist philosophers were influenced by the model of mathematical reasoning. That is to say, mathematics provides a model of clarity, certainty and orderly deduction. The personal element, subjective factors such as feeling, are eliminated, and a body of propositions, the truth of which is assured, is built up. Could not philosophy attain a like objectivity

and certainty, if an appropriate method, analogous to that of mathematics, were employed? The use of the right method could make metaphysical philosophy, and even ethics, a science in the fullest sense of the word instead of a field for verbal wrangling, unclarified ideas, faulty reasoning and mutually incompatible conclusions. The personal element could be eliminated, and philosophy would possess the characteristics of universal, necessary and impersonal truth which is possessed by pure mathematics. Such considerations, as will be seen later, weighed heavily with Descartes.

It is commonly maintained today that pure mathematics as such does not give us factual information about the world. To take a simple example, if we define a triangle in a certain way, it must possess certain properties, but we cannot deduce from this the conclusion that there exist triangles possessing these properties. All that we can deduce is that if a triangle exists which fulfils the definition, it possesses these properties. And an obvious criticism of the rationalists is that they did not understand the difference between mathematical and existential propositions. This criticism is not, indeed, altogether fair. For, as will be shown later, Descartes endeavoured to found his system on an existential proposition and not on what some writers call a 'tautology'. At the same time it can scarcely be denied that there was a tendency on the part of the rationalists to assimilate philosophy, including natural philosophy or physics, to pure mathematics and the causal relation to logical implication. But it is arguable that the background of Renaissance science encouraged them to think in this way. And I wish now to illustrate this point.

That Nature is, as it were, mathematical in structure was the tenet of Galileo. 'As a physicist he tried to express the foundations of physics and the observed regularities of Nature in terms of mathematical propositions, so far as this was possible. As a philosopher he drew from the success of the mathematical method in physics the conclusion that mathematics is the key to the actual structure of reality.'[1] In *Il saggiatore*[2] Galileo declared that philosophy is written by God in the book of the universe, though we cannot read this book until we understand the language, which is that of mathematics. If, therefore, as Galileo maintained, the structure of Nature is mathematical in character, so that there is a conformity between Nature and mathematics, it is easy to

[1] Vol. III, p. 287. [2] 6.

understand how philosophers who were dominated by the ideal of the mathematical method came to think that the application of this method in the philosophical field could lead to the discovery of hitherto unknown truths about reality.

In order, however, to appreciate the significance of Descartes' quest for certainty and of his looking to mathematics as a model for reasoning, it is desirable to bear in mind the revival of scepticism which was one of the aspects of Renaissance thought. When one thinks of French scepticism in the last part of the sixteenth century the name which comes first to mind is that of Montaigne (1533–92). And this is only natural, given his eminent position in the field of French literature. As was pointed out in the third volume of this *History*,[1] Montaigne revived the ancient arguments in favour of scepticism; the relativity and unreliable character of sense-experience, the mind's dependence on sense-experience and its consequent incapacity for attaining absolute truth, and our inability to solve the problems which arise out of the conflicting claims of the senses and the reason. Man lacks the power to construct any certain metaphysical system; and the fact that metaphysicians have arrived at different and incompatible conclusions bears witness to this. To exalt the powers of the human mind as the humanists did is absurd: rather should we confess our ignorance and the weakness of our mental capacities.

This scepticism about the possibility of attaining metaphysical and theological truth by the use of reason was eventually accepted by Charron (1541–1603), a priest. At the same time he insisted on man's obligation to humble himself before divine revelation, which must be accepted on faith. In the field of moral philosophy he accepted an ethics of Stoic inspiration. In the previous volume[2] mention was made of Justus Lipsius (1547–1606), one of the revivers of Stoicism during the Renaissance. Another was William Du Vair (1556–1621) who tried to harmonize the Stoic ethics with the Christian faith. It is understandable that at a time when scepticism in regard to metaphysics was influential the Stoic ideal of the morally independent man should exercise an attraction on some minds.

But scepticism was not confined to the elegant, literary version represented by Montaigne or to the fideism of Charron. It was represented also by a group of free-thinkers who had little difficulty in showing the inconsistencies in Charron's combination of

[1] pp. 228–30. [2] Vol. III, p. 228.

scepticism with fideism. This combination had existed already in the fourteenth century; and some religiously-minded people are undoubtedly attracted by it. But it is scarcely a satisfactory position from the rational point of view. Further, the free-thinkers or 'libertines' interpreted the term 'nature', which plays such an important role in the Stoic ethic, in a very different sense from that in which Charron understood it. And the term is, indeed, ambiguous, as can be seen by considering the different senses in which it was taken by the Greeks.

The revival of scepticism, ranging from Montaigne's Pyrrhonism and Charron's fideism to scepticism combined with moral cynicism, is relevant to Descartes' attempt to set philosophy on a sure basis. In meeting the challenge he looked to mathematics as the model of certain and clear reasoning, and he desired to give to metaphysics a similar clarity and certainty. Metaphysics must here be understood as including philosophical, as distinct from dogmatic, theology. In Descartes' opinion the proofs which he offered of God's existence were absolutely valid. And he believed, therefore, that he had provided a firm foundation for belief in the truths revealed by God. That is to say, he believed that he had shown conclusively that there exists a God who is capable of revealing truths to mankind. As for ethics, Descartes was himself influenced by the revival of Stoicism, and though he did not develop a systematic ethics, he at any rate contemplated incorporating into his philosophy those Stoic principles which he recognized as true and valuable. In the moral philosophy of Spinoza too we can see a distinct flavour of Stoicism. Indeed, Stoicism was in certain important respects much better adapted for use in the philosophy of Spinoza than in that of Descartes. For Spinoza, like the Stoics, was both a monist and a determinist, whereas Descartes was neither.

Mention of differences between Descartes and Spinoza leads us to consider briefly the development of continental rationalism. To speak at length about this theme in an introductory chapter would be inappropriate. But a few words on the subject may serve to give the reader some preliminary, if necessarily inadequate, idea of the scheme of development which will be treated more at length in the chapters devoted to individual philosophers.

We have already seen that Descartes affirmed the existence of two different types of substances, spiritual and material. In this sense of the word he can be called a dualist. But he was not a

dualist in the sense that he postulated two ultimate, independent ontological principles. There is a plurality of finite minds and there is a plurality of bodies. But both finite minds and bodies depend on God as creator and conserver. God is, as it were, the link between the sphere of finite spiritual substances and the corporeal sphere. In several important respects the philosophy of Descartes differs very much from the systems of the thirteenth-century metaphysicians; but if we attend merely to the statement that he was a theist and a pluralist who recognized an essential difference between spiritual and material substances, we can say that he preserved the tradition of mediaeval metaphysics. To say this alone would be, indeed, to give a very inadequate idea of Cartesianism. For one thing, it would leave out of account the diversity of inspiration and aim. But it is none the less worth bearing in mind the fact that the first outstanding continental philosopher of the modern era preserved a great deal of the general scheme of reality which was current in the Middle Ages.

When we turn to Spinoza, however, we find a monistic system in which the Cartesian dualism and the Cartesian pluralism are discarded. There is only one substance, the divine substance, possessing an infinity of attributes, two of which, thought and extension, are known to us. Minds are modifications of the one substance under the attribute of thought, while bodies are modifications of the same unique substance under the attribute of extension. The Cartesian problem of interaction between the finite mind and the finite body in man disappears, because mind and body are not two substances but parallel modifications of one substance.

Although the monistic system of Spinoza is opposed to the pluralistic system of Descartes, there are equally obvious connections. Descartes defined substance as an existent thing which requires nothing but itself in order to exist. But, as he explicitly acknowledges, this definition applies strictly to God alone, so that creatures can be called substances only in a secondary and analogical sense. Spinoza, however, adopting a similar definition of substance, drew the conclusion that there is only one substance, God, and that creatures cannot be more than modifications of the divine substance. In this limited sense his system is a development of that of Descartes. At the same time, in spite of the connections between Cartesianism and Spinozism, the inspirations and atmospheres of the two systems are very different. The latter

system may perhaps be regarded as being partly the result of a speculative application of the new scientific outlook to the whole of reality; but it is also suffused with a quasi-mystical and pantheistic colouring and inspiration which shows through the formal, geometrical trappings and which is absent from Cartesianism.

Leibniz, with his ideal of a logical deduction of hitherto unknown truths about reality, might perhaps be expected to adopt a similar monistic hypothesis. And he evidently saw this himself. But in point of fact he put forward a pluralistic philosophy. Reality consists of an infinity of monads or active substances, God being the supreme monad. Thus as far as pluralism is concerned, his philosophy is more akin to that of Descartes than to that of Spinoza. At the same time he did not believe that there are two radically different types of substances. Each monad is a dynamic and immaterial centre of activity; and no monad can be identified with geometrical extension. This does not mean, however, that reality consists of an anarchic chaos of monads. The world is a dynamic harmony, expressing the divine intelligence and will. In the case of man, for example, there is a dynamic or operational unity between the monads of which he is composed. And so it is with the universe. There is a universal harmony of monads conspiring together, as it were, for the attainment of a common end. And the principle of this harmony is God. The monads are so knit together that, even though one monad does not act directly on another, any change in any monad is reflected throughout the whole system in the divinely pre-established harmony. Each monad reflects the whole universe: the macrocosm is reflected in the microcosm. An infinite mind, therefore, could read off, as it were, the whole universe by contemplating one single monad.

If, therefore, we wish to regard the development of continental rationalism as a development of Cartesianism, we can say perhaps that Spinoza developed Cartesianism as viewed from a static point of view, while Leibniz developed it from a dynamic point of view. With Spinoza Descartes' two kinds of substances become so many modifications of one substance considered under two of its infinite attributes. With Leibniz the Cartesian pluralism is retained, but each substance or monad is interpreted as an immaterial centre of activity, the Cartesian idea of material substance, identifiable with geometrical extension and to which motion is added from without, as it were, being eliminated. Or one can express the development in another way. Spinoza resolves

the Cartesian dualism by postulating a substantial or ontological monism, in which Descartes' plurality of substances become modifications or 'accidents' of one divine substance. Leibniz, however, eliminates the Cartesian dualism by asserting a monism of quite a different type from that asserted by Spinoza. All monads or substances are in themselves immaterial. We thus have monism in the sense that there is only one kind of substance. But at the same time the Cartesian pluralism is retained, inasmuch as there is a plurality of monads. Their dynamic unity is due, not to their being modifications or accidents of one divine substance, but to the divinely pre-established harmony.

A further way of expressing the development would be this. In the Cartesian philosophy there is a sharp dualism in the sense that the laws of mechanics and of efficient causality hold good in the material world, whereas in the spiritual world there is freedom and teleology. Spinoza eliminates this dualism by means of his monistic hypothesis, assimilating the causal connections between things to logical implication. As in a mathematical system conclusions flow from the premisses, so in the universe of Nature modifications or what we call things, together with their changes, flow from the one ontological principle, the divine substance. Leibniz, however, tries to combine mechanical causality with teleology. Each monad unfolds and develops according to an inner law of change, but the whole system of changes is directed, in virtue of the pre-established harmony, to the attainment of an end. Descartes excluded from natural philosophy or physics the consideration of final causes. But for Leibniz there is no need to choose between mechanical and final causality. They are really two aspects of one process.

The influence of mediaeval philosophy on the rationalist systems of the pre-Kantian era is sufficiently obvious. For instance, all three philosophers utilize the category of substance. At the same time the idea of substance undergoes equally obvious changes. With Descartes material substance is identified with geometrical extension, a theory which is foreign to mediaeval thought, while Leibniz tries to give an essentially dynamic interpretation to the concept of substance. Again, though the idea of God plays an integral part in the systems of all three thinkers, we can see, in the philosophies of Spinoza and Leibniz at any rate, a tendency to eliminate the idea of personal and voluntary creation. This is evidently the case with Spinoza. The divine substance

expresses itself necessarily in its modifications, not, of course, by a necessity imposed from without (this is impossible, because there is no other substance), but by an inner necessity. Human freedom, therefore, goes by the board, together with the Christian concepts of sin, merit and so on. Leibniz, indeed, endeavoured to combine his idea of quasi-logical development of the world with the recognition of contingency and of human freedom. And he made distinctions with this end in view. But, as will be seen in due course, it is arguable that his efforts were not particularly successful. He attempted to 'rationalize' the mediaeval (or, more accurately, Christian) conception of the mystery of personal and voluntary creation, while retaining the fundamental idea; but the task which he set himself was no easy one. Descartes was, indeed, a believing Catholic, and Leibniz professed himself a Christian. But in continental rationalism as a whole we can see a tendency towards the speculative rationalization of Christian dogmas.[1] This tendency reached its climax in the philosophy of Hegel in the nineteenth century, though Hegel belongs, of course, to a different period and to a different climate of thought.

3. We have seen that the certainty of mathematics, its deductive method and its successful application in Renaissance science helped to provide the continental rationalists with a model of method and an ideal of procedure and purpose. But there was another side to Renaissance science besides its use of mathematics. For scientific progress was also felt to depend very largely on attention to empirical data and on the use of controlled experiment. Appeal to authority and to tradition was ousted in favour of experience, of reliance on factual data and on the empirical testing of hypotheses. And although we cannot account for the rise of British empiricism merely in terms of the conviction that scientific advance was based on actual observation of the empirical data, the development of the experimental method in the sciences naturally tended to stimulate and confirm the theory that all our knowledge is based on perception, on direct acquaintance with internal and external events. Indeed, 'The scientific insistence on going to the observable "facts" as a necessary basis for explanatory theory found its correlative and its theoretical justification in the empiricist thesis that our factual knowledge is ultimately based on

[1] This statement does not cover Spinoza, who was not a Christian. And it does not refer, of course, to those eighteenth-century writers who rejected Christian dogma. But these writers, though 'rationalists' in a modern sense of the term, were not speculative philosophers after the style of Descartes and Leibniz.

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perception.'[1] We cannot obtain factual knowledge by *a priori* reasoning, by quasi-mathematical deduction from alleged innate ideas or principles, but only by experience and within the limits of experience. There is, of course, such a thing as *a priori* reasoning. We see it in pure mathematics. And by such reasoning we reach conclusions which are certain. But mathematical propositions do not give us factual information about the world; they state, as Hume put it, relations between ideas. For factual information about the world, indeed about reality in general, we have to turn to experience, to sense-perception and to introspection. And though such inductively-based knowledge enjoys varying degrees of probability, it is not and cannot be absolutely certain. If we wish for absolute certainty, we must confine ourselves to propositions which state something about the relations of ideas or the implications of the meanings of symbols, but which do not give us factual information about the world. If we wish for factual information about the world, we must content ourselves with probabilities, which is all that inductively-based generalizations can give us. A philosophical system which possesses absolute certainty and which at the same time would give us information about reality and be capable of indefinite extension through the deductive discovery of hitherto unknown factual truths is a will-o'-the-wisp.

True, this description of empiricism certainly will not fit all those who are customarily reckoned as empiricists. But it indicates the general tendency of this movement of thought. And the nature of empiricism is revealed most clearly in its historical development, since it is possible to regard this development as consisting, in large part at least, in a progressive application of the thesis, enunciated by Locke, that all our ideas come from experience, from sense-perception and from introspection.

In view of his insistence on the experimental basis of knowledge and on induction as contrasted with deduction, Francis Bacon can be called an empiricist. The appositeness of this name is not, however, so clear in the case of Hobbes. He maintained, indeed, that all our knowledge begins with sensation and can be traced back to sensation as its ultimate fount. And this entitles us to call him an empiricist. At the same time he was deeply influenced by the idea of mathematical method as a model of reasoning, and in this respect he stands closer to the continental rationalists than

[1] Vol. III, p. 290.

do other British philosophers of the early modern period. He was, however, a nominalist, and he did not think that we can in fact demonstrate causal relations. He certainly tried to extend the scope of Galileo's mechanics to cover all the subject-matter of philosophy; but it is more appropriate, I think, to class him with the empiricists than with the rationalists, if we have to choose between the two labels. And I have followed this procedure in the present volume, while at the same time I have attempted to point out some of the requisite qualifications.

The real father of classical British empiricism, however, was John Locke (1632–1704), whose declared aim was to inquire into the source, certainty and extent of human knowledge, and also into the grounds and degrees of belief, opinion and assent. In connection with the first problem, the source of our knowledge, he delivered a vigorous attack on the theory of innate ideas. He then attempted to show how all the ideas which we have can be explained on the hypothesis that they originate in sense-perception and in introspection or, as he put it, reflection. But though Locke asserted the ultimately experimental origin of all our ideas, he did not restrict knowledge to the immediate data of experience. On the contrary, there are complex ideas, built up out of simple ideas, which have objective references. Thus we have, for example, the idea of material substance, the idea of a substratum which supports primary qualities, such as extension, and those 'powers' which produce in the percipient subject ideas of colour, sound and so on. And Locke was convinced that there actually are particular material substances, even though we can never perceive them. Similarly, we have the complex idea of the causal relation; and Locke used the principle of causality to demonstrate the existence of God, of a being, that is to say, who is not the object of direct experience. In other words, Locke combined the empiricist thesis that all our ideas originate in experience with a modest metaphysics. And if there were no Berkeley and no Hume, we might be inclined to look on Locke's philosophy as a watered-down form of Scholasticism, with Cartesian elements thrown in, the whole being expressed in a sometimes confused and inconsistent manner. In point of fact, however, we not unnaturally tend to regard his philosophy as the point of departure for his empiricist successors.

Berkeley (1685–1753) attacked Locke's conception of material substance. He had, indeed, a particular motive for dwelling at

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length on this point. For he considered that belief in material substance was a fundamental element in materialism, which, as a devout Christian, he was intent on refuting. But he had, of course, other grounds for attacking Locke's thesis. There was the general empiricist ground or reason, namely, that material substance as defined by Locke is an unknowable substrate. We have, therefore, no clear idea of it, and we have no warrant for saying that it exists. A so-called material thing is simply what we perceive it to be. But nobody has perceived or can perceive an imperceptible substrate. Experience, then, gives us no ground for asserting its existence. But there were other reasons which arose out of Locke's unfortunate habit or common, though not invariable, practice of speaking as though it is ideas which we perceive directly, and not things. Starting with Locke's position in regard to secondary and primary qualities (which will be explained in the chapter on Locke), Berkeley argued that all of them, including the primary qualities, such as extension, figure and motion, are ideas. He then asked how ideas could possibly exist in or be supported by a material substance. If all that we perceive is ideas, these ideas must exist in minds. To say that they exist in an unknowable, material substrate is to make an unintelligible statement. The latter has no possible function to fulfil.

To say that Berkeley got rid of Locke's material substance is to mention only one aspect of his empiricism. And just as Locke's empiricism is only a part of his philosophy, so is Berkeley's empiricism only one aspect of his philosophy. For he went on to build up a speculative idealist metaphysic, for which the only realities are God, finite minds and the ideas of finite minds. Indeed, he used his empiricist conclusions as a foundation of a theistic metaphysic. And this attempt to erect a metaphysical philosophy on the basis of a phenomenalistic account of material things constitutes one of the chief points of interest in Berkeley's thought. But in giving a brief and necessarily inadequate sketch of the development of classical British empiricism it is sufficient to draw attention to his elimination of Locke's material substance. If we leave aside the theory of 'ideas', we can say that for Berkeley the so-called material thing or sensible object consists simply of phenomena, of those qualities which we perceive in it. And this, in Berkeley's opinion, is precisely what the man-in-the-street believes it to consist of. For he has never heard of, let alone perceived, any occult substance or substratum. In the eyes of the

plain man the tree is simply that which we perceive it, or can perceive it, to be. And we perceive, and can perceive, only qualities.

Now, Berkeley's phenomenalistic analysis of material things was not extended to finite selves. In other words, though he eliminated material substance, he retained spiritual substance. Hume (1711–76), however, proceeded to eliminate spiritual substance as well. All our ideas are derived from impressions, the elementary data of experience. And in order to determine the objective reference of any complex idea, we have to ask, from what impressions is it derived. Now, there is no impression of a spiritual substance. If I look into myself, I perceive only a series of psychic events such as desires, feelings, thoughts. Nowhere do I perceive an underlying, permanent substance or soul. That we have some idea of a spiritual substance can be explained by reference to the working of mental association; but we have no ground for asserting that such a substance exists.

Analysis of the idea of spiritual substance, however, does not occupy so prominent a position in Hume's writings as his analysis of the causal relation. In accordance with his regular programme he asks from what impression or impressions is our idea of causality derived. And he answers that all that we observe is constant conjunction. When, for example, *A* is always followed by *B*, in such a way that when *A* is absent *B* does not occur and that when *B* occurs it is, as far as we can ascertain empirically, always preceded by *A*, we speak of *A* as the cause and of *B* as the effect. To be sure, the idea of necessary connection also belongs to our idea of causality. But we cannot point to any sense-impression from which it is derived. The idea can be explained with the help of the principle of association: it is, so to speak, a subjective contribution. We can inspect the objective relations between cause *A* and effect *B* as long as we like; we shall find nothing more than constant conjunction.

In this case we obviously cannot legitimately use the principle of causality to transcend experience in such a way as to extend our knowledge. We say that *A* is the cause of *B* because, so far as our experience goes, we find that the occurrence of *A* is always followed by the occurrence of *B* and that *B* never occurs when *A* has not previously occurred. But though we may believe that *B* has some cause, we cannot legitimately argue that *A* is this cause unless we observe *A* and *B* occurring in the relation which has just

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been described. We cannot argue, therefore, that phenomena are caused by substances which are not only never observed but also in principle unobservable. Nor can we argue, as in their different ways both Locke and Berkeley argued, to the existence of God. We can form a hypothesis if we like; but no causal argument in favour of God's existence can possibly give us any certain knowledge. For God transcends our experience. With Hume, therefore, the metaphysics of both Locke and Berkeley go overboard, and both minds and bodies are analysed in phenomenalistic terms. In fact we can be certain of very little, and scepticism may seem to result. But, as will be seen later, Hume answers that we cannot live and act in accordance with pure scepticism. Practical life rests on beliefs, such as belief in the uniformity of nature, which cannot be given any adequate rational justification. But this is no reason for renouncing these beliefs. In his study a man may be a sceptic, realizing how little is capable of proof; but when he turns from his academic reflections he has to act on the fundamental beliefs according to which all men act, whatever their philosophical views may be.

The aspect of classical British empiricism which first impresses itself on the mind is perhaps its negative aspect, namely, the progressive elimination of traditional metaphysics. But it is important to note the more positive aspects. For example, we can see the growth of the approach to philosophy which is now generally known as logical or linguistic analysis. Berkeley asks what it means to say of a material thing that it exists. And he answers that to say that a material thing exists is to say that it is perceived by a subject. Hume asks what it means to say that *A* is the cause of *B*, and he gives a phenomenalistic answer. Moreover, in the philosophy of Hume we can find all the main tenets of what is sometimes called 'logical empiricism'. That this is the case will be shown later. But it is worth while pointing out in advance that Hume is very much a living philosopher. True, he often expresses in psychological terms questions and answers which would be expressed in a different way even by those who accept him as being in some sense their 'master'. But this does not affect the fact that he is one of those philosophers whose thought is a living force in contemporary philosophy.

4. It is in the seventeenth rather than in the eighteenth century that we see the most vigorous manifestation of the impulse to systematic philosophical construction which owed so much to the

new scientific outlook. The succeeding century is not marked to the same extent by brilliant and bold metaphysical speculation, and in its last decades philosophy takes a new turn with the thought of Immanuel Kant.

If we leave out of account Francis Bacon, we can say that the seventeenth century is headed by two systems, that of Descartes on the Continent and that of Hobbes in England. From both the epistemological and the metaphysical points of view their philosophies are very different. But both men were influenced by the ideal of mathematical method, and both were systematizers on the grand scale. One can note that Hobbes, who had personal relations with Mersenne, a friend of Descartes, was acquainted with the latter's *Meditations* and wrote a series of objections against them, to which Descartes replied.

The philosophy of Hobbes excited a sharp reaction in England. In particular the so-called Cambridge Platonists, such as Cudworth (1617–88) and Henry More (1614–87), opposed his materialism and determinism and what they regarded as his atheism. They were also opposed to empiricism and are frequently called 'rationalists'. But though some of them were, indeed, influenced to a minor extent by Descartes, their rationalism sprang rather from other sources. They believed in fundamental speculative and ethical truths or principles which are not derived from experience but discerned immediately by reason, and which reflect the eternal divine truth. They were also concerned to show the reasonableness of Christianity. They can be called Christian Platonists, provided that the term 'Platonist' is understood in a wide sense. In histories of philosophy they are rarely accorded a prominent position. But it is as well to remember their existence if for no other reason than as a corrective to the not uncommon persuasion that British philosophy has been throughout empiricist in character, apart, of course, from the idealist interlude of the second half of the nineteenth and the first decades of the twentieth centuries. Empiricism is doubtless the distinguishing characteristic of English philosophy; but at the same time there is another, if less prominent, tradition, of which Cambridge Platonism in the seventeenth century forms one phase.

Cartesianism was far more influential on the Continent than was the system of Hobbes in England. At the same time it is a mistake to think that Cartesianism swept everything before it, even in France. A notable example of unfavourable reaction is

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seen in the case of Blaise Pascal (1623–62). Pascal, the Kierkegaard of the seventeenth century, was uncompromising in his opposition, not, of course, to mathematics (he was himself a mathematical genius), but to the spirit of Cartesianism, which he regarded as naturalistic in character. In the interests of Christian apologetics he emphasized on the one hand the weakness of man and on the other his need of faith, of submission to revelation and of supernatural grace.

We have already seen that Descartes left behind him a legacy in the form of the problem of interaction between mind and body, a problem which was discussed by the occasionalists. Among their names we sometimes find that of Malebranche (1638–1715). But though the latter can be called an occasionalist if we consider only one element of his thought, his philosophy went far beyond occasionalism. It was a metaphysical system of an original stamp which combined elements taken from Cartesianism with elements developed under Augustinian inspiration and which might have become a system of idealistic pantheism, had not Malebranche, who was an Oratorian priest, endeavoured to remain within the bounds of orthodoxy. As it is, his philosophy remains one of the most notable products of French thought. Incidentally, it exercised some influence on the mind of Bishop Berkeley in the eighteenth century.

In the seventeenth century we have, therefore, the systems of Hobbes, Descartes and Malebranche. But these philosophies are by no means the only notable achievements of the century. The year 1632 saw the births of two of the chief thinkers of the pre-Kantian period of modern philosophy, of Spinoza in Holland and of Locke in England. But their lives, as well as their philosophies, were very different. Spinoza was more or less a recluse, a man dominated by a vision of the one reality, the one divine and eternal substance, which manifests itself in those finite modifications which we call 'things'. This one substance he called God or Nature. Obviously, we have here an ambiguity. If we emphasize the second name, we have a naturalistic monism in which the God of Christianity and Judaism (Spinoza was himself a Jew) is eliminated. In the period under discussion Spinoza was frequently understood in this sense and was accordingly regarded and execrated as an atheist. Hence his influence was extremely limited, and he did not come into his own until the German romantic movement and the period of German post-Kantian

idealism, when the term 'God' in the phrase 'God or Nature' was emphasized and Spinoza was depicted as a 'God-intoxicated man'. Locke, on the contrary, was by no means a recluse. A friend of scientists and philosophers, he moved on the fringe of the great world and held some government posts. His philosophy, as has already been remarked, followed a rather traditional pattern; he was much respected; and he influenced profoundly not only the subsequent development of British philosophy but also the philosophy of the French Enlightenment in the eighteenth century. Indeed, in the extent of Locke's influence we see an evident refutation of the notion that British and continental thought in the pre-Kantian era flowed in parallel channels without any intermingling of their waters.

In 1642, ten years after the birth of Locke, there was born another of the most influential figures in modern thought, Isaac Newton. He was not, of course, primarily a philosopher, as we understand the word today, and his great importance consists in the fact that he completed to all intents and purposes the classical scientific conception of the world which Galileo in particular had done so much to promote. But Newton laid more stress than had Galileo on empirical observation, induction and the place of probability in science. And for this reason his physics tended to undermine the Galilean-Cartesian ideal of *a priori* method and to encourage the empiricist approach in the field of philosophy. Thus he influenced the mind of Hume to a considerable extent. At the same time, though Newton was not primarily a philosopher, he did not hesitate to go beyond physics or 'experimental philosophy' and to indulge in metaphysical speculation. Indeed, the confident way in which he drew metaphysical conclusions from physical hypotheses was attacked by Berkeley who saw that the tenuous character of the connections between Newton's physics and his theological conclusions might make a (for Berkeley) unfortunate impression on men's minds. And in point of fact a number of French philosophers of the eighteenth century, while accepting Newton's general approach to physics, employed it in a non-theistic setting which was alien to the latter's mind. At the end of the eighteenth century Newton's physics exercised a powerful influence on the thought of Kant.

Though he lived until 1716, Leibniz can be considered the last of the great seventeenth-century speculative philosophers. He evidently had some regard for Spinoza, though he did not manifest

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this regard to the public. Further, he attempted to hang Spinoza, as it were, round the neck of Descartes, as though the former's system were a logical development of the latter's. In other words, he seems to have been at pains to make it clear that his own philosophy differed greatly from those of his predecessors or, more accurately, that it contained their good points while omitting the bad points in Cartesianism which led to its development into the system of Spinoza. However this may be, there can be no doubt that Leibniz remained faithful to the general spirit and inspiration of continental rationalism. He made a careful critical study of Locke's empiricism, which was eventually published as *New Essays Concerning the Human Understanding*.

Like Newton (and, indeed, like Descartes), Leibniz was an eminent mathematician, though he did not agree with Newton's theories about space and time; and he carried on a controversy about this subject with Samuel Clarke, one of the latter's disciples and admirers. But though Leibniz was a great mathematician, and though the influence of his mathematical studies upon his philosophy is clear enough, his mind was so many-sided that it is not surprising if a great variety of elements and lines of thought can be found in his diverse writings. For example, his conception of the world as a dynamic and progressively self-unfolding and developing system of active entities (monads) and of human history as moving towards an intelligible goal probably had some effect on the rise of the historical outlook. Again, through some aspects of his thought such as his interpretation of space and time as phenomenal, he prepared the way for Kant. If, however, one mentions the influence of Leibniz or his partial anticipation of a thesis maintained by a later thinker, this is not to deny that his system is interesting in itself.

5. The eighteenth century is known as the century of the Enlightenment (also as the Age of Reason). This term can hardly be defined. For though we speak of the philosophy of the Enlightenment, no one school or set of determinate philosophical theories is meant. The term indicates, however, an attitude and a prevalent disposition of mind and outlook, and these can be described in a general way.

Provided that the word 'rationalistic' is not understood as necessarily referring to rationalism in the sense explained in section two of this chapter, one can say that the general spirit of the Enlightenment was rationalistic in character. That is to say,

the typical thinkers and writers of the period believed that the human reason was the apt and only instrument for solving problems connected with man and society. Just as Newton had interpreted Nature and had set the pattern for the free, rational and unprejudiced investigation of the physical world, so should man employ his reason for interpreting moral, religious, social and political life. It may be said, of course, that the ideal of using the reason to interpret human life was in no way alien to the mediaeval mind. And this is true. But the point is that the writers of the Enlightenment generally meant by reason a reason unhampered by belief in revelation, by submission to authority, by deference to established customs and institutions. In the religious sphere some explained away religion in a naturalistic manner; but even those who retained religious belief based it simply on reason, without reference to unquestionable divine revelation or to emotional or mystical experience. In the moral sphere the tendency was to separate morality from all metaphysical and theological premisses and in this sense to make it autonomous. In the social and political spheres too the characteristic thinkers of the Enlightenment endeavoured to discover a rational foundation for and justification of political society. Mention was made in the first section of this chapter of Hume's idea that a science of man was needed to complement the science of Nature. And this idea represents very well the spirit of the Enlightenment. For the Enlightenment does not represent a humanistic reaction against the new development in science or natural philosophy, which began with the scientific phase of the Renaissance and which culminated in the work of Newton. It represents rather the extension of the scientific outlook to man himself and a combination of humanism, which had been a characteristic of the first phase of the Renaissance, with this scientific outlook.

There were, indeed, considerable differences between the ideas of the various philosophers of the Enlightenment. Some believed in self-evident principles, the truth of which is immediately discerned by the unprejudiced reason. Others were empiricists. Some believed in God, others did not. Again, there were considerable differences of spirit between the phases of the Enlightenment in Britain, France and Germany. In France, for example, the characteristic thinkers of the period were bitterly opposed to the *ancien régime* and to the Church. In England, however, the Revolution had already taken place, and Catholicism, with its

strict concept of revelation and its authoritarianism, counted for very little, being to all intents and purposes still a proscribed religion. Hence we would not expect to find among the British philosophers of the Enlightenment the same degree of hostility towards the Established Church or towards the civil powers that we can find among a number of their French contemporaries. Again, crudely materialistic interpretations of the human mind and of psychical processes were more characteristic of a certain section of French thinkers than of British thinkers of the time.

At the same time, in spite of all differences in spirit and in particular tenets, there was considerable interchange of ideas between the writers of France and England. Locke, for instance, exercised a very considerable influence on eighteenth-century thought in France. There existed in fact a kind of international and cosmopolitan-minded set of thinkers and writers who were united at any rate in their hostility, which showed itself in varying degrees according to circumstances, to ecclesiastical and political authoritarianism and to what they regarded as obscurantism and tyranny. And they looked on philosophy as an instrument of liberation, enlightenment and social and political progress. They were, in short, rationalists more or less in the modern sense, free-thinkers with a profound confidence in the power of reason to promote the betterment of man and of society and with a belief in the deleterious effects of ecclesiastical and political absolutism. Or, to put the matter another way, the liberal and humanitarian rationalists of the nineteenth century were the descendants of the characteristic thinkers of the Enlightenment.

The great systems of the seventeenth century helped, of course, to prepare the way for the Enlightenment. But in the eighteenth century we find not so much outstanding philosophers elaborating original and mutually incompatible metaphysical systems as a comparatively large number of writers with a belief in progress and a conviction that 'enlightenment', diffused through philosophical reflection, would secure in man's moral, social and political life a degree of progress worthy of an age which already possessed a scientific interpretation of Nature. The eighteenth-century philosophers in France were scarcely of the stature of Descartes. But their writings, easily understandable by educated people and sometimes superficial, were undeniably influential. They contributed to the coming of the French Revolution. And the philosophers of the Enlightenment in general exercised a

lasting influence on the formation of the liberal mind and on the growth of a secularist outlook. One may have a favourable or an unfavourable view of the ideas of men such as Diderot and Voltaire; but one can hardly deny that, for good or ill, their ideas exercised a powerful influence.

In England, Locke's writings contributed to the philosophical current of thought which is known as deism. In his work on the *Reasonableness of Christianity* and elsewhere he insisted on reason as the judge of revelation, though he did not reject the idea of revelation. The deists, however, tended to reduce Christianity to natural religion. True, they differed considerably in their views about religion in general and Christianity in particular. But, while believing in God, they tended to reduce the Christian dogmas to truths which can be established by reason and to deny the unique and supernatural character of Christianity and God's miraculous intervention in the world. Among the deists were John Toland (1670–1722), Matthew Tindal (*c.* 1656–1733) and the Viscount Bolingbroke (1678–1751), who looked on Locke as his master and as superior to most other philosophers put together. Among the opponents of the deists were Samuel Clarke (1675–1729) and Bishop Butler (1692–1752), author of the famous work *The Analogy of Religion.*

In eighteenth-century philosophy in England we find also a strong interest in ethics. Characteristic of the time is the moral-sense theory, represented by Shaftesbury (1671–1713), Hutcheson (1694–1746), to a certain extent Butler, and Adam Smith (1723–90). As against Hobbes's interpretation of man as fundamentally egoistic they insisted on man's social nature. And they maintained that man possesses an inborn 'sense' or sentiment by which he discerns moral values and distinctions. David Hume had affiliations with this current of thought in that he found the basis of moral attitudes and distinctions in feeling rather than in reasoning or the intuition of eternal and self-evident principles. But at the same time he contributed to the growth of utilitarianism. In the case of several important virtues, for example, the feeling or sentiment of moral approbation is directed towards that which is socially useful. In France utilitarianism was represented by Claude Helvetius (1715–71), who did much to prepare the way for the utilitarian moral theories of Bentham, James and John Stuart Mill in the nineteenth century.

Though Locke was not the first to mention or discuss the

principle of the association of ideas, it was largely through his influence that the foundations of the associationist psychology were laid in the eighteenth century. In England David Hartley (1705–57) tried to explain man's mental life with the aid of the principle of association of ideas, combined with the theory that our ideas are faint copies of sensations. He also tried to explain man's moral convictions with the aid of the same principle. And, in general, those moralists who started by assuming that man seeks by nature simply his own interest, in particular his own pleasure, used the principle to show how it is possible for man to seek virtue for its own sake and to act altruistically. For example, if the practice of some virtue is experienced by me as conducing to my own interest or benefit, I can come by the operation of the principle of association to approve of and practise this virtue without any advertence to the advantage which such conduct brings me. The utilitarians of the nineteenth century made copious use of this principle in explaining how altruism is possible in spite of the supposed fact that man naturally seeks his own satisfaction and pleasure.

The two outstanding eighteenth-century philosophers in Great Britain were obviously Berkeley and Hume. But it has already been mentioned that though the former's philosophy can be regarded as constituting a stage in the development of empiricism, it was at the same time much more than this. For on an empiricist foundation Berkeley developed an idealist and spiritualist metaphysics, orientated towards the acceptance of Christianity. His philosophy thus stands apart not only from deism but also from the interpretations of man which have just been mentioned. For the implicit tendency of the associationist current of thought was towards materialism and to the denial of any spiritual soul in man, whereas for Berkeley there are, besides God, only finite spirits and their ideas. Hume, however, though it would be wrong to call him a materialist, represents much better the spirit of the Enlightenment, with his empiricism, scepticism, liberalism and freedom from all theological assumptions and preoccupations.

In the last half of the century a reaction against empiricism and in favour of rationalism made itself felt. It was represented, for example, by Richard Price (1723–91) and Thomas Reid (1710–96). The former insisted that reason, not emotion, is authoritative in morals. We enjoy intellectual intuition of objective moral

distinctions. For Reid and his followers there are a number of self-evident principles, principles of 'common sense', which are the foundation of all reasoning and which neither admit of direct proof nor need it. Just as the materialism of Hobbes stimulated the reaction of the Cambridge Platonists, so the empiricism of Hume stimulated a reaction. Indeed, there is continuity between the Cambridge Platonists and the Scottish philosophers of common sense, headed by Reid. Both groups represent a tradition in British philosophy which is weaker and less conspicuous than empiricism, but which is there none the less.

The deist movement in England had its counterpart in France. Voltaire (1694–1778), for example, was not an atheist, even though the Lisbon earthquake of 1755, while not making him abandon all belief in God, caused him to modify his views about the relation of the world to God and about the nature of the divine activity. But atheism was represented by a considerable number of writers. The Baron d'Holbach (1725–89), for instance, was a pronounced atheist. Ignorance and fear led to belief in the gods, weakness worshipped them, credulity preserves them, tyranny uses religion for its own ends. La Mettrie (1709–51) was also an atheist, and he tried to improve on the assertion of Pierre Bayle (1647–1706) that a State of atheists is possible[1] by saying that it is desirable. Again, Diderot (1713–84), who was one of the editors of the *Encyclopédie*,[2] passed from deism to atheism. All these writers, both deists and atheists, were anti-clericals and hostile to Catholicism.

Locke endeavoured to explain the origin of our ideas on empiricist principles; but he did not reduce man's psychical life to sensation. Condillac (1715–80), however, who aimed at developing a consistent empiricism, tried to explain all mental life in terms of sensations, 'transformed' sensations and signs or symbols. His sensationalism, which was worked out in an elaborate manner, was influential in France; but for outspoken materialism we have to turn rather to other writers. Mention has already been made of La Mettrie's attempt in *Man a Machine* to extend Descartes' mechanistic interpretation of infra-human life and of the body to man as a totality. D'Holbach maintained that mind is an epi-phenomenon of the brain, and Cabanis (1757–1808) summed up

[1] Bayle maintained that religion does not affect morality.

[2] This work, edited by Diderot and d'Alembert, was designed to give an account of the progress achieved in the different sciences and, by implication at least, to promote a secularist outlook.

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his idea of man in the often quoted words, *Les nerfs—voilà tout l'homme*. According to him, the brain secretes thought as the liver secretes bile. Goethe later described the unpleasant impression made on him in his student days by d'Holbach's *Système de la nature*.

A materialist interpretation of man, however, by no means always involved a rejection of moral ideals and principles. Thus Diderot emphasized the ideal of self-sacrifice and demanded of man benevolence, pity and altruism. D'Holbach, too, made morality consist in altruism, in service of the common good. And in the utilitarian theory of Helvetius the concept of the greatest possible happiness of the greatest number played a fundamental part. This moral idealism was, of course, separated from theological presuppositions and assumptions. Instead it was closely connected with the idea of social and legal reform. According to Helvetius, for example, the rational control of man's environment and the making of good laws would lead people to seek the public advantage. And d'Holbach emphasized the need for social and political reorganization. With appropriate systems of legislation, supported by sensible sanctions, and of education, man would be induced by his pursuit of his own advantage to act virtuously, that is to say, in a manner useful to society.

It has been remarked that the characteristic writers of the French Enlightenment were opposed to political tyranny. But this must not be taken to mean that they were all convinced 'democrats'. Montesquieu (1689–1755), indeed, concerned himself with the problem of liberty, and as a result of his analysis of the British constitution he insisted on the separation of powers as a condition of liberty. That is to say, the legislative, executive and judicial powers should be independent in the sense that they should not be subject to the will either of one man or of one body of men, whether of a small body of nobles or of the people. Montesquieu was opposed to any form of absolutism. But Voltaire, although he too was influenced by his knowledge of British practice and thought, particularly the thought of Locke, looked to the enlightened despot to achieve the necessary reforms. Like Locke, he advocated within limits the principle of toleration; but he was not notably concerned with the establishment of a democracy. One of his charges against the Church, for example, was that it exercised a hampering power over the sovereign and prevented really strong government. To find an outstanding advocate of democracy in a literal sense we have to turn to

Rousseau (1712–78). In general, we find among the writers of the French Enlightenment either an insistence on constitutionalism, as with Montesquieu, or the hope for an enlightened ruler, as with Voltaire. But in both cases the inspiration of and admiration for British political life is evident, though Voltaire was more impressed by freedom of discussion than by representative government.

Locke had maintained the doctrine of natural rights, that is to say, the natural rights of individuals, which are not derived from the State and cannot legitimately be abolished by the State. This theory, which has its antecedents in mediaeval thought and which was applied in the American Declaration of Independence, was influential also on the Continent. Voltaire, for example, supposed that there are self-evident moral principles and natural rights. Indeed, in a good deal of eighteenth-century French philosophy we can find the same sort of attempt to combine empiricism with elements derived from 'rationalism' that we find in Locke himself. With the utilitarians, however, another point of view comes to the fore. In the writings of Helvetius, for instance, the greatest happiness of the greatest number replaces as the standard of value Locke's natural rights. But Helvetius does not appear to have fully understood that this substitution implied the rejection of the theory of natural rights. For if utility is the standard, rights are themselves justified only by their utility. In England, however, this was seen by Hume. Rights are founded on convention, on general rules which experience has shown to be useful, not on self-evident principles or on eternal truths.

Liberty in the economic sphere was demanded by the so-called 'physiocrats', Quesnay (1694–1774) and Turgot (1727–81). If governments abstain from all avoidable interference in this sphere, and if individuals are left free to pursue their interests, the public advantage will inevitably be promoted. The reason for this is that there are natural economic laws which produce prosperity when nobody interferes with their operation. Here we have the policy of economic *laissez-faire*. It reflects to some extent the liberalism of Locke; but it is obviously based on a naïve belief in the harmony between the operation of natural laws[1] and the attainment of the greatest happiness of the greatest number.

We have noticed the dismal materialism expounded by some of

[1] Clearly, the term 'natural law', as used in this context, must be sharply distinguished from the term when used in the context of a 'rationalist' system of ethics.

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the French philosophers of the eighteenth century. But, speaking generally, the thinkers of the period, including the materialists, manifested a strong belief in progress and in the dependence of progress on intellectual enlightenment. This belief received its classic expression in France in the *Esquisse d'un tableau historique des progrès de l'esprit humain* (1794) by Condorcet (1743–94). The scientific culture which began in the sixteenth century is destined to indefinite development.

The belief of the Encyclopaedists and others that progress consists in intellectual enlightenment and in the growth of civilization and that progress of this kind is inevitably accompanied by moral progress was sharply challenged by Rousseau. Associated for a time with Diderot and his circle, Rousseau subsequently broke with them and insisted on the virtues of the natural or uncivilized man, on the corruption of man by historic social institutions and by civilization in its actual development, and on the importance of emotion and of the heart in human life. But he is far better known for his great political work, *The Social Contract*. For the moment, however, it is sufficient to say that though Rousseau's starting-point is individualistic, in the sense that the State is justified in terms of a contract between individuals, the whole tendency of his work is to stress the concept of society as against the concept of the individual. Of all the political writings of the French Enlightenment Rousseau's book proved to be the most influential. And one reason for its influence on later thinkers was the fact that the author tended to leave behind the liberal individualism which was one of the characteristics of the philosophy of his period.

We have seen that the philosophy of the Enlightenment in France was inclined to be more extreme than eighteenth-century thought in England. Deism tended to give place to atheism, empiricism to become outspoken materialism. When, however, we turn to the Enlightenment (*Aufklärung*) in Germany, we find a rather different atmosphere.

Leibniz was the first great German philosopher, and the first phase of the Enlightenment in Germany consisted in a prolongation of his philosophy. His doctrine was systematized, not without some changes in its contents, let alone in its spirit, by Christian Wolff (1679–1754). Unlike most of the other well-known philosophers of the pre-Kantian period, Wolff was a university professor; and the textbooks which he published

enjoyed a great success. Among his followers were Bilfinger (1693–1750), Knutzen (1713–51), whose lectures at Königsberg were attended by Kant, and Baumgarten (1714–62).

The second phase of the German *Aufklärung* shows the influence of the Enlightenment in France and England. If it is said that this phase is typified by Frederick the Great (1712–86), this does not mean, of course, that the king was himself a philosopher. But he admired the thinkers of the French Enlightenment, and he invited both Helvetius and Voltaire to Potsdam. He looked upon himself as the embodiment of the enlightened monarch, and he endeavoured to spread education and science in his territory. He is therefore of some importance in the philosophical field, as being one of the instruments by which the influence of the French Enlightenment was introduced to Germany.

Deism found a German defender in Samuel Reimarus (1694–1768). Moses Mendelssohn (1729–86), one of the 'popular philosophers' (so called because they excluded subtleties from philosophy and tried to reduce it to the capacity of the mediocre mind), was also influenced by the Enlightenment. But much more important was Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729–81), the principal literary representative of the *Aufklärung*. Well known for his saying that if God were to offer him truth with one hand and the search for truth with the other he would choose the latter, he did not think in point of fact that in metaphysics and theology at least absolute truth is attainable or, indeed, that there is such a thing. Reason alone must decide about the content of religion, but the latter cannot be given a final expression. There is, as it were, a continuous education of the human race by God, to which we cannot put a full stop at any given moment in the form of unquestionable propositions. As for morality, it is in itself independent of metaphysics and theology. The human race attains its majority, as it were, when it comes to understand this fact and when man does his duty without regard to reward either in this life or in the next. By this idea of progress towards understanding the autonomy of ethics as well as by his rationalistic attitude towards Christian doctrine and towards Biblical exegesis Lessing gives ample evidence of the influence of eighteenth-century thought in France and England.

In the third phase of eighteenth-century philosophy in Germany[1]

[1] I am excluding, of course, the philosophy of Kant, which will be briefly treated in the eighth section of this chapter.

a different attitude manifests itself. Indeed, it is rather misleading to include this phase under the heading of the Enlightenment; and those writers who do so are accustomed to speak of men like Hamann, Herder and Jacobi as 'overcoming' the spirit of the Enlightenment. But it is convenient to mention them here.

Johann Georg Hamann (1730–88) disliked the intellectualism of the Enlightenment and what he regarded as the illegitimate dichotomy between reason and sensibility. Indeed, language itself shows the unjustifiable character of this separation. For in the word we see the union of reason and sense. With Hamann we find the analytical and rationalist outlook giving way before a synthesizing and almost mystical attitude. He revived Bruno's idea of the *coincidentia oppositorum* or synthesis of opposites,[1] and his aim was to see in Nature and in history the self-revelation of God.

A like reaction against rationalism appears in the thought of Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi (1743–1819). Reason alone, which in its isolation is 'heathen', brings us either to a materialistic, deterministic and atheistic philosophy or to the scepticism of Hume. God is apprehended by faith rather than by reason, by the heart or by intuitive 'feeling' rather than by the coldly logical and analytic process of the intellect. Indeed, Jacobi is one of the leading representatives of the idea of religious sentiment or feeling.

Johann Gottfried Herder (1744–1803), who will be mentioned again in the section on the rise of the philosophy of history, shared with Hamann his dislike of the separation between reason and sensibility and also his interest in the philosophy of language. It is true that Herder is linked with the characteristic thinkers of the French Enlightenment by his belief in progress; but he envisaged progress in a different manner. Instead of being concerned simply with the progress of man towards the development of one type, the type of the free-thinker who becomes, as it were, more and more separated from the Transcendent and from Nature, he tried to see history as a whole. Each nation has its own history and line of development, prefigured in its natural endowments and in its relations to its natural environment. At the same time the different lines of development form one pattern, one great harmony; and the whole process of evolution is the manifestation or working-out of divine providence.

[1] This idea was borrowed by Bruno from Nicholas of Cusa. See vol. III, ch. XV and ch. XVI, section 6.

These thinkers had, of course, some connections with the Enlightenment. And in Herder's idea of history we can find an application of some of Leibniz's ideas, and also the influence of Montesquieu. At the same time the spirit of a man like Herder is markedly different from that of a man like Voltaire in France or of Reimarus in Germany. Indeed, in their reaction against the narrow rationalism of the eighteenth century and in their feeling for the unity of Nature and history these thinkers may be considered as representatives of a period of transition between the philosophy of the Enlightenment and the speculative idealism of the nineteenth century.

6. In the third volume of this *History*[1] an account was given of the political theories of men such as Machiavelli, Hooker, Bodin and Grotius. The first outstanding political philosophy of the period covered in the present volume is that of Thomas Hobbes. His chief political work, *Leviathan*, which was published in 1651, appears to be, when regarded superficially, a resolute defence of absolute monarchy. And it is quite true that Hobbes, who had a horror of anarchy and of civil war, emphasizes centralized power and the indivisibility of sovereignty. But his theory has fundamentally nothing to do with the notion of the divine right of kings or with the principle of legitimacy, and it could be used to support any strong *de facto* government, whether a monarchy or not. This was seen at the time by those who thought, though wrongly, that Hobbes had written the *Leviathan* to flatter Cromwell.

Hobbes begins with an extreme statement of individualism. In the so-called 'state of nature', the state which precedes, logically at least, the formation of political society, each individual strives after his self-preservation and the acquisition of power for the better attainment of this end; and there is no law in existence with reference to which his actions can be called unjust. This is the state of the war of every man against every man. It is a state of atomic individualism. Whether it existed as a historical reality or not is a secondary question: the main point is that if we think away political society and all that follows from its institution, we are left with a multiplicity of human beings, each of which seeks his own pleasure and self-preservation.

At the same time reason makes men aware of the fact that self-preservation can best be secured if they unite and substitute organized co-operation for the anarchy of the state of nature in

[1] Ch. XX.

which no man can feel safe from his fellows but in which life is attended by constant fear. Hobbes depicts men, therefore, as making a social covenant by which each man agrees to hand over to a sovereign his right of governing himself provided that every other member of the prospective society does the same. This covenant is obviously a fiction, a philosophical and rationalistic justification of society. But the point is that the constitution of political society and the erection of the sovereign take place together, by one act. It follows that if the sovereign loses his power, the society is dissolved. And this is precisely what happened, as Hobbes thought, during the civil war. The cementing bond of society is the sovereign. Hence if enlightened self-interest dictates the formation of political society, it also dictates the concentration of power in the hands of the sovereign. Any division of sovereignty was abhorrent to Hobbes, as tending towards social dissolution. He was not interested in monarchic absolutism as such; he was concerned with the cohesion of society. And if one presupposes an egoistic and individualistic interpretation of man, it follows that concentration of power in the hands of the sovereign is required to overcome the centrifugal forces which are always at work.

Perhaps the most significant feature of Hobbes's political theory is its naturalism. He does, indeed, speak of laws of nature or natural law, but he has not got in mind the mediaeval metaphysically based concept of the moral natural law. He means the laws of self-preservation and power. Moral distinctions come into being with the formation of the State, the establishment of rights and the institution of positive law. True, Hobbes does pay at any rate some lip-service to the idea of divine law; but his thoroughgoing Erastianism shows that to all intents and purposes the will of the sovereign, expressed in law, is the norm of morality. At the same time Hobbes is not concerned to expound a totalitarian doctrine in so far as this means that all life, including, for instance, economic life, should be actively directed and controlled by the State. His view is rather that the institution of the State and the concentration of indivisible sovereignty renders it possible for men to pursue their several ends in security and in a well-ordered manner. And though he speaks of the commonwealth as the mortal god, to whom, after the immortal God, we owe reverence, it is obvious that the State is for him a creation of enlightened self-interest. And if the sovereign loses his power to govern and can

no longer protect his subjects, that is the end of his title to rule.

Locke also starts from an individualistic position and makes society depend on a compact or agreement. But his individualism is different from that of Hobbes. The state of nature is not by essence a state of war between each man and his fellows. And in the state of nature there are natural rights and duties which are antecedent to the State. Chief among these rights is the right of private property. Men form political society for the more secure enjoyment and regulation of these rights. As for government, this is instituted by society as a necessary device to preserve peace, defend society and protect rights and liberties; but its function is, or should be, confined to this preservation of rights and liberty. And one of the most effective checks to unbridled despotism is the division of powers, so that the legislative and executive powers are not vested simply in the hands of one man.

With Locke, then, as with Hobbes, the State is the creation of enlightened self-interest, though the former stands closer to the mediaeval philosophers inasmuch as he allows that man is by nature inclined to social life and even impelled to it. The general spirit, however, of Locke's theory is different from that of Hobbes. Behind the latter we can see the fear of civil war and anarchy; behind the former we can see a concern with the preservation and promotion of liberty. The stress which Locke lays on the separation between the legislative and executive powers reflects to some extent the struggle between parliament and monarch. The emphasis placed on the right to property is often said to reflect the outlook of the Whig landowners, the class to which Locke's patrons belonged. And there is some truth in this interpretation, though it should not be exaggerated. Locke certainly did not envisage a monopoly of power in the hands of the landowners. According to the philosopher's statement, he wrote to justify, or hoped that his political treatise would justify, the Revolution of 1688. And it was his liberal outlook, with his defence of natural rights, and, within limits, of the principle of toleration, which exercised most influence on the eighteenth century, particularly in America. The common-sense atmosphere of his philosophy and its appearance (sometimes deceptive) of simplicity doubtless helped to extend its influence.

Both Hobbes and Locke founded the State on a covenant or compact or contract. Hume, however, pointed out the absence of

historical support for this theory. He also observed that if government is justified by consent of the governed, as Locke thought, it would be extremely difficult to justify the Revolution of 1688 and the title of William of Orange to rule in England. For the majority of the people were simply not asked for their opinions. In fact, it would be very difficult to justify any extant government. Political obligation cannot be derived from expressed consent; for we acknowledge this obligation even when there is no evidence at all of any compact or agreement. It is founded rather on a sense of self-interest. Through experience men come to feel what is for their interest and they act in certain ways without making any explicit agreements to do so. Political society and civic obedience can be justified on purely utilitarian grounds without the need of having recourse either to philosophical fictions like that of the social compact or to eternal and self-evident truths. If we wish to find a justification for political society and political obligation, we can find it in their utility, which is first known by a kind of feeling or sense of interest.

When we turn to Rousseau we find again the idea of a social contract. Political society rests ultimately upon a voluntary agreement whereby men agree to renounce the freedom of the state of nature for their own advantage and to attain freedom to live according to law. In the state of nature each individual possesses complete independence and sovereignty over himself; and when they join together to form society, the sovereignty which originally belonged to them as separate individuals belongs to them corporately. And this sovereignty is inalienable. The executive appointed by the people is simply the servant or practical instrument of the people.

This doctrine of popular sovereignty represents the democratic side of Rousseau's political theory. He himself came from Geneva, and he admired the vigorous and independent political life of the Swiss canton, which he contrasted with the sophisticated and artificial atmosphere of French civilization and with the monarchic constitution and oppressive ways of the *ancien régime*. Indeed, Rousseau's ideas about active popular government would be quite impracticable in anything but a Greek city-state or a small Swiss canton. At the same time his democratic ideas were influential in the movement which found expression in the French Revolution.

But though Rousseau's doctrine of the social contract falls into

the general pattern of the political theory of the Enlightenment, he added a new feature to political philosophy which was of considerable importance. Like Hobbes and Locke before him, he envisaged individuals as agreeing together to form society. But once the social contract has taken place, a new body or organism comes into being which possesses a common life and a common will. This common or general will always tends to the preservation and welfare of the whole, and it is the rule or norm of law and of justice and injustice. This infallible general will is not the same thing as 'the will of all'. If the citizens meet together and vote, their individual wills are expressed in their votes, and if the votes are unanimous, we have the will of all. But individuals may have an incorrect notion of what is for the public advantage, whereas the general will is never mistaken. In other words, the community always wills what is for its good, but it may be deceived in its idea what is actually for its good.

The general will thus becomes, when considered in itself, something inarticulate: it needs interpretation, articulate expression. There can be little doubt that Rousseau himself thought of it as finding expression, in practice, in the expressed will of the majority. And if one has in mind a small Swiss canton in which it is possible for all the citizens to vote on important issues, either as individuals or as members of associations, it is natural to think in this way. But in a large State such direct reference to the people is impracticable, except perhaps on rare occasions by means of a referendum. And in such a State the tendency will be for a few men, or for one man, to claim to embody in their wills, or in his will, the general will which is immanent in the people. Thus we find Robespierre saying of the Jacobins that 'our will is the general will', while Napoleon seems to have regarded himself, on occasion at least, as the organ and embodiment of the Revolution.

We are thus faced with the odd situation of Rousseau, the enthusiastic democrat, starting with individualism, the freedom of the individual in the state of nature, and ending with a theory of the organic State in which the quasi-mystical general will is embodied either in the will of the majority or in the will of one or more leaders. We then have either the despotism of the majority or the despotism of the leader or group of leaders. To say this is not to say that Rousseau fully understood the trend of his own theory. But he originated a paradoxical idea of liberty. To be free is to act according to one's will and according to the law of

which one is oneself the author. But the individual whose private will is at variance with the general will does not actually will what he 'really' wills. In being compelled, therefore, to submit to the expression of the general will which represents his own 'real' will, he is being forced to be free. The freedom of man in society can thus come to mean something very different from what is meant by freedom in the state of nature. And though Rousseau's political theory is akin to Locke's so far as the bare idea of a social contract is concerned, it looks forward at the same time to the philosophy of Hegel for whom the obedient citizen is truly free, since he obeys a law which is the expression of the universal, of the essential nature of the human spirit. It also looks forward to much later political developments which would have been abhorrent to Rousseau, as indeed to Hegel, but which could find in Rousseau's theory a theoretical justification.

7. It is not infrequently said that in the period of the Enlightenment a historical outlook was lacking. What is meant by this statement? Obviously, the statement does not mean that historiography was not practised in the eighteenth century. At least, if this were the meaning of the statement, the statement would be false. To see this, we have only to think, for example, of Hume's *History of England*, of *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* by Edward Gibbon (1737–94) and of the historical writings of Voltaire and Montesquieu. Nor should the statement be taken to mean that the eighteenth century was marked by no improvements in the writing of history. For example, there was a needed reaction against preoccupation with military, dynastic and diplomatic historiography. Emphasis was laid on cultural and intellectual factors, and attention was paid to the life of the people and to men's habits and customs. This emphasis is clear, for instance, in Voltaire's *Essai sur les mœurs*. Again, Montesquieu emphasized the influence of material conditions, such as climate, on the development of a people or nation and on its customs and laws.

At the same time the historiography of the eighteenth century suffered from serious defects. In the first place historians were, generally speaking, insufficiently critical of their sources and disinclined to carry out the work of historical research and of painstaking evaluation of evidence and documents which is required for objective writing. True, one could hardly expect a man of the world who dabbled in many branches of philosophy and letters to

give himself to research of this kind. But the comparative absence of the latter constituted a defect none the less.

In the second place the eighteenth-century historians were too much inclined to use history as a means of proving a thesis and as a source of moral lessons. Gibbon was concerned to show that the victory of Christianity had been a victory of barbarism and bigotry over enlightened civilization. Writers such as Voltaire concentrated in a rather complacent fashion on the victory of rationalism over what they regarded as the dead weight of tradition and obscurantism. They assumed not only the theory of progress but also the idea that progress consists in the advance of rationalism, free-thinking and science. According to Bolingbroke in his *Letters on the Study and Use of History* (1752), history is philosophy teaching us by examples how we ought to conduct ourselves in the situations of public and private life. And when the eighteenth-century historians emphasized the moral lessons of history, they were thinking, of course, of a morality set free from theological presuppositions, and connections. They were all opposed to the theological interpretation of history which had been given by Bossuet (1627–1704) in his *Discours sur l'histoire universelle*. But it does not seem to have occurred to them that in interpreting history in function of the Enlightenment, of the Age of Reason, they were showing an analogous, if different, bias. It would be a great mistake to imagine that because the writers of the Enlightenment were free-thinkers and rationalists, they were exempt from bias and from the tendency to subordinate historiography to moralistic and preconceived purposes. Ranke's call for objectivity in the first half of the nineteenth century applies just as much to the rationalist as to the theologically-minded historians. If we attribute bias to Bossuet, we cannot declare Gibbon exempt. The eighteenth-century historians were concerned not so much to understand the mentality and outlook of the men of past ages as to use what they knew, or thought they knew, of past eras to prove a thesis or to derive moral lessons or conclusions unfavourable to religion, at least to supernatural religion. In particular, the spirit of the Enlightenment was so sharply opposed to that of the Middle Ages that the historians of the former period not only failed to understand the mentality of the Middle Ages but also made no real effort to do so. For them the use of the Middle Ages was to serve as a foil to the Age of Reason. And this attitude is one of the reasons why the Enlightenment is said to be lacking in

an historical spirit. As we have seen, this accusation does not mean, or at least should not be taken to mean, that no interesting developments in historiography took place. It indicates rather a lack of imaginative insight and a tendency to interpret past history according to the standards of the Age of Reason. Gibbon, for example, is the opposite of Bossuet so far as the content of his thesis is concerned; but the secularist and rationalist thesis was no less a thesis than the bishop's preconceived theological scheme.

If one admits, as one must, that historiography is more than mere chronicling and that it involves selection and interpretation, it becomes very difficult to draw a hard-and-fast line between historiography and philosophy of history. However, when we find historians interpreting history as the working-out of some kind of general plan or reducing historical development to the operation of certain universal laws, it is reasonable to begin speaking of philosophy of history. A man who endeavours to write, for instance, the objective history of a particular region would not normally, I think, be classed as a philosopher of history. We are not accustomed to speak of Hume or of Justus Möser (author of an *Osnabrückische Geschichte*, 1768) as philosophers of history. But when a man treats of universal history and either gives a finalistic interpretation of historical development or concerns himself with universally-operative laws, it is not improper to speak of him as a philosopher of history. Bossuet in the seventeenth century would count as one. And in the eighteenth century there are a number of notable examples.

The most eminent of these is doubtless John-Baptist Vico (1668–1744). Vico was a Christian, and he did not belong to the camp of those who rejected the theological interpretation of history represented by St. Augustine and Bossuet. At the same time in his work *Principi di una scienza nuova d'intorno alla commune natura delle nazioni* (*Principles of a New Science Concerning the Common Nature of Nations*) he left aside purely theological considerations to examine the natural laws governing historical development. There are two points which we can notice here about this New Science. In the first place Vico did not think in terms of a lineal progress or development of humanity as a whole, but in terms of a series of cyclic developments. That is to say, the laws which govern the movement of history are exemplified in the rise, progress, decline and fall of each particular people or nation. In the second place Vico characterized each successive

phase in a cycle by its system of law. In the theocratic phase law is regarded as having divine origins and sanctions. This is the age of the gods. In the aristocratic phase law is in the hands of a few families (for example, in the hands of the patrician families in the Roman Republic). This is the age of heroes. In the phase of human government, the age of men, we have a rationalized system of law, in which there are equal rights for all citizens. In this scheme we can see an adumbration of Comte's three stages. But Vico was not a positivist philosopher; and further, as we have already seen, he retained the Greek idea of historical cycles, which was different from the nineteenth-century idea of human progress.

Montesquieu also concerned himself with law. In his *Esprit des lois* (1748) he set himself to examine the different systems of positive law. He tried to show that each is a system of laws which are linked by mutual relations, so that any given law involves a particular set of other laws and excludes another set. But why does one nation possess this system and another nation that system? By way of answer Montesquieu emphasized the part played by the form of government; but he also emphasized the influence of natural factors such as climate and geographical conditions as well as of acquired factors such as commercial relations and religious beliefs. Each people or nation will have its own constitution and system of law; but the practical problem is fundamentally the same for all, namely, that of developing the system of law which, given the relevant natural and historical conditions, will favour the greatest amount of liberty. It is at this point that the influence of the British constitution makes its mark on Montesquieu's thought. Liberty, he thought, is best assured by a separation of the legislative, executive and judicial powers.

With Condorcet we find a different conception of progress from that of Vico. As has already been remarked, in his *Esquisse d'un tableau historique des progrès de l'esprit humain* (1794) he envisages the indefinite progress of the human race. Before the sixteenth century we can distinguish a number of epochs, and we can find movements of retrogression, in particular the Middle Ages. But the Renaissance ushered in the beginning of a new scientific and moral culture to the development of which we can set no limits. Men's minds can, however, be limited by prejudice and narrow ideas, such as those fostered by religious dogma. Hence follows the importance of education, especially of scientific education.

In Germany, Lessing too proposed an optimistic theory of

historical progress. In his work *Die Erziehung des Menschengeschlects* (1780) he depicted history as the progressive education of the human race. There are occasional retrogressions and stoppages on the path of progress, but even these enter into the general scheme and serve its realization through the centuries. As for religion, history is, indeed, the education of the human race by God. But there is no final and absolute form of religious belief. Rather is each religion a stage in the progressive 'revelation' of God.

In his work on language (*Ueber den Ursprung der Sprache*, 1772) Herder dealt with the natural origin of language and attacked the view that speech was originally communicated by God to man. In regard to religion he emphasized its natural character. It is closely allied with poetry and myth and is due originally to man's desire to explain phenomena. In developed religion, especially in Christianity, we see the growth and strength of the moral element; and this is why Christianity responds to the human being's moral needs and yearnings. In other words, Herder reacted strongly against the rationalistic criticism of and opposition to religion, especially Christianity, which was characteristic of the eighteenth century. He disliked the separation of the analytic and critical reason from man's other powers, and he showed a sense for human nature as a whole. In his *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* (*Ideas for the Philosophy of the History of Mankind*, 1784–91) he described history as a purely natural history of human powers, actions and propensities, modified by time and place. And he tried to trace man's development in connection with the character of his physical environment, proposing a theory of the origin of human culture. Theologically speaking, the histories of the different nations form a harmonious whole, the working out of divine providence.

It was only natural that in a period when thought centred round man himself, interest should have grown in the historical development of human culture. And in the eighteenth century we can see an attempt, or rather a series of attempts, to understand history by discovering some alternative principles of explanation to the theological principles of St. Augustine and Bossuet. But even those who believe that the construction of a philosophy of history is a profitable undertaking must admit that the philosophical historians of the eighteenth century were over-hasty in the development of their syntheses. Vico, for instance, based his

cyclic interpretation of history largely on a consideration of Roman history. And none of them possessed a sufficiently wide and accurate factual knowledge to warrant the construction of a philosophy of history, even granting that such a thing is a legitimate enterprise. Indeed, some of the men of the French Enlightenment were inclined to despise and belittle the painstaking work of a Muratori (1672–1750), who prepared a great collection of sources for Italian history. At the same time we can see the growth of a broad view of the development of human culture, considered in relation to a variety of factors from the influence of climate to the influence of religion. This is especially observable in the case of Herder, who passes beyond the confines of the Enlightenment when this term is understood in the narrow sense, particularly, that is, with reference to French rationalism.

8. Mention has already been made of a number of philosophers who died in the early years of the nineteenth century. But among those who wrote in the closing decades of the eighteenth century by far the greatest name is that of Immanuel Kant (1724–1804). Whatever one may think of his philosophy, nobody would deny his outstanding historical importance. Indeed, in certain respects his thought marks a crisis in European philosophy, so that we can speak of the pre-Kantian and the post-Kantian eras in modern philosophy. If Descartes and Locke can be regarded as the dominating figures in the thought of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, that of the nineteenth century is dominated by Kant. To speak in this way is, indeed, to be guilty of oversimplification. To imagine that all the philosophers of the nineteenth century were Kantians would be as erroneous as to suppose that the philosophers of the eighteenth century were all either Cartesians or followers of Locke. Yet just as Descartes' influence on the development of continental rationalism and Locke's influence on the development of British empiricism are both beyond doubt, even though Spinoza and Leibniz on the Continent and Berkeley and Hume in England were all original thinkers, so is Kant's influence on nineteenth-century thought undeniable, even though Hegel, for example, was a great thinker of marked originality who cannot be classed as a 'Kantian'. Indeed, Kant's attitude towards speculative metaphysics has exercised a powerful influence ever since his time. And many people today think that he successfully exposed its pretensions, even though they may not be prepared to accept much of his

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positive thought. It is true that to over-emphasize what I may call the negative or destructive influence of Kant is to give a one-sided view of his philosophy. But this does not alter the fact that in the eyes of many people he appears as the great debunker of speculative metaphysics.

Kant's intellectual life falls into two periods, the pre-critical and the critical periods. In the first he was under the influence of the Leibnizian-Wolffian tradition; in the second he worked out his own original point of view. His first great work, *The Critique of Pure Reason*, appeared in 1781. Kant was then fifty-seven years old; but he had already been engaged for some ten years or more in the elaboration of his own philosophy, and this is why he was able to publish in quick succession the works which have made his name famous. In 1783 appeared the *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysic*, in 1785 the *Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysic of Morals*, in 1788 the *Critique of Practical Reason*, in 1790 the *Critique of Judgment*, in 1793 *Religion within the Limits of Bare Reason*. The papers found in his study after his death and published posthumously show that he was working until the end on the reconsideration, reconstruction or completion of certain parts of his philosophical system.

It would be inappropriate to expound the philosophy of Kant in an introductory chapter. But something must be said about the problems which presented themselves to him and about his general line of thought.

Among Kant's works two are concerned with moral philosophy and one with religion. This fact is significant. For if we take a broad view of the matter, we can say that Kant's fundamental problem was not dissimilar to that of Descartes. He declared that there were for him two main objects of wonder and admiration, 'the starry heavens above and the moral law within'. On the one hand he was faced by the scientific conception of the world, with the physical universe of Copernicus, Kepler and Newton, as subject to mechanical causality and determined in its motions. On the other hand he was faced by the rational creature who can understand the physical world, set over against it, so to speak, as subject to object, who is conscious of moral obligation and of freedom, and who sees in the world the expression of rational purpose. How can these two aspects of reality be reconciled? How can we harmonize the physical world, the sphere of determinism, with the moral order, the sphere of freedom? It is not

simply a matter of juxtaposing the two worlds, as though they were completely separate and independent. For they meet in man. Man is both an item in Nature, in the physical system, and a moral and free agent. The question is, therefore, how can the two points of view, the scientific and the moral, be harmonized without denying either of them. This, it seems to me, is Kant's fundamental problem. And it is as well to realize this from the outset. Otherwise the emphasis which is very naturally placed on the analytical and critical aspects of his thought may almost totally obscure the profound speculative motivation of his philosophy.

But though Kant's general problem was not unlike that of Descartes, a great deal of water had flowed under the bridge since the latter's time; and when we come to Kant's particular problems the change becomes evident. On the one hand he had before him the metaphysical systems of the great continental rationalists. Descartes had tried to put metaphysical philosophy on a scientific basis; but the emergence of conflicting systems and the failure to attain assured conclusions cast doubt on the validity of the aim of traditional metaphysics, the aim of extending our knowledge of reality, especially of reality as transcending the data of sense-experience. On the other hand Kant was faced by British empiricism, culminating in the philosophy of Hume. But pure empiricism, it seemed to him, was quite unable to justify or account for the success of Newtonian physics and the evident fact that it increased man's knowledge of the world. On Hume's principles an informative statement about the world would be no more than a statement of what has actually been experienced. For example, we have always found, as far as our experience goes, that on the occurrence of event *A* event *B* regularly follows. But the empiricism of Hume would give us no objective justification for the universal statement that whenever *A* occurs *B* must follow. In other words, pure empiricism cannot account for universal and necessary informative judgments (which Kant called synthetic *a priori* judgments). Yet the Newtonian physics presupposes the validity of such judgments. Both of the main lines of modern philosophy, therefore, seem to be defective. The rationalist metaphysics does not appear to provide any certain knowledge about the world. And this prompts us to ask whether metaphysical knowledge is, indeed, possible. Pure empiricism, however, is unable to justify a branch of study, namely, physical science, which certainly does increase our knowledge of the world. And

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this prompts us to ask what is missing in pure empiricism and how the universal, necessary and informative judgments of science are possible. How can we justify the assurance with which we make these judgments?

The problem or problems can be expressed in this way. On the one hand Kant saw that the metaphysicians[1] tended to confuse logical relations with causal relations and to imagine that one could produce by *a priori* reasoning a system which would give us true and certain information about reality. But it did not seem to him at all evident that, even if we avoid this confusion, we can obtain metaphysical knowledge, say about God, by employing the principle of causality. Hence we can profitably ask whether metaphysics is possible and, if so, in what sense it is possible. On the other hand, while agreeing with the empiricists that all our knowledge begins in some sense with experience, Kant saw that the Newtonian physics could not be justified on purely empiricist lines. For the Newtonian physics presupposed, in his opinion, the uniformity of Nature. And it was precisely the belief in the uniformity of Nature of which Hume could give no adequate theoretical justification, even though he tried to give a psychological account of the origin of the belief. The question arises, therefore, what is the theoretical justification of our belief if we once assume with the empiricists that all our knowledge begins with experience?

In answering this last question Kant proposes an original hypothesis. Even if all our knowledge begins with experience, it does not necessarily follow that it all arises from experience. For it may be the case (and Kant thought that it is in fact the case) that our experience comprises two elements, impressions which are given and the *a priori* forms and elements by which these impressions are synthesized. Kant does not mean to suggest that we have innate ideas, nor that the *a priori* elements in cognition are objects of knowledge antecedently to experience. What he is suggesting is that man, the experiencing and knowing subject, is so constituted that he necessarily (because he is what he is) synthesizes the ultimately given data or impressions in certain ways. In other words, the subject, man, is not simply the passive recipient of impressions: he actively (and unconsciously) synthesizes the raw data, so to speak, imposing on them the *a priori*

[1] This applies to the pre-Kantian continental rationalists, not to a mediaeval philosopher such as Aquinas. Kant's knowledge of mediaeval philosophy, however, was extremely meagre.

forms and categories by which the world of our experience is built up. The world of experience, the phenomenal world or reality as it appears to us, is not simply our construction, a dream as it were; nor is it simply something given; it is the result of an application of *a priori* forms and categories to what is given.

What is the advantage of such an hypothesis? It can be illustrated in this way. Appearances are the same both for the man who accepts the Copernican hypothesis that the earth revolves round the sun and for the man who does not accept it or knows nothing of it. As far as appearances go, both men see the sun rising in the east and setting in the west. But the Copernican hypothesis accounts for facts which cannot be accounted for on the geocentric hypothesis. Similarly, the world appears in the same way to the man who recognizes no *a priori* element in knowledge as it appears to the man who does recognize such an element. But on the hypothesis that there is such an element we can explain what pure empiricism cannot explain. If we assume, for example, that by the very fact that our minds are what they are we synthesize data according to the causal relation, Nature will always appear to us as governed by causal laws. In other words, we are assured of the uniformity of Nature. Nature means Nature as appearing; it cannot mean anything else. And given the subjective constants in human cognition, there must be corresponding constants in phenomenal reality. If, for instance, we necessarily apply *a priori* forms of space and time to raw sense-data (of which we are not directly conscious), Nature must always appear to us as spatio-temporal.

I do not propose to enter into any detailed account of Kant's *a priori* conditions of experience. The appropriate place to do this will be in the relevant chapters in the sixth volume. But there is one important point which must be noted because it bears directly on Kant's problem about the possibility of metaphysics.

The function, Kant asserts, of the *a priori* conditions of experience is to synthesize the manifold of sense-impressions. And what we know with their aid is phenomenal reality. We cannot, therefore, legitimately use a subjective category of the understanding to transcend experience. We cannot, for instance, legitimately employ the concept of causality to transcend phenomena by using a causal argument to prove the existence of God. Nor can we ever know metaphenomenal reality, if we are talking about certain

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theoretical knowledge. Yet this is precisely what the metaphysicians have attempted to do. They have tried to extend our theoretical or scientific knowledge to reality as it is in itself; and they have used categories having validity only within the phenomenal world to transcend phenomena. Such attempts were foredoomed to failure. And Kant tries to show that metaphysical arguments of the traditional type lead to insoluble antinomies. It is no matter for wonder, therefore, if metaphysics makes no progress comparable to that of physical science.

The only 'scientific' metaphysics which there can be is the metaphysics of knowledge, the analysis of the *a priori* elements in human experience. And the greater part of Kant's work consists in an attempt to perform this task of analysis. In *The Critique of Pure Reason* he attempts to analyse the *a priori* elements which govern the formation of our synthetic *a priori* judgments. In the *Critique of Practical Reason* he investigates the *a priori* element in the moral judgment. In the *Critique of Judgment* he sets out to analyse the *a priori* elements governing our aesthetic and teleological judgments.

But though Kant ruled out what he regarded as classical metaphysics, he was far from showing indifference towards the principal themes treated by the metaphysicians. These themes were for him freedom, immortality and God. And he endeavoured to reinstate on a different basis what he had excluded from the province of theoretical and scientific knowledge.

Kant starts from the fact of the awareness or consciousness of moral obligation. And he tries to show that moral obligation presupposes freedom. If I ought, I can. Further, the moral law commands perfect conformity with itself, perfect virtue. But this is an ideal for the attainment of which, Kant assumes, endless duration is required. Hence immortality, in the sense of never-ending progress towards the ideal, is a 'postulate' of the moral law. Again, though morality does not mean acting with a view to one's happiness, morality should produce happiness. But the proportioning of happiness to virtue requires the idea of a Being who can and will effect the connection. The idea of God is thus a 'postulate' of the moral law. We cannot prove, in the way that some metaphysicians sought to prove, that man is free, that his soul is immortal and that there exists a transcendent God. But we are conscious of moral obligation; and freedom, immortality and God are 'postulates' of the moral law. It is a matter of practical faith,

that is to say, of a faith involved in committing oneself to moral activity.

This doctrine of 'postulates' is sometimes interpreted either as a cheap pragmatism or as a conventional concession to the prejudices of the orthodox. But I think that Kant himself took the matter much more seriously. He regarded man as a kind of mixed being. As part of the natural order, he is subject to mechanical causality like any other natural object. But he is also a moral being who is conscious of obligation. And to recognize obligation is to recognize that the moral law has a claim upon one which one is free to fulfil or reject.[1] Moreover, to recognize a moral order is to recognize implicitly that moral activity is not doomed to frustration and that ultimately human existence 'makes sense'. But it cannot make sense without immortality and God. We cannot prove freedom, immortality and God's existence scientifically. For these ideas have no place in science. Nor can we prove them by the arguments of traditional metaphysics. For these arguments are invalid. But if a man recognizes moral obligation at all, he is implicitly asserting a moral order which in turn implies the immortality of the soul and the existence of God. It is not a case of strict logical implication, so that we can produce a series of watertight proofs. Rather is it a case of discovering and affirming by faith that view of reality which alone gives full meaning and value to the consciousness of moral obligation mediated by conscience.

Kant leaves us, therefore, with what one may call perhaps a bifurcated reality. On the one hand there is the world of Newtonian science, a world governed by necessary causal laws. This is the phenomenal world, not in the sense that it is mere illusion, but in the sense that it presupposes the operation of those subjective conditions of experience which determine the ways in which things appear to us. On the other hand there is the supersensuous world of the free human spirit and of God. According to Kant, we cannot give any strict theoretical proof that there is such a supersensuous world. At the same time we have no adequate reason for asserting that the material world, governed by mechanical causality, is the only world. And if our interpretation of the world as a mechanical system depends on the operation of

[1] The moral law, for Kant, is promulgated by the practical reason. In a sense which will be explained in the appropriate place man gives the law to himself. But obligation is without meaning except in relation to a being which is free to obey or disobey the law.

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subjective conditions of experience, of sense-experience, that is to say, we have even less reason for making this assertion than we should have in any case. Moreover, the moral life, especially the consciousness of obligation, opens up a sphere of reality which the moral man affirms by faith as a postulate or demand of the moral law.

This is not the place to subject Kant's philosophy to critical discussion. I wish instead to remark that what I have called Kant's 'bifurcation' represents a dilemma of the modern mind. We have seen that the new scientific conception of the world threatened to monopolize man's view of reality as a whole. Descartes in the seventeenth century endeavoured to combine the affirmation of spiritual reality with an acceptance of the world of mechanical causality. But he believed that he could show conclusively that, for example, there exists an infinite and transcendent God. Kant, in the closing decades of the eighteenth century, refused to allow that such truths are capable of being proved in the ways in which Descartes and Leibniz had thought that they could be proved. At the same time he felt strongly that the world of Newtonian physics was not coterminous with reality. He therefore relegated the affirmation of supersensuous reality to the sphere of 'faith', trying to justify this by reference to the moral consciousness. Now, there are people today who regard science as the only means of extending our factual *knowledge*, though at the same time they feel that the world as presented by science is not the only reality and that it in some way points beyond itself. For them the system of Kant possesses a certain contemporaneity, even if, as developed in his works, it cannot stand up to criticism. There is, that is to say, some similarity between their situation and that in which Kant found himself. I say 'some similarity' because the setting of the problem has changed very much since the time of Kant. On the one hand there have been changes in scientific theory. On the other hand philosophy has developed in a variety of ways. Yet it is arguable that the basic situation remains the same.

To end the present chapter with a consideration of Kant's philosophy is, I think, appropriate. Brought up in a diluted version of continental rationalism, he was awoken from his dogmatic slumbers, as he put it, by David Hume. At the same time, though he rejected the claims of the continental metaphysicians to increase our knowledge of reality, he was also convinced

of the insufficiency of pure empiricism. We can say, therefore, that in his thought the influence of continental rationalism and British empiricism combined to give rise to a new and original system. It must be added, however, that Kant put a full stop neither to metaphysics nor to empiricism. Yet he made a difference to both. Metaphysics in the nineteenth century was not the same as it had been in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. And though British empiricism in the nineteenth century was more or less unaffected by Kant, the neo-empiricism of the twentieth century has consciously tried to deal metaphysics a far more decisive blow than was delivered by Kant who, when all is said and done, was himself something of a metaphysician.

CHAPTER II

DESCARTES (I)

Life and works[1]*—Descartes' aim—His idea of method—The theory of innate ideas—Methodic doubt.*

1. RENÉ DESCARTES was born on March 31st, 1596, in Touraine, being the third child of a councillor of the parliament of Brittany. In 1604 his father sent him to the college of La Flèche which had been founded by Henry IV and was directed by the Fathers of the Society of Jesus. Descartes remained at the college until 1612, the last few years being given to the study of logic, philosophy and mathematics. He tells us[2] of his extreme desire to acquire knowledge, and it is clear that he was an ardent student and a gifted pupil. 'I did not feel that I was esteemed inferior to my fellow-students, although there were amongst them some destined to fill the places of our masters.'[3] When we remember that Descartes later subjected traditional learning to strong adverse criticism and that even as a schoolboy he became so dissatisfied with a great part of what he had been taught (mathematics excepted) that on leaving the college he quitted for a time the pursuit of learning, we may be tempted to draw the conclusion that he felt resentment towards his masters and contempt for their system of education. But this was far from being the case. He spoke of the Jesuits of La Flèche with affection and respect, and he regarded their system of education as greatly superior to that provided in most other pedagogical institutions. It is clear from his writings that he considered that he had been given the best education available within the framework of tradition. Yet on looking back he came to the conclusion that the traditional learning, in some of its branches at least, was not based on any solid foundation. Thus he remarks sarcastically that 'philosophy teaches us to speak with an appearance of truth about all things and causes us to be

[1] In the references to the writings of Descartes the following abbreviations have been used. *D.M.* stands for the *Discourse on Method*, *R.D.* for the *Rules for the Direction of the Mind*, *M.* for the *Meditations*, *P.P.* for the *Principles of Philosophy*, *S.T.* for the *Search after Truth*, *P.S.* for the *Passions of the Soul*, *O.* and *R.O.* for *Objections* and *Replies to Objections* respectively. The letters *A.T.* refer to the edition of the works of Descartes by Charles Adam and Paul Tannery; Paris, 13 vols., 1897–1913.

[2] *D.M.*, 1; *A.T.*, VI. 3.

[3] *D.M.*, 1; *A.T.*, VI, 5.

(combined with empiricism) in the writings of Berkeley and which flourished in the latter part of the nineteenth century and in the first two decades of the twentieth. On the Continent British philosophy is often supposed to be inherently and constantly empiricist and even naturalistic in character. The existence of another tradition needs, therefore, to be emphasized if we are to form a balanced view of the development of British thought.

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CHAPTER IV

LOCKE (1)

Life and writings—Locke's moderation and common sense—The purpose of the Essay*—The attack on innate ideas—The empiricist principle.*

1. JOHN LOCKE was born at Wrington, near Bristol, in 1632. His father was a country attorney, and he was educated at home until he went in 1646 to Westminster School, where he remained until 1652. In that year he entered the university of Oxford as a junior student of Christ Church. After taking in due course the B.A. and M.A. degrees, he was elected in 1659 to a senior studentship at Christ Church. In the following year he was made a lecturer in Greek, and later he was appointed Reader in rhetoric and Censor of Moral Philosophy.

When Locke started studying philosophy at Oxford, he found there a debased and rather petrified form of Scholasticism for which he conceived a great distaste, regarding it as 'perplexed' with obscure terms and useless questions. No doubt, like some other Renaissance and modern philosophers who revolted against Aristotelian Scholasticism, he was more influenced by it than he himself was aware; but his interest in philosophy was aroused by his private reading of Descartes rather than by what was then being taught at Oxford. This is not to say that Locke was ever a Cartesian. But on certain points he was influenced by Descartes, and in any case the latter's writings showed him that clear and orderly thinking is as possible inside as it is outside the sphere of philosophy.

Locke's studies at Oxford were not confined to philosophy. As a friend of Sir Robert Boyle and his circle, he interested himself in chemistry and physics, and he also pursued studies in medicine, though it was not until a later date (1674) that he obtained his medical degree and a licence to practise. He did not, however, take up the practice of medicine as a regular career, nor did he continue his academic life at Oxford. Instead he became involved, in a minor way, in public affairs.

In 1665 Locke left England as secretary to a diplomatic mission, headed by Sir Walter Vane, to the Elector of Brandenburg. Two

years later, after his return to England, he entered the service of Lord Ashley, afterwards the first earl of Shaftesbury, acting as medical adviser to his patron and as tutor to the latter's son. But Shaftesbury evidently held a higher opinion of Locke's abilities; for when he became Lord Chancellor in 1672, he appointed his friend to the post of secretary for the presentation of ecclesiastical benefices. In 1673 Locke was made secretary to the council of trade and plantations; but Shaftesbury's political fortunes suffered a reverse, and Locke retired to Oxford, where he still held his studentship at Christ Church. Ill-health, however, led him to go to France in 1675, and he remained there until 1680. During this period he met Cartesians and anti-Cartesians and was influenced by the thought of Gassendi.

On his return to England Locke re-entered the service of Shaftesbury. But the latter was engaged in intrigue against King James II, then Duke of York, and he was finally forced to take refuge in Holland, where he died in the January of 1683. Locke, believing that his own safety also was menaced, fled to Holland in the autumn of the same year. Charles II died in 1685, and Locke's name was placed on a list of people wanted by the new government in connection with Monmouth's rebellion. He therefore lived under an assumed name and did not return to England even when his name had been removed from the list of wanted persons. However, as Locke was aware, plans were afoot for placing William of Orange on the throne of England, and shortly after the revolution of 1688 Locke returned to his own country, the Dutchman having been safely installed in London.

For reasons of health Locke declined the proffered post of ambassador to the Elector of Brandenburg; but he retained a minor office in London until in 1691 he retired to Oates in Essex, where he lived as guest of the Masham family, though from 1696 until 1700 his duties as Commissioner of Trade forced him to spend part of the year in the capital. He died in October 1704, while Lady Masham was reading the Psalms to him. Incidentally, this lady was the daughter of Ralph Cudworth, the Cambridge Platonist, with whom Locke had been acquainted and with some of whose views he was in sympathy.

Locke's principal work is his *Essay concerning Human Understanding*.[1] In 1671 he was engaged in philosophical discussion with five or six friends when it occurred to him that they could not

[1] References to this work by volume and page are to the edition by A. C. Fraser.

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make further progress until they had examined the mind's capacities and seen 'what objects our understandings were, or were not, fitted to deal with'.[1] Locke prepared a paper on the subject, and this formed the nucleus of the two early drafts of the *Essay*. He continued work on the treatise during the following years, and the first edition was published in 1690 (preceded in 1688 by a French abstract for Le Clerc's *Bibliothèque universelle*). Three further editions were published during Locke's lifetime.

In 1690 there also appeared Locke's *Two Treatises of Civil Government*. In the first he attacked the theory of the divine right of kings as expounded by Sir Robert Filmer, while in the second he developed his own political theory. According to Locke in his preface to the *Treatises* his motive in writing was to justify the revolution of 1688 and make good the title of William of Orange to occupy the throne of England. But this does not mean that his political principles had been hurriedly conceived with a view to achieving this practical purpose. Moreover, his expression of his political theory remains one of the most important documents in the history of liberal thought, just as the *Essay* remains one of the most important documents in the history of empiricism.

In 1693 Locke published *Some Thoughts concerning Education* and in 1695 *The Reasonableness of Christianity*. In 1689 he published in Latin, and anonymously, his first *Letter on Toleration*; and this was followed, in 1690 and 1693, by two other letters on the same subject. An incomplete fourth letter appeared posthumously in 1706, together with his discourse on miracles, his examination of Malebranche's opinion about seeing all things in God, the uncompleted work on *The Conduct of the Understanding*, his memoirs of Shaftesbury, and some letters. Other material has been subsequently published.

2. Locke, as is evident from his writings, was very much a man of moderation. He was an empiricist, in the sense that he believed that all the material of our knowledge is supplied by sense-perception and introspection. But he was not an empiricist in the sense that he thought that we can know only sense-presentations. In his own modest fashion he was a metaphysician. He was a rationalist in the sense that he believed in bringing all opinions and beliefs before the tribunal of reason and disliked the substitution of expressions of emotion and feeling for rationally grounded judgments. But he was not a rationalist in the sense of

[1] *Essay*, 'Epistle to the Reader'.

one who denies spiritual reality or the supernatural order or the possibility of divine revelation of truths which, while not contrary to reason, are above reason, in the sense that they cannot be discovered by reason alone and may not be fully understandable even when revealed. He disliked authoritarianism, whether in the intellectual or in the political field. And he was one of the earlier exponents of the principle of toleration. But he was far from being a friend of anarchy; and there were limits to the extent to which he was willing to apply the principle of toleration. He was a religious man; but he had no sympathy with fanaticism or with intemperate zeal. One does not look to him for brilliant extravaganzas or for flashes of genius; but one finds in him an absence of extremes and the presence of common sense.

One or two commentators have objected against over-emphasizing Locke's 'common sense'. And it is true, for example, that his theory of an occult substrate in material things is not a common-sense view, if by this one means a view spontaneously held by a man who is innocent of all philosophy. But when one speaks of Locke's common sense, one does not mean to imply that his philosophy is no more than an expression of the spontaneously held views of the ordinary man. One means rather that he endeavoured to reflect on and analyse common experience, that he did not strive after originality by producing far-fetched theories and one-sided, if brilliant, interpretations of reality, and that the theories which he did produce were, in his opinion, required by rational reflection on common experience. To those who expect from a philosopher startling paradoxes and novel 'discoveries' he inevitably appears as pedestrian and unexciting. But he gives throughout the impression of being an honest thinker. In reading him one is not forced to ask oneself constantly whether he can possibly have believed what he was saying.

In his writings Locke employs ordinary English, apart from a few technical terms; and he is to this extent easy to follow. But, as far as the *Essay* at any rate is concerned, terms are not always employed in the same sense; and he is to this extent difficult to follow. In his 'Epistle to the Reader' Locke makes open acknowledgement of the fact that the *Essay* was 'written by incoherent parcels; and after long intervals of neglect, resumed again, as my humour or occasions permitted'. This serves to explain defects in arrangement and a certain repetitiveness; 'the way it has been writ in, by catches, and many long intervals of interruption, being

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apt to cause some repetitions'. The reason for leaving the results as they are is provided by Locke himself. 'But to confess the truth, I am too lazy, or too busy to make it shorter.' He might, however, have profitably cleared up some major inconsistencies and fixed more definitely the meaning of certain terms. For example, sometimes he speaks as though what we know is our ideas and the relations between ideas, and, indeed, he defines the idea as the object of the understanding when a man thinks. But at other times he implies that we know at least some things directly. In other words, he sometimes implies a representationist view of knowledge, while on other occasions he implies the opposite. Again, in what he has to say about universal ideas there are several different strands or tendencies of thought. Sometimes he speaks in a nominalist fashion, but at other times he implies what the Scholastics call 'moderate realism'. And the result of all this is that under the *prima facie* simplicity and clarity of Locke's writing there is a certain amount of ambiguity and confusion. It is not that Locke was incapable of clearing up these obscurities of thought: he has himself provided what is doubtless the true explanation, namely, that he was either too lazy or too busy to do so.

3. We have seen that Locke undertook to institute an inquiry concerning human knowledge. Other philosophers before him had, of course, reflected on and written about human knowledge. In the Greek world both Plato and Aristotle had done so and, from a very different point of view, the sceptics. St. Augustine had reflected on this subject, and the leading mediaeval philosophers all considered it in one connection or another. In post-Renaissance philosophy Descartes had treated the problem of certainty, and in England both Francis Bacon and Hobbes had written about human knowledge. But Locke was really the first philosopher to devote his main work to an inquiry into human understanding, its scope and its limits. And we can say that the prominent place occupied in modern philosophy by the theory of knowledge is in large measure due to him, even though it was the influence of Kant which subsequently led to this branch of philosophical inquiry usurping to all intents and purposes the whole field of philosophy; that is to say, among those thinkers who adhered more or less closely to the position of Kant himself. The mere fact, therefore, that Locke devoted a large-scale treatise to an inquiry into human understanding and knowledge has a peculiar importance of its own.

Now it has already been mentioned that in his 'Epistle to the Reader', prefaced to the *Essay*, Locke says that he considered it necessary to inquire, with what objects are our understandings fitted to deal, with what objects are they not fitted to deal. That he asked such a question is understandable. For he thought that men not infrequently wasted their energies on problems which could not be solved by the human mind. And he also considered that this procedure is an occasion for scepticism in others. If we confined our attention to matters which fall within the scope of the human intellect, we should make progress in knowledge, and less occasion would be given for scepticism. But though it is understandable that he asked the question, its formulation, as given above, is unfortunate. For how, it may be asked, can we distinguish between the objects with which the mind is capable of dealing and those with which it is incapable of dealing without passing beyond the scope of the mind? Or the objection can be expressed in this way. If we can mention any object with which the human mind is incapable of dealing, have we not implicitly stated that the mind is capable of saying something about it and so 'dealing' with it to a certain extent?

Further, Locke defines an idea as 'whatever is meant by phantasm, notion, species, or whatever it is which the mind can be employed about in thinking'.[1] Here he tells us that the objects of the mind are ideas. And it would appear that the mind is fitted to deal with all its ideas. We could not say, with what objects the mind is not fitted to deal. For if we could say this, we should have ideas of these objects. And in this case we could deal with them, since an idea is defined as that about which the mind can be employed in thinking.

In his introduction to the *Essay* Locke says that his purpose is 'to inquire into the original, certainty, and extent of human knowledge; together with the grounds and degrees of belief, opinion, and assent'.[2] He thus makes no clear distinction between the psychological question concerning the origin of our ideas and epistemological questions such as the nature of certain knowledge and the sufficient grounds for 'opinion'. But this could hardly be expected at the time. Before speaking of the method which he proposes to employ, he remarks that it is worth while 'to search out the bounds between opinion and knowledge; and examine by what measures, in things, whereof we have no certain knowledge,

[1] *E.*, Introduction, 8; 1, p. 32. [2] *Ibid.*, 2; 1, p. 26.

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we ought to regulate our assent, and moderate our persuasions'.[1] Here we have a more or less epistemological programme. But the first point of the method of inquiry which Locke then gives is to inquire 'into the origin of those ideas, notions, or whatever else you please to call them, which a man observes, and is conscious to himself he has in his mind; and the ways, whereby the understanding comes to be furnished with them'.[2] Here we have a psychological inquiry.

This inquiry into our ideas covers the first and second books of the *Essay*. In the first book Locke argues against the theory of innate ideas, while in the second he gives his own theories about our ideas, their origin and nature. But, as one might expect when an idea is defined as whatever is the object of the understanding when a man thinks, discussion of ideas is sometimes discussion of our ideas of things and sometimes of the things of which we have ideas.

The third book treats of words. It is closely connected with the preceding book, because 'words in their primary or immediate signification stand for nothing but the ideas in the mind of him that uses them'.[3] Ideas represent things, and words stand for ideas.

The second and third points in Locke's method are 'to show what knowledge the understanding hath by those ideas; and the certainty, evidence, and extent of it' and to inquire 'into the nature and grounds of faith, or opinion'.[4] These subjects, knowledge and opinion, are dealt with in the fourth book.

4. With a view to clearing the ground in preparation for laying the empiricist foundations of knowledge Locke first disposes of the theory of innate ideas. He understands this theory as being the doctrine that 'there are in the understanding certain innate principles; some primary notions, *κοιναὶ ἔννοιαι*, characters, as it were stamped upon the mind of man, which the soul receives in its very first being; and brings into the world with it'.[5] Some of these principles are speculative. Locke gives as examples 'whatsoever is, is' and 'it is impossible for the same thing to be and not to be'. Others are practical, that is to say general moral, principles. In the course of his discussion of this theory Locke makes explicit mention of Lord Herbert of Cherbury's theory of 'common notions'.[6] But he says that he consulted the latter's *De veritate*

[1] *E.*, Introduction, 3; 1, p. 27. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 28. [3] *E.*, 3, 2, 2; 11, p. 9.
[4] *E.*, Introduction, 3; 1, p. 28. [5] *E.*, 1, 1, 1; 1, p. 37. [6] *E.*, 1, 2, 15f.; 1, p. 80.

'when I had writ this' (the foregoing part of the discussion). Hence he did not set out to attack Lord Herbert specifically; and he does not tell us which philosopher or philosophers he had in mind when he started to attack the theory of innate ideas. His remarks about this theory being 'an established opinion amongst some men' and about there being 'nothing more commonly taken for granted' suggest perhaps that he was simply writing in general against the theory, without intending to direct his criticism against any individual in particular, Descartes, for example, or against a particular group, such as the Cambridge Platonists. He includes in a global fashion all the upholders of the theory.

The chief argument, according to Locke, which is customarily adduced in favour of the theory is universal consent. Because all men agree about the validity of certain speculative and practical principles, it needs must be, it is argued, that these principles are originally imprinted on men's minds and that they brought them into the world with them 'as necessarily and really as they do any of their inherent faculties'.[1]

Against this theory Locke argues in the first place that even if it were true that all men agree about certain principles this would not prove that these principles are innate, provided that some other explanation can be given of this universal agreement. In other words, if the agreement of all mankind about the truth of these principles can be explained without introducing the hypothesis of innate ideas, the hypothesis is superfluous, and the principle of economy should be applied. Locke was, of course, convinced that the origin of all our ideas can easily be explained without postulating innate ideas. And for this reason alone he was prepared to exclude the theory.

Secondly, Locke argues that the argument which is brought in favour of the theory of innate ideas is worthless. For there is no universal consent about the truth of any principle. Children and idiots have minds, but they have no knowledge of the principle that it is impossible for the same thing to be and not to be. Yet if this principle were really innate, it must be known. 'No proposition can be said to be in the mind, which it never yet knew, which it was never yet conscious of.'[2] Moreover, 'a great part of illiterate people, and savages, pass many years, even of their rational age, without ever thinking on this and the like general propositions'.[3] The general principles of the speculative order are 'seldom

[1] *E.*, 1, 1, 2; 1, p. 39. [2] *E.*, 1, 1, 5; 1, p. 40. [3] *E.*, 1, 1, 12; 1, p. 45.

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mentioned in the huts of Indians, much less are they to be found in the thoughts of children, or any impression of them on the minds of naturals'.[1] As for the practical or moral principles, 'it will be hard to instance any one moral rule, which can pretend to so general and ready an assent as, "What is, is" or to be so manifest a truth as this, that "it is impossible for the same thing to be, and not to be"'.[2] Where is the moral rule to which all men assent? The general principles of justice and of observing contracts seem to be the most generally received. But it is difficult to believe that those who habitually infringe these rules have received them at birth as innate principles. It may be urged that these people assent in their minds to rules which they contradict in practice. But 'I have always thought the actions of men the best interpreters of their thoughts'.[3] And 'it is very strange and unreasonable to suppose innate practical principles, that terminate only in contemplation'.[4] We have, indeed, natural tendencies; but natural tendencies are not the same thing as innate principles. If moral principles were really innate, we should not find those differences in moral outlook and practice in different societies and in different epochs which we do in fact find.

It may be objected that all this presupposes that principles, to be innate, must be consciously apprehended from the beginning of life, and that this presupposition is unwarranted. For they may be innate, not in the sense that infants in arms consciously apprehend them, but in the sense that they are apprehended when people come to the use of reason. They may even be innate simply in the sense that if and when a man comes to understand the meaning of the relevant terms, he necessarily sees the truth of the proposition in question.

If to apprehend the truth of a principle when one reaches the age of reason means apprehending its truth when one reaches a certain determinate age, Locke did not believe that there are any principles which a man necessarily apprehends when he has passed a certain time in this world. Indeed, he thought, as we have seen, that there are men who apprehend no general abstract principles at all. As for the view that those principles are innate the truth of which is seen when the meaning of the terms is known, Locke did not deny that there are principles of this kind, but he refused to admit that there is any adequate reason for calling them

[1] *E.*, 1, 1, 27; 1, p. 62. [2] *E.*, 1, 2, 1; 1, p. 64.
[3] *E.*, 1, 2, 3; 1, pp. 66–7. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 67.

'innate'. If immediate assent to a proposition once the terms are understood is a certain sign that the proposition is an innate principle, people 'will find themselves plentifully stored with innate principles'.[1] There will be 'legions of innate propositions'.[2] Moreover, the fact that the meanings of the terms have to be learned and that we have to acquire the relevant ideas is a sure sign that the propositions in question are not in fact innate.

If, therefore, we take 'innate' to mean explicitly innate, Locke objects that all the available evidence goes to show that there are no explicitly innate principles. If, however, 'innate' is taken to mean implicitly or virtually innate, Locke asks what is really signified by the statement that there are innate principles in this sense. 'It will be hard to conceive what is meant by a principle imprinted on the understanding implicitly; unless it be this, that the mind is capable of understanding and assenting firmly to such propositions.'[3] And nobody denies that the mind is capable of understanding and assenting firmly to, for example, mathematical propositions. Why, then, call them innate? By the addition of this epithet nothing is explained and nothing further is said.

In view of the facts that the theory of innate ideas is not a theory which counts in contemporary thought and that in any case the Kantian theory of the *a priori* superseded the older theory of innate ideas, it may seem that I have given too much space to an outline of Locke's treatment of the subject. But his discussion of the theory serves at least to illustrate Locke's common-sense attitude and his constant recourse to the available empirical evidence. Moreover, the purpose of a history of philosophy is not simply that of mentioning theories which have an importance also today. And in Locke's time the theory of innate ideas was influential. To a certain extent he may have been tilting at a windmill; for it is hard to think of anyone who believed that infants in arms apprehend explicitly any innate propositions. But, as we have seen, Locke also attacked the theory of implicitly or virtually innate ideas and principles; the theory in this form was held by men of the calibre of Descartes and Leibniz.

5. Setting aside, therefore, the hypothesis of innate ideas, how does the mind come to be furnished with ideas? 'Whence has it all the materials of reason and knowledge? To this I answer, in one word, from *experience*. In that all our knowledge is founded, and

[1] *E.*, 1, 1, 18; 1, p. 51. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 53. [3] *E.*, 1, 1, 22; 1, p. 56.

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from that it ultimately derives itself.'[1] But what does Locke understand by experience? His theory is that all our ideas are ultimately derived from sensation or from reflection; and that these two make up experience. 'Our senses, conversant about particular sensible objects, do convey into the mind several distinct perceptions of things, according to the ways wherein those objects do affect them . . . when I say the senses convey into the mind, I mean, they from external objects convey into the mind what produces there those perceptions.'[2] This is sensation. The other source of ideas is the perception of the operations of our own minds, such as perceiving, thinking, doubting, believing and willing. This source is reflection, 'the ideas it affords being such only as the mind gets by reflecting on its own operations within itself'.[3] All our ideas come from one or other of these sources.

Attention may be drawn in passing to the ambiguous use of the term 'idea' to which allusion has already been made. Locke frequently speaks, for example, of our ideas of sensible qualities, while at other times the sensible qualities are spoken of as ideas. Further, as will be shown later, he uses the term 'idea' not only for sense-data but also for concepts and universal ideas. And though it is doubtless possible to make out what Locke really wishes to say on a given occasion, this careless use of the term 'idea' scarcely serves the cause of clarity.

In any case, however, Locke is convinced that experience is the fountain of all ideas. If we observe children, we see how their ideas are formed, develop and increase in number together with their experience. The human being's attention is primarily directed outwards, and sensation is thus the chief source of ideas. 'Growing up in a constant attention to outward sensation, (men) seldom make any considerable reflection on what passes within them till they come to be of riper years; and some scarce ever at all.'[4] But though reflection or introspection is not generally developed to the same extent as sensation, we have no ideas of psychical activities such as thinking and willing save by actual experience of these activities. If the words are used when we have had no experience at all of the corresponding activities, we do not know what the words mean. Locke's conclusion is, therefore, that 'all those sublime thoughts which tower above the clouds, reach as high as heaven itself, take their rise and footing here: in all that good

[1] *E.*, 2, 1, 2; 1, pp. 121–2. [2] *E.*, 2, 1, 3; 1, pp. 122–3.
[3] *E.*, 2, 1, 4; 1, p. 124. [4] *E.*, 2, 1, 8; 1, p. 127.

extent wherein the mind wanders, in those remote speculations, it may seem to be elevated with, it stirs not one jot beyond those ideas which sense or reflection have offered for its contemplation'.[1]

Locke's general principle, that all our ideas are grounded in experience and depend on it, was basic in classical British empiricism. And in view of the fact that rationalist philosophers such as Descartes and Leibniz believed in virtually innate ideas, we can speak of it as the 'empiricist principle'. But this should not be taken to mean that Locke invented it. To take but one example, St. Thomas Aquinas in the thirteenth century maintained that all our natural ideas and knowledge are grounded in experience, and that there are no innate ideas. Moreover, Aquinas admitted sense-perception and introspection or reflection as 'fountains' of ideas, to use Locke's way of talking, though he subordinated the latter to the former, in the sense that attention is directed first to external material objects. Aquinas was not, of course, what is generally called an 'empiricist'. Nor, for the matter of that, was Locke himself a pure 'empiricist', if by pure empiricism we mean a philosophy which excludes all metaphysics. But I do not wish to institute any comparison between Aquinas and Locke. My object in mentioning the former is simply to point out that it is a mistake to suppose that Locke invented the theory that our ideas originate in experience and to speak as though the doctrine of innate ideas had held undisputed sway in the Middle Ages. Quite apart from the fourteenth-century philosophers of the Ockhamist current of thought, a metaphysician of the thirteenth century such as Aquinas, who adhered more closely than did philosophers such as St. Bonaventure to the Aristotelian way of thinking, had no belief in the hypothesis of innate ideas. Locke's assertion of the empiricist principle was of great historical importance, but it was not a novelty in the sense that nobody before him had maintained anything of the kind.

[1] *E.*, 2, 1, 24; 1, p. 142.

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CHAPTER V

LOCKE (2)

Simple and complex ideas—Simple modes; space, duration, infinity—Mixed modes—Primary and secondary qualities—Substance—Relations—Causality—Identity in relation to inorganic and organic bodies and to man—Language—Universal ideas—Real and nominal essences.

1. WHAT was said in the final section of the last chapter about the origin of our ideas may suggest that in Locke's view the mind is purely passive; that is, that ideas are 'conveyed into the mind' and lodged there, and that in the formation of ideas the mind plays no active part at all. But this would be an erroneous interpretation of Locke's theory, if it were taken to be an adequate account. For he made a distinction between simple and complex ideas. And while the mind receives the former passively, it exercises an activity in the production of the latter.

As examples of simple ideas Locke first gives the coldness and hardness of a piece of ice, the scent and whiteness of a lily, the taste of sugar. Each of these 'ideas' comes to us through one sense only. Thus the idea of whiteness comes to us only through the sense of sight, while the idea of the scent of a rose comes to us only through the sense of smell. Locke calls them, therefore, 'ideas of one sense'. But there are other ideas which we receive by more than one sense. Such are 'space or extension, figure, rest, and motion. For these make perceivable impressions, both on the eyes and touch; and we can receive and convey into our minds the ideas of the extension, figure, motion and rest of bodies, both by seeing and feeling.'[1]

Both these classes of simple ideas are ideas of sensation. But there are also simple ideas of reflection, the two principal ones being the ideas of 'perception or thinking, and volition or willing'.[2] Further, there are other simple ideas 'which convey themselves into the mind by all the ways of sensation and reflection, viz. pleasure or delight, and its opposite, pain or uneasiness; power; existence; unity'.[3] Thus pleasure or pain, delight or uneasiness, accompanies almost all our ideas, both of sensation and reflection,

[1] *E.*, 2, 5; 1, p. 158. [2] *E.*, 2, 6; 1, p. 159. [3] *E.*, 2, 7, 1; 1, p. 160.

while 'existence and unity are two other ideas that are suggested to the understanding by every object without, and every idea within'.[1] So also we obtain the idea of power both by observing the effects which natural bodies produce on one another and by observing in ourselves our own power of moving the members of our bodies at will.

We have, therefore, four classes of simple ideas. And a common characteristic of all these ideas is that they are passively received. 'For the objects of our senses do, many of them, obtrude their particular ideas upon our minds whether we will or not; and the operations of our minds will not let us be without at least some obscure notions of them. No man can be wholly ignorant of what he does when he thinks.'[2] Moreover, once the mind has these simple ideas it cannot alter or destroy them or substitute new ones at will. 'It is not in the power of the most exalted wit, or enlarged understanding, by any quickness or variety of thought, to invent or frame one new simple idea in the mind, not taken in by the ways aforementioned: nor can any force of the understanding destroy those that are there.'[3]

On the other hand the mind can actively frame complex ideas, using simple ideas as its material. A man can combine two or more simple ideas into one complex idea. He is not confined to bare observation and introspection, but he can voluntarily combine the data of sensation and reflection to form new ideas, each of which can be considered as one thing and given one name. Such are, for example, 'beauty, gratitude, a man, an army, the universe'.[4]

Locke's general notion of a complex idea presents no great difficulty. For example, we combine the simple ideas of whiteness, sweetness and hardness to form the complex idea of a lump of sugar. In what sense Locke's simple ideas can properly be called 'simple' is doubtless disputable, just as it is open to question in what sense they can properly be termed 'ideas'. Still, the general notion is clear enough, as long as we do not scrutinize it too closely. But Locke complicates matters by giving two classifications of complex ideas. In the original draft of the *Essay* he divided complex ideas into ideas of substances (for example, the idea of a man or of a rose or of gold), of collective substances (for example, of an army), of modes or modifications (of figure, for example, or of thinking or running) and of relations, 'the considering of one idea

[1] *E.*, 2, 7, 7; I, p. 163. [2] *E.*, 2, 1, 25; I, p. 142.
[3] *E.*, 2, 2, 2; I, p. 145. [4] *E.*, 2, 12, 1; I, p. 214.

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with relation to another'.[1] And this classification reappears in the published *Essay*, being reduced for convenience to the three heads of modes, substances and relations. It is a classification in terms of objects. But he includes another threefold classification in the published *Essay*, and puts it in the first place. This is a classification according to the mind's activities. The mind may combine simple ideas into one compound one, 'and thus all complex ideas are made',[2] a remark which seems at first sight to restrict complex ideas to ideas of this type. Secondly, the mind can bring together two ideas, whether simple or complex, and compare them with one another without uniting them into one. And thus it obtains its ideas of relations. Thirdly, it can separate ideas 'from all other ideas that accompany them in their real existence; this is called abstraction: and thus all its general ideas are made'.[3] Having given this classification in the fourth edition of the *Essay*, Locke then proceeds to give his original classification. In the ensuing chapters he follows the latter, treating first of modes, then of substances, and afterwards of relations.

Once given the general theory of simple and complex ideas, it is incumbent on Locke to justify it. It is his business to show how abstract ideas which seem to be extremely remote from the immediate data of sensation and reflection are in fact explicable in terms of the compounding or comparing of simple ideas. 'This I shall endeavour to show in the ideas we have of space, time and infinity, and some few others, that seem the most remote from those originals.'[4]

2. We have seen that complex ideas are divided by Locke into the ideas of modes, substances and relations. Modes are defined as 'complex ideas which, however compounded, contain not in them the supposition of subsisting by themselves, but are considered as dependencies on or affections of substances; such as are ideas signified by the words triangle, gratitude, murder, etc.'.[5] And there are two kinds of modes, namely, simple and mixed. Simple modes are 'variations or different combinations of the same simple idea, without the mixture of any other, (while mixed modes are) compounded of simple ideas of several kinds, put together to make one complex one'.[6] For example, if we suppose that we have the simple idea of one, we can repeat this idea or combine three ideas of the same kind to form the complex idea of three, which is a

[1] Edit. Rand, p. 120. [2] *E.*, 2, 12, 1; I, p. 213. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 214.
[4] *E.*, 2, 12, 8; I, p. 217. [5] *E.*, 2, 12, 4; I, p. 215. [6] *E.*, 2, 12, 5; I, pp. 215–16.

simple mode of one. According to Locke's definition it is a simple mode, because it is the result of combining ideas 'of the same kind'. The idea of beauty, however, is the idea of a mixed mode. It is the idea of a mode and not of a substance, because beauty does not subsist of itself but is an affection or mode of things. It is the idea of a mixed mode, because it consists 'of a certain composition of colour and figure, causing delight in the beholder',[1] that is to say, it consists of ideas of different kinds.

Examples of simple modes discussed by Locke are space, duration, number, infinity, modes of motion and modes of sound, colour, taste and smell. Thus 'to slide, roll, tumble, walk, creep, run, dance, leap, skip' and so on are 'all but the different modifications of motion'.[2] Similarly, blue, red and green are variations or modifications of colour. And some indication has been given above of the way in which Locke regarded distinct numbers as simple modes of number. But it is not so easy to see how he could think of space, duration and infinity as simple modes, and a brief explanation must be given here.

The simple idea of space comes to us through two senses, sight and touch. 'This space considered barely in length between any two beings, without considering anything else between them, is called distance; if considered in length, breadth and thickness, I think it may be called capacity. The term extension[3] is usually applied to it in what manner soever considered.'[4] Now, 'each different distance is a different modification of space; and each idea of any different distance or space is a simple mode of this idea'.[5] And we can repeat or add to or expand a simple idea of space until we come to the idea of a common space, for which Locke suggests the name of 'expansion'. The complex idea of this common space, in which the universe is thought of as extended, is thus due to combining or repeating or enlarging simple ideas of space.

The ultimate foundation of our idea of time is our observation of the train of ideas succeeding one another in our minds. 'Reflection on these appearances of several ideas, one after another, in our minds, is that which furnishes us with the idea of succession; and the distance between any parts of that succession, or between

[1] *E.*, 2, 12, 5; 1, p. 216.
[2] *E.*, 2, 18, 2; 1, p. 294.
[3] Locke insists, against Descartes and his followers, that extension and body are not the same thing. The idea of body involves, for example, the idea of solidity, but the idea of extension does not.
[4] *E.*, 2, 13, 3; 1, p. 220.
[5] *E.*, 2, 13, 4; 1, p. 220.

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the appearances of any two ideas in our minds, is that we call duration.'[1] We thus obtain the ideas of succession and duration. And by observing certain phenomena occurring at regular and apparently equidistant periods we get the ideas of lengths or measures of duration, such as minutes, hours, days and years. We are then able to repeat ideas of any length of time, adding one to another without ever coming to the end of such addition; and so we form the idea of eternity. Lastly, 'by considering any part of infinite duration, as set out by periodical measures, we come by the idea of what we call time in general'.[2] That is to say, time in general, in one of the possible meanings of the term, is 'so much of infinite duration as is measured by and coexistent with the existence and motions of the great bodies of the universe, so far as we know anything of them: and in this sense time begins and ends with the frame of this sensible world'.[3]

Finite and infinite, says Locke, seem to be modes of 'quantity'. It is true that God is infinite; but He is at the same time 'infinitely beyond the reach of our narrow capacities'.[4] For present purposes, therefore, the terms 'finite' and 'infinite' are attributed only to things which are capable of increase or diminution by addition or subtraction; 'and such are the ideas of space, duration and number'.[5] And the question is, how the mind obtains the ideas of finite and infinite as modifications of space, duration and number. Or, rather, the question is, how the idea of infinity arises, since the idea of the finite is easily explicable in terms of experience.

Locke's answer is what we would expect from the foregoing paragraphs. We can continue adding to any idea of a finite space, and, however long we go on adding, we are no nearer the limit beyond which no addition is possible. We thus obtain the idea of infinite space. It does not follow that there is such a thing as infinite space; for 'our ideas are not always proofs of the existence of things';[6] but we are concerned simply with the origin of the idea. Similarly, by repeating the idea of any finite length of duration, we arrive, as has already been seen, at the idea of eternity. Again, in the addition or increase of number we can set no bound or limit.

An obvious objection to the foregoing account of the origin of the idea of the infinite is that Locke slurs over the gap between, say, the ideas of progressively larger finite spaces and the idea of

[1] *E.*, 2, 14, 3; 1, p. 239.
[2] *E.*, 2, 14, 31; 1, p. 256.
[3] *E.*, 2, 15, 6; 1, p. 262.
[4] *E.*, 2, 17, 1; 1, p. 277.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 276.
[6] *E.*, 2, 17, 4; 1, p. 278.

infinite space. But it should be noted that he does not claim that we have or can have a positive idea of the infinite. 'Whatsoever positive ideas we have in our minds of any space, duration or number, let them be ever so great, they are still finite; but when we suppose an inexhaustible remainder, from which we remove all bounds, and wherein we allow the mind an endless progression of thoughts, without ever completing the idea, there we have our idea of infinity.'[1] He can say, therefore, with regard to number, that 'the clearest idea it (the mind) can get of infinity is the confused incomprehensible remainder of endless addible numbers, which affords no prospect of stop or boundary'.[2] In an idea of the infinite there is, of course, a positive element, namely, the idea of 'so much' space or duration of 'so great' a number; but there is also an indefinite or negative element, namely, the indefinite ideas of what lies beyond, conceived as boundless.

Commentators have drawn attention to the crudeness and inadequacy of Locke's description of the genesis of our idea of the infinite and to the fact that his account of infinite number would certainly not satisfy the modern mathematician. But whatever may be the defects of Locke's analysis, whether from the psychological or from the mathematical point of view, his main endeavour, of course, is to show that even those ideas, such as the ideas of immensity or boundless space, of eternity and of infinite number, which seem to be very remote from the immediate data of experience, can nevertheless be explained on empiricist principles without recourse to the theory of innate ideas. And on this point many, who criticize his analysis on other grounds, would agree with him.

3. Mixed modes, says Locke, consist of combinations of simple ideas of different kinds. These ideas must be compatible, of course; but, apart from this condition, any simple ideas of different kinds can be combined to form a complex idea of a mixed mode. This complex idea will then owe its unity to the mind's activity in effecting the combination. There may, indeed, be something in nature corresponding to the idea, but this is by no means necessarily the case.

As examples of mixed modes Locke gives, for instance, obligation, drunkenness, hypocrisy, sacrilege and murder. No one of these is a substance. And each one (or, more accurately, the idea of each one) is a combination of simple ideas of different kinds.

[1] *E.*, 2, 17, 8; 1, pp. 281–2. [2] *E.*, 2, 17, 9; 1, p. 283.

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Can they be said to exist, and, if so, where? Murder, for example, can be said to exist externally only in the act of murder. Hence its external existence is transient. It has, however, a more lasting existence in men's minds, that is, as an idea. But 'there too they (mixed modes) have no longer any existence than whilst they are thought on'.[1]

They appear to have their most lasting existence in their names; that is, in the words which are used as signs for the relevant ideas. In the case of mixed modes, indeed, we are very prone, according to Locke, to take the name for the idea itself. The name plays an important role. Because we have the word 'parricide', we tend to have the corresponding complex idea of a mixed mode. But because we have no one name for the killing of an old man (who is not the murderer's father) as distinct from the killing of a young man, we do not combine the relevant simple ideas into a complex idea, nor do we regard the killing of an old man, as distinct from a young man, as a specifically different type of action. Locke was well aware, of course, that we could choose to form this complex idea as a distinct idea and attach a separate name to it. But, as will be seen presently, he believed that one of the principal ways in which we come to have complex ideas of mixed modes is through the explanation of names. And where there is no name, we are apt not to have the corresponding idea.

There are three ways in which we come to have complex ideas of mixed modes. First, 'by experience and observation of things themselves. Thus, by seeing two men wrestle or fence, we get the idea of wrestling or fencing.'[2] Secondly, by voluntarily putting together several simple ideas of different kinds: 'so he that first invented printing, or etching, had an idea of it in his mind, before it ever existed'.[3] Thirdly, 'which is the most usual way, by explaining the names of actions we never saw, or notions we cannot see'.[4] What Locke means is clear enough. A child, for example, learns the meanings of many words not by actual experience of the things signified but by having the meanings explained to him by others. He may never have witnessed sacrilege or murder, but he can obtain the complex ideas of these mixed modes if someone explains the meanings of the words in terms of ideas with which he is already familiar. In Locke's terminology, the complex idea can be conveyed to the child's mind by resolving it into simple ideas and then combining these ideas, provided, of course, that the child

[1] *E.*, 2, 22, 8; 1, p. 385. [2] *E.*, 2, 22, 9; 1, p. 385. [3] *Ibid.* [4] *Ibid.*

already has these simple ideas or, if he has not got them, that they can be conveyed to him. As a child has the idea of man and most probably also possesses the idea of killing, the complex idea of murder can easily be conveyed to him, even though he has never witnessed a murder. Indeed, the majority of people have never witnessed a murder, but they none the less have the complex idea of it.

4. It will be remembered that Locke divides complex ideas into the ideas of modes, of substances and of relations. And after treating of his distinction between simple and complex ideas I have gone on to deal with the complex ideas of simple and mixed modes, in order to illustrate more easily the application of his theory that all our ideas are derived ultimately from sensation and reflection; that is, from experience, without there being any need to postulate the hypothesis of innate ideas. But before proceeding to discuss the ideas of substance and of relation I wish to say something about his theory of primary and secondary qualities. He treats of this matter in a chapter entitled 'Some farther considerations concerning our simple ideas', before, that is to say, proceeding to speak of complex ideas.

Locke makes a distinction between ideas and qualities. 'Whatsoever the mind perceives in itself or is the immediate object of perception, thought or understanding, that I call idea; and the power to produce any idea in our mind I call quality of the subject wherein that power is.'[1] Taking the example of a snowball, he explains that the snowball's powers of producing in us the ideas of white, cold and round are called by him 'qualities', while the corresponding 'sensations or perceptions' are called 'ideas'.

A further distinction must now be made. Some qualities are inseparable from a body, whatever changes it undergoes. A grain of wheat has solidity, extension, figure and mobility. If it is divided, each part retains these qualities. 'These I call original or primary qualities of body, which I think we may observe to produce simple ideas in us, viz. solidity, extension, figure, motion or rest, and number.'[2] Besides these primary qualities there are also secondary qualities. The latter are 'nothing in the objects themselves but powers to produce various sensations in us by their primary qualities'.[3] Such are colours, sounds, tastes and odours. Locke also mentions tertiary qualities, namely, the powers in bodies of producing, not ideas in us, but changes of bulk, figure,

[1] *E.*, 2, 8, 8; 1, p. 169. [2] *E.*, 2, 8, 9; 1, p. 170. [3] *E.*, 2, 8, 10; 1, p. 170.

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texture and motion in other bodies, so that the latter operate on our senses in a different way from the way in which they previously operated. 'Thus the sun has a power to make wax white, and fire to make lead fluid.'[1] But we can confine our attention to primary and secondary qualities.

Locke supposes that in the production of our ideas both of primary and of secondary qualities 'insensible particles' or 'imperceptible bodies' emanate from objects and act on our senses. But there is this great difference between our ideas of primary and those of secondary qualities. The former are resemblances of bodies, 'and their patterns do really exist in the bodies themselves; but the ideas produced in us by these secondary qualities have no resemblance of them at all. There is nothing like our ideas existing in the bodies themselves. They are, in the bodies we denominate from them, only a power to produce those sensations in us; and what is sweet, blue or warm in idea is but the certain bulk, figure and motion of the insensible parts in the bodies themselves, which we call so.'[2] Thus our idea of figure, for example, resembles the object itself which causes the idea in us: the object really has figure. But our idea of, say, red does not resemble the rose considered in itself. What corresponds in the rose to our idea of red is its power of producing in us the idea of red through the action of imperceptible particles on our eyes. (In modern terminology we would speak, of course, of the action of light-waves.)

It is not terminologically accurate to say that according to Locke secondary qualities are 'subjective'. For, as we have seen, what he calls secondary qualities are powers in objects of producing certain simple ideas in us. And these powers are really in the objects. Otherwise, of course, the effect would not be produced. But the ideas of secondary qualities, that is to say, the simple ideas of colours, sounds and so on, which are produced in us are not copies, as it were, of colours and sounds in the objects themselves. Obviously, we can say that the ideas of secondary qualities are subjective; but then so are the ideas of primary qualities, if we mean by 'subjective' existing in the percipient subject. Locke's point is, however, that the latter resemble what is in the object, whereas the former do not. 'The particular bulk, number, figure and motion of the parts of fire or snow are really in them, whether any one's senses perceive them or no; and therefore they may be called real qualities, because they really exist in those bodies. But light,

[1] *E.*, 2, 8, 23; 1, p. 179. [2] *E.*, 2, 8, 15; 1, p. 173.

heat, whiteness or coldness are no more really in them than sickness or pain is in manna.'[1] 'Why are whiteness and coldness in snow, and pain not, when it produces the one and the other idea in us; and can do neither, but by the bulk, figure, number and motion of its solid parts?'[2] 'Let us consider the red and white colours in porphyry: hinder light from striking on it, and its colours vanish, it no longer produces any such ideas in us; upon the return of light, it produces these appearances on us again.'[3] Again, 'Pound an almond, and the clear white colour will be altered into a dirty one, and the sweet taste into an oily one. What real alteration can the beating of the pestle make in any body, but an alteration of the texture of it?'[4] Such considerations show us that our ideas of secondary qualities have no resembling counterparts in bodies.

This theory about secondary, as distinct from primary, qualities was not Locke's invention. It had been held by Galileo[5] and Descartes, and something of the kind had been maintained by Democritus[6] many centuries before. And at first sight at least it may appear to be a perfectly reasonable conclusion, perhaps the only reasonable conclusion, to be drawn from the available scientific data. Nobody, for instance, would wish to question the fact that our sensations of colour depend on certain differences in the wave-lengths of the light rays which affect our eyes. But it is possible to maintain that there is no necessary connection at all between admitting the scientific data which are more or less established and saying that it is improper to speak, for instance, of an object as crimson or blue. If two men argue about the physical events involved in sensation, the argument is a scientific and not a philosophical argument. If they are in agreement about the scientific data, they can dispute about the propriety or impropriety of speaking of roses as white or red, and of sugar as sweet and of tables as hard. And it might well be maintained that the scientific data provide no cogent reasons for saying anything else but what we are accustomed to say. But it would not be appropriate to discuss the problem here for its own sake. I wish instead to point out the very difficult position in which Locke places himself.

That Locke's way of expressing himself is confused and careless is scarcely open to denial. Sometimes he speaks of 'the ideas' of

[1] *E.*, 2, 8, 17; 1, p. 174.
[2] *E.*, 2, 8, 16; 1, p. 174.
[3] *E.*, 2, 8, 19; 1, p. 176.
[4] *E.*, 2, 8, 20; 1, p. 176.
[5] See vol. III of this *History*, p. 287.
[6] See vol. I of this *History*, pp. 124–5.

white and black. And it is clear enough that if the term 'idea' were taken in the ordinary sense, these ideas can only be in the mind. If an idea can be said to be somewhere, where else can it be said to be but in the mind? True, he tells that what he here calls 'ideas' are sensations or perceptions. But, again, that our sensations are our sensations and not the object's which produces them is an obvious truism. And Locke does not raise the question whether, if the object is not crimson or sweet, the sensation is to be spoken of as crimson or sweet. He simply says that we have an idea or sensation of crimson or sweet. However, these questions left aside, the main difficulty which arises on Locke's premisses arises from the fact that for him an idea is 'the immediate object of perception, thought or understanding'.[1] We do not know things immediately but mediately, by means of ideas. And these ideas (in the present context we can substitute sense-data, if we like) are regarded as representing things, as signs of them. Ideas of primary qualities really resemble things; ideas of secondary qualities do not. But if what we know immediately are ideas, how can we ever know whether these ideas do or do not resemble things? How, for the matter of that, can we be certain that things other than our ideas even exist? For if we know only ideas immediately, we are in no position to compare ideas with things and ascertain whether the former resemble the latter or not, or even to establish whether there are any things other than ideas. On Locke's representative theory of perception he has no means of establishing the validity of his distinction between primary and secondary qualities.

Locke was not unaware of this difficulty. As will be seen later on, he fell back on the notion of causality to show that there are things which correspond to our ideas. When we observe constantly recurring collections of simple ideas, which are conveyed to us without choice on our part (except, of course, for the choice not to shut one's eyes and stop one's ears), it is at least highly probable that there are external things which cause these ideas, at least during the time when the latter are being passively received by our minds. And from the common-sense point of view this inference is reliable. But, apart from any intrinsic difficulties in this theory, it would scarcely be sufficient to warrant his distinction between primary and secondary qualities. For this seems to require further knowledge than the knowledge that there is 'something out there'.

[1] *E.*, 2, 8, 8; 1, p. 169.

Berkeley, as will be shown later in connection with the latter's philosophy, maintained that Locke's arguments to show that colour, taste, odour and so on are ideas in our minds and not real qualities of objects, could just as well be employed to show that the so-called primary qualities are ideas in our minds and not real qualities of objects. And there is obviously a great deal to be said in favour of this point of view. According to Locke, primary qualities are inseparable from bodies. But this is true only if he is speaking of determinable and not of determinate primary qualities. To take one of his own examples, the two parts of a divided grain of wheat certainly possess extension and figure; but they do not possess the determinate extension and figure of the whole grain of wheat. One can also say, however, of a pounded almond that even if, as Locke asserts, it has not the same colour as the unpounded almond, it still possesses colour. And do not the perceived size and shape of an object vary with the position of the percipient subject and with other physical conditions just as much as secondary qualities vary?

The foregoing considerations are not, of course, intended to express doubt concerning the scientific data which can be used to support Locke's position. They are intended to show some of the difficulties which arise on Locke's theory when this is presented as a philosophical theory and thus as something more than an account of scientific data. His representationist theory of perception is a particular source of difficulty. To be sure, he sometimes forgets this theory and speaks in common-sense terms, implying that we know objects immediately; but his prevalent and, so to speak, official position is that ideas are, in Scholastic language, the *media quae*, or immediate objects, of knowledge. And matters are further complicated because, as has already been noted, he uses the term 'idea' in different senses on different occasions.

5. Mention has been made above of 'collections' of simple ideas. We find certain groups of similar sense-data constantly recurring or tending to recur. For example, a certain colour and a certain shape may be associated with a certain scent and with a certain softness or hardness. This is a matter of common experience. If I go into the garden on a summer day I see certain patches of colour (say, the petals of a red rose) of definite shapes and I perceive a certain scent. I can also have certain experiences through the sense of touch, by performing the action which we call touching the rose. There is thus a given constellation or cluster or collection

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of qualities which appear to accompany one another and which are associated together in my mind. If I go into the same garden in the dark, I do not see the colour patches, but I perceive the scent and I can have similar experiences of touch to those which I had in the daylight. And I am confident that if there were sufficient light I should see the colours which appear to go with the scent and texture. Again, certain sounds may be associated in my experience with certain colours and with a certain shape. For instance, what we call the song of the blackbird is a succession of sounds which appear to go together with the presence of certain colours and with a certain figure or shape.

There are, therefore, collections or clusters of qualities or, as Locke puts it, 'ideas'. And 'not imagining how these simple ideas can subsist by themselves, we accustom ourselves to suppose some substratum wherein they do subsist and from which they do result; which therefore we call substance'.[1] This is the idea of substance in general, namely, 'a supposition of he knows not what support of such qualities, which are capable of producing simple ideas in us; which qualities are commonly called accidents'.[2] The mind supplies the idea of a substratum, a support for qualities. More accurately, the mind supplies the idea of a substratum or support in which the primary qualities inhere and which has the power of producing in us, by means of the primary qualities, simple ideas of secondary qualities. The general idea of substance is 'nothing but the supposed but unknown support of those qualities we find existing, which we imagine cannot subsist *sine re substante*, without something to support them, (and) we call that support *substantia*, which, according to the true import of the word, is in plain English "standing under" or "upholding" '.[3]

It is important to understand that Locke is talking about the origin of our idea of substance. Bishop Stillingfleet of Worcester at first understood him to mean that substance is nothing but the figment of men's fancies. To this Locke replied that he was discussing the idea of substance, not its existence. To say that the idea is grounded in our custom of supposing or postulating some support for qualities is not to say that this supposition or postulate is unwarranted and that there is no such thing as substance. In Locke's view the inference to substance is justified; but this does not alter the fact that it is an inference. We do not perceive substances; we infer substance as the support of 'accidents', qualities

[1] *E.*, 2, 23, 1; 1, pp. 390–1. [2] *E.*, 2, 23, 2; 1, p. 391. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 392.

or modes, because we cannot conceive the latter as subsisting by themselves. And to say that the general idea of substance is the idea of an unknown substratum is to say that the only characteristic note of the idea in our minds is that of supporting accidents; that is, of being the substratum in which the primary qualities inhere and which possesses the power of causing simple ideas in us. It is not to say that substance is a mere figment of the imagination.

This general idea of substance, which is not clear and distinct, must be distinguished from our distinct ideas of particular substances. These are 'nothing but several combinations of simple ideas. . . . It is by such combinations of simple ideas, and nothing else, that we represent particular sorts of substances to ourselves.'[1] For example, we have a number of simple ideas (of red or white, of a certain odour, a certain figure or shape, and so on) which go together in experience, and we call the combination of them by one name, 'rose'. Similarly, 'the idea of the sun, what is it but an aggregate of those several simple ideas, bright, hot, roundish, having a constant regular motion, at a certain distance from us, and perhaps some other?'[2] In fine, 'all our ideas of the several sorts of substances are nothing but collections of simple ideas, with a supposition of something to which they belong, and in which they subsist; though of this supposed something we have no clear distinct idea at all'.[3]

The simple ideas which we unite to form the complex idea of a particular substance are obtained through sensation or reflection. Thus our idea of the spiritual substance of the soul is obtained by combining together simple ideas of thinking, doubting and so on, which are obtained by reflection, with the vague and obscure notion of a substratum in which these psychical operations inhere.

It may be as well to remark at once that by 'spiritual substance' in this connection Locke means simply a substance which thinks. In the fourth book of the *Essay*, when discussing the extent of our knowledge he declares that 'we have the ideas of matter and thinking, but possibly shall never be able to know, whether any mere material being thinks or no'.[4] For all we know, divine omnipotence might be able to confer the faculty of thinking on a material thing. Dr. Stillingfleet, bishop of Worcester, objected that in this case it is impossible to prove that there is in us a spiritual substance. To this Locke replied that the concept of

[1] *E.*, 2, 23, 6; 1, p. 396. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 397.
[3] *E.*, 2, 23, 37; 1, p. 422. [4] *E.*, 4, 3, 6; 11, p. 192.

substance is vague and indeterminate, and that the addition of thinking makes it a spiritual substance. That there is a spiritual substance in us can thus be shown. But if Dr. Stillingfleet means by 'spiritual substance' an immaterial substance, the existence of such a substance in us cannot be strictly proved by reason. Locke does not say that God can confer the faculty of thinking on a material thing, but rather that he does not see that it is inconceivable that God should do so. As for the implications with regard to immortality, to which the bishop draws attention, our certainty on this matter is derived from faith in revelation rather than from strict philosophical demonstration.

Further, 'if we examine the idea we have of the incomprehensible Supreme Being, we shall find that we come by it in the same way, and that the complex ideas we have both of God and separate spirits are made up of the simple ideas we receive from reflection'.[1] When we frame the idea of God we enlarge to infinity the ideas of those qualities 'which it is better to have than to be without'[2] and combine them to form one complex idea. In Himself God is simple and not 'compounded'; but our idea of Him is complex.

Our distinct ideas of corporeal substances are made up of the ideas of primary qualities, those of secondary qualities (the powers in things of producing different simple ideas in us through the senses), and those of the powers of things to cause in other bodies or to receive in themselves such alterations of primary qualities as will produce different ideas in us from the ideas formerly produced. Indeed, 'most of the simple ideas that make up our complex ideas of substances, when truly considered, are only powers, however we are apt to take them for positive qualities'.[3] For example, the greater part of our idea of gold is made up of ideas of qualities (such as yellowness, fusibility and solubility in *aqua regia*) which, as they exist in the gold itself, are only active or passive powers.

Now, in so far as our distinct complex ideas of particular substances are simply combinations of simple ideas received through sensation and reflection, their formation can be explained in terms of Locke's empiricist premisses. For he expressly allowed for the formation of complex ideas by combining simple ideas. But it seems to be doubtful whether his premisses permit of his explaining the formation of the general idea of substance as an occult substratum. Dr. Stillingfleet thought at first that Locke meant that substance is nothing but a combination of qualities. And in

[1] *E.*, 2, 23, 33; 1, p. 418. [2] *Ibid.* [3] *E.*, 2, 23, 37; 1, p. 422.

his reply Locke distinguished between our complex ideas of particular substances and the general idea of substance. The former are obtained by combining simple ideas, but the latter is not. How, then, is it obtained? By 'abstraction', Locke tells us. But earlier on he has described the process of abstraction as 'separating them (ideas) from all other ideas that accompany them in their real existence'.[1] And in the formation of the general idea of substance it is not a question of fixing the attention on one particular member of a cluster of ideas and omitting or abstracting from the rest, but rather of inferring a substratum. And in this case a novel idea seems to make its appearance which is not obtained by sensation or reflection, or by combining simple ideas, or by abstraction in the sense mentioned above. True, Locke speaks of the general idea of substance as being neither clear nor distinct. But he nevertheless speaks of this 'idea'. And if it is an idea at all, it seems difficult to explain, on Locke's premisses, how it arises. He certainly attributed to the mind an active power. But the difficulty of explaining the origin of the general idea of substance remains, unless Locke is willing to revise or re-state his premisses.

Locke's idea of substance obviously derives from Scholasticism. But it is not, as is sometimes supposed, the same as that of Aquinas. The explicit distinction between substance and accident was for Aquinas, as for Locke, the work of the reflective mind; but for the former it was a distinction made within the total datum of experience, the modified or 'accidentified' thing or substance, whereas for Locke substance lies beyond experience and is an unknown substratum. Again, on Aquinas's view substance is not an unchanging substratum, even though we can distinguish between accidental and substantial change. Locke, however, speaks as though substance were an unchanging substratum hidden beneath the changing phenomena. In other words, Aquinas's conception of substance stands nearer to the point of view of common sense than does that of Locke.

Locke's distinction between the general idea of substance and our ideas of particular substances is connected with his distinction between real and nominal essences. But he does not discuss this topic before the third book of the *Essay*, and I leave it aside for the moment to consider his account of the origin of our idea of causality.

6. It has already been pointed out that in the first draft of the

[1] *E.*, 2, 12, 1; 1, pp. 213–14.

Essay Locke classified relations, together with substances and modes, under the general heading of complex ideas. But though this classification reappears in the fourth edition, Locke gives us another as well, in which relations stand in a class by themselves. This juxtaposition of two methods of classification is obviously unsatisfactory. However, we are told that relations arise from the act of comparing one thing with another. If I consider Caius as such, merely by himself, I do not compare him with any other thing. And the same is true when I say that Caius is white. 'But when I give Caius the name *husband*, I intimate some other person; and when I give him the name *whiter*, I intimate some other thing: in both cases my thought is led to something beyond Caius, and there are two things brought into consideration.'[1] Terms like 'husband', 'father', 'son', and so on, are obviously relative terms. But there are other terms which appear at first sight to be absolute but which 'conceal a tacit, though less observable relation'.[2] Such, for example, is the term 'imperfect'.

Any idea, whether simple or complex, can be compared with another idea and thus give rise to the idea of a relation. But all our ideas of relations can in the long run be reduced to simple ideas. This is one of the points which Locke is most concerned to make. For if he wishes to show that his empiricist account of the origin of our ideas is justified, he has to show that all ideas of relations are ultimately made up of ideas obtained through sensation or reflection. And he proceeds to argue that this is true by applying his theory to certain selected relations, such as causality.

But before we consider Locke's analysis of causality it is worth while drawing attention to the ambiguous way in which he speaks about relations. Primarily, indeed, he is concerned to show how the mind acquires its ideas of relations; that is to say, he is primarily concerned with a psychological question rather than with the ontological question, what is the nature of relations. However, as he has described an idea as whatever is the object of the mind when it thinks, it follows that relations, as thought about, are ideas. And some of his pronouncements can hardly be understood as meaning anything else but that relations are purely mental. For example, we are told that 'the nature of relation consists in the referring or comparing two things one to another'.[3] Again, 'relation is a way of comparing or considering two things

[1] *E.*, 2, 25, 1; 1, p. 427. [2] *E.*, 2, 25, 3; 1, p. 428. [3] *E.*, 2, 25. 5; 1, p. 428.

together, and giving one or both of them some appellation from that comparison; and sometimes giving even the relation itself a name'.[1] Moreover, he states explicitly that a relation is 'not contained in the real existence of things, but (is) something extraneous and superinduced'.[2] And when treating later on of the abuse of words he remarks that we cannot have ideas of relations which disagree with things themselves, because relation is only a way of considering together or comparing two things and so 'an idea of my own making'.[3] At the same time Locke speaks freely about ideas of relations; and he does not make it clear what he means to imply by this. Suppose that I do not consider John simply by himself but 'compare' him with Peter, his son. I can then think of John as father, which is a relative term. Now, as we have seen, Locke says that a relation is the comparing of one thing with another. The relationship in the case in point should be the act of 'comparing' John with Peter. And the idea of the relation should be the idea of the act of comparing. But it would be odd to say that the relationship of fatherhood is the act of comparing one man with another; and it would be still more odd to say that the idea of the relationship of fatherhood is the idea of the act of comparing. Moreover, when in the fourth book of the *Essay* Locke speaks about our knowledge of the existence of God, he clearly implies that all finite things really depend on God as their cause, that is to say, that they have a real relation of dependence on God. The truth of the matter seems to be that he did not work out his theory of relations in any clear and precise way. When speaking of relations in general, he seems to say that they are all mental; but this does not prevent him from speaking about some particular relations as though they were not purely mental. This can be seen, I think, in his treatment of causality.

7. According to Locke, 'that which produces any simple or complex idea we denote by the general name *cause*; and that which is produced, *effect*'.[4] We receive our ideas of cause and effect, therefore, from observing that particular things, qualities or substances, begin to exist. Observing, for instance, that fluidity, a 'simple idea', is produced in wax by the application of a certain degree of heat, 'we call the simple idea of heat, in relation to fluidity in wax, the cause of it, and fluidity the effect'.[5] Similarly, observing that wood, a 'complex idea', is reduced to ashes, another

[1] *E.*, 2, 25, 7; I, pp. 429–30. [2] *E.*, 2, 25, 8; I, p. 430.
[3] *E.*, 3, 10, 33; II, p. 145. [4] *E.*, 2, 26, 1; I, p. 433. [5] *Ibid.*, p. 434.

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'complex idea', by the application of fire, we call the fire, in relation to the ashes, *cause* and the ashes *effect*. The notions of cause and effect arise, therefore, from ideas received through sensation or reflection. And 'to have the idea of cause and effect it suffices to consider any simple idea, or substance, as beginning to exist by the operation of some other, without knowing the manner of that operation'.[1] We can discriminate between different kinds of production. Thus when a new substance is produced from pre-existing material we speak of 'generation'. When a new 'simple idea' (quality) is produced in a pre-existent thing we speak of 'alteration'. When anything begins to exist without there being any pre-existent material out of which it is constituted we speak of 'creation'. But our ideas of all these different forms of production are said to be derived from ideas received through sensation and reflection, though Locke does not offer any explanation how this general proposition covers the case of our idea of creation.

In so far as causality is a relation between ideas, it is a mental construction. But it has a real foundation, and this is power; the powers, that is to say, which substances have of affecting other substances and of producing ideas in us. The idea of power is classified by Locke as a simple idea, though 'I confess power includes in it some kind of relation, a relation to action or change'.[2] And powers are divided, as we have already seen, into active and passive. We can ask, therefore, whence we derive our idea of active power and causal efficacy. The answer, according to Locke, is that our clearest idea of active power is derived from reflection or introspection. If we observe a moving ball which hits a ball at rest and sets it in motion, we do not observe any active power in the first ball; for 'it only communicates the motion it had received from another and loses in itself so much as the other received: which gives us but a very obscure idea of an active power moving in body, whilst we observe it only to transfer, but not produce any motion. For it is but a very obscure idea of power which reaches not the production of the action, but the continuation of the passion.'[3] If, however, we turn to introspection, 'we find in ourselves a power to begin or forbear, continue or end several actions of our minds and motions of our bodies, barely by a thought or preference of the mind ordering or, as it were, commanding the doing or not doing such or such a particular action'.[4] It is the

[1] *E.*, 2, 26, 2; I, p. 435. [2] *E.*, 2, 21, 3; I, p. 310.
[3] *E.*, 2, 21, 4; I, p. 312. [4] *E.*, 2, 21, 5; I, p. 313.

exercise of volition, therefore, which gives us our clearest idea of power and causal efficacy.

Locke thus establishes to his own satisfaction the empirical foundations of our ideas of cause and effect and of causal efficacy or the exercise of active power. But he does not give any real analysis of the causal relation. However, he makes it clear, both in his arguments for the existence of God and when writing to Stillingfleet, that he was convinced that the proposition 'everything which has a beginning must have a cause' is an indubitable proposition. It has been made a charge against him that he does not explain how this proposition is established by experience. But, as the fourth book of the *Essay* makes abundantly clear, Locke believed that there is such a thing as intuitive certainty and that the mind can apprehend a necessary connection between ideas. In the case of the proposition in question Locke would doubtless say that we obtain through experience our ideas of a thing beginning to be and of cause, and that then we perceive the necessary connection between the ideas, which is expressed in the statement that everything which begins to be has a cause. Presumably he thought that this account of the matter satisfied the demands of his empiricist theory of the foundations of all our ideas and knowledge. Whether it fits in with his remarks about relations as mental constructions is another question.

8. In connection with relations Locke devotes a chapter to the ideas of identity and diversity. When we see a thing existing in a certain place at a certain instant of time we are sure that it is itself and not another thing which exists at the same time in another place, even though the two things may be alike in other respects. For we are certain that one and the same thing cannot exist simultaneously in more than one place. Locke here refers to common linguistic usage. If we observe body A existing at time t in place x and if we observe body B existing at time t in place y, we speak of them as two different bodies, however much they may resemble one another. But if A and B both existed at time t in place x, they would be indistinguishable; and we would speak of one and the same body, not of two bodies. I do not mean that Locke thought that this view was 'simply a matter of words': I mean that he adopts the common-sense point of view which finds expression in ordinary linguistic usage. As God is eternal, immutable and omnipresent, there can be, Locke tells us, no doubt about His constant self-identity. But finite things begin to exist

in time and space; and the identity of each thing will be determined, as long as it exists, by its relation to the time at which and the place in which it begins to exist. And we can therefore solve the problem of individuation by saying that the principle of individuation is 'existence itself, which determines a being of any sort to a particular time and place, incommunicable to two beings of the same kind'.[1] The last part of this definition is included because two substances of different kinds may occupy the same place at the same time. Presumably Locke is thinking primarily of God's eternity and omnipresence.

But though Locke defines identity in general in relation to the temporal and spatial co-ordinates of a thing's existence, he sees that the matter is rather more complicated than is allowed for by this formula. If two atoms are joined to form one 'mass of matter', we speak of the mass as being the same, as long as the same two atoms are conjoined. But if one atom is taken away and another added, the result is a different mass or body. In organic things, however, we are accustomed to speak of the organism as being the same organic body, even though obvious changes in the matter have taken place. A plant continues to be the same plant 'as long as it partakes of the same life, though that life be communicated to new particles of matter vitally united to the living plant, in a like continued organization conformable to that sort of plant'.[2] The case of animals is similar. The continued identity of an animal is in some ways similar to that of a machine. For we speak of a machine as being the same, even if parts of it have been repaired or renewed, because of the continued organization of all the parts with a view to the attainment of a certain end or purpose. An animal differs from a machine, however, in that in the case of the latter the motion comes from without whereas in the case of the animal the motion comes from within.

The identity of a 'simple' inorganic thing can be defined, therefore, in terms of time and place (though Locke does not mention continuity of the thing's spatio-temporal history as one of the criteria of persisting self-identity). The continued identity of a compound inorganic thing demands the continuous identity (in relation to space and time) of its constituent parts. The continuous identity of an organic body, however, is defined in relation to the organization of parts informed by a common life rather than in relation to the continued identity of the parts themselves. In fact,

[1] *E.*, 2, 27, 4; 1, pp. 441–2. [2] *E.*, 2, 27, 5; 1, p. 443.

'in these two cases, a mass of matter and a living body, identity is not applied to the same thing'.[1] Inorganic and organic bodies are different in kind, and the criteria of identity differ in the two cases, though in both there must be a continuous existence which has some relation to spatio-temporal co-ordinates.

How far can we apply to man the criteria of identity which are applicable to other organic bodies? Locke answers that a man's continued self-identity consists 'in nothing but a participation of the same continued life by constantly fleeting particles of matter in succession vitally united to the same organized body'.[2] He does not explain in exact terms the precise meaning of this statement, but he makes it clear that in his opinion we are accustomed, and justifiably accustomed, to speak of 'the same man' when there is bodily continuity. Whatever psychological changes may take place in a man, we still call him the same man provided that his bodily existence is continuous. If, however, we take identity of soul as the one and only criterion of sameness, strange results follow. For example, if we assume for the sake of argument the hypothesis of reincarnation, we should have to say that *X*, living in ancient Greece, was the same man as *Y*, living in mediaeval Europe, simply because the soul was the same. But this way of speaking would be very strange. 'I think nobody, could he be sure that the soul of Heliogabalus were in one of his hogs, would yet say that hog were a man or Heliogabalus.'[3] In other words, Locke appeals here to ordinary linguistic usage. We speak of a man as being the same man when there is bodily continuity. And we have here an empirical criterion of sameness. But, in Locke's opinion, there would be no way of controlling our use of the word 'same' if we said that it is identity of soul that makes a man the same man.

But though we are ordinarily accustomed to speak of a man as the same man when there is bodily continuity, we can still raise the question in what does personal identity consist, meaning by 'person' 'a thinking, intelligent being, that has reason and reflection and can consider itself as itself, the same thinking thing in different times and places'.[4] The answer to this question is consciousness, which Locke declares to be inseparable from thinking and essential to it, 'it being impossible for anyone to perceive without perceiving that he does perceive'.[5] 'As far as this

[1] *E.*, 2, 27, 4; I, p. 442. [2] *E.*, 2, 27, 7; I, p. 444. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 445.
[4] *E.*, 2, 27, 11; I, p. 448. [5] *Ibid.*, p. 449.

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consciousness can be extended backwards to any past action or thought, so far reaches the identity of that person.'[1]

Locke draws the logical conclusion that if it is possible for the same man (that is, a man who is the same man in the sense that there is bodily continuity) to have at time t^1 one distinct and incommunicable consciousness and at time t^2 another distinct and incommunicable consciousness, we could not speak of the man as being the same 'person' at time t^2 as he was at time t^1. This is 'the sense of mankind in the solemnest declaration of their opinions, human laws not punishing the madman for the sober man's actions, nor the sober man for what the madman did, thereby making them two persons; which is somewhat explained by our way of speaking in English, when we say such an one is not himself, or is beside himself; in which phrases it is insinuated as if those who now, or at least first used them, thought that self was changed, the self-same person was no longer in that man'.[2]

9. At the end of the second book of the *Essay* Locke tells us that having given an account of the source and kinds of our ideas he at first proposed to proceed immediately to consider the use which the mind makes of these ideas and the knowledge which we obtain through them. But reflection convinced him that it was necessary to treat of language before going on to discuss knowledge. For ideas and words are clearly closely connected, and our knowledge, as he puts it, consists in propositions. He therefore devoted the third book to the subject of words or language.

God made man a social being by nature. And language was to be 'the great instrument and common tie of society'.[3] Language consists of words, and words are signs of ideas. 'The use of words is to be sensible marks of ideas; and the ideas they stand for are their proper and immediate signification.'[4] It is true that we take our words to be signs of ideas in other men's minds as well of ideas in our own minds, when, that is to say, we and they are speaking a common language. And we often suppose words to stand for things. None the less a man's words signify primarily and immediately the ideas in his own mind. Words can, of course, be used without meaning. A child can learn and use a word in parrot-fashion, without having the idea which is normally signified by it. But in this case the word is nothing but a non-significant noise.

[1] *E.*, 2, 27, 11; I, p. 449. [2] *E.*, 2, 27, 20; I, p. 461.
[3] *E.*, 3, 1, 1; II, p. 3. [4] *E.*, 3, 2, 1; II, p. 9.

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Although Locke insists tenaciously that words are signs of ideas, he does not give any thorough explanation of the meaning of this statement. However, his general position is clear enough, if we do not pry into it too closely. Ideas, according to Locke's representationist theory, are the immediate objects of thought; and ideas, or some of them rather, stand for things or are signs of things. But ideas are private. And to communicate our ideas to others and to learn others' ideas we stand in need of 'sensible' and public signs. This need is fulfilled by words. But there is this difference between ideas, which are signs of things, and words. Those ideas which signify things or represent things are natural signs. Some of them at least, that is to say, are produced by things, though others are mental constructions. Words, however, are all conventional signs: their signification is fixed by choice or convention. Thus while the idea of man is the same in the minds of a Frenchman and an Englishman, the sign of this idea is *homme* in French and *man* in English. It is clear that Locke assumed that thought in itself is really distinct from the use of words and symbols, and that the possibility of expressing the same thought in different linguistic forms and in different language is a proof of this distinction.

There is, however, a qualification to be added to the statement that words are signs of ideas. 'Besides words which are names of ideas in the mind there are a great many others that are made use of to signify the connection that the mind gives to ideas or propositions one with another.'[1] The mind needs not only signs of the ideas 'before it' but also signs to show or intimate some action of its own in relation to these ideas. For example, 'is' and 'is not' show or intimate or express the mind's acts of affirming and denying. Locke calls words of this kind 'particles', and he includes under this heading not only the copula in propositions but also prepositions and conjunctions. These all mark or express some action of the mind in relation to its ideas.

Although Locke does not give any thorough explanation of his theory of signification, he saw clearly enough that to say that words are signs of ideas and that language, composed of conventional signs, is a means of communicating ideas, constitutes an over-simplification. 'To make words serviceable to the end of communication, it is necessary that they excite in the hearer exactly the same idea they stand for in the mind of the speaker.'[2]

[1] *E.*, 3, 7, 1; II, p. 98. [2] *E.*, 3, 9, 6; II, p. 106.

But this end is not always attained. For example, a word may stand for a very complex idea; and in this case it is very difficult to ensure that the word always stands for precisely the same idea in common use. 'Hence it comes to pass that men's names of very compound ideas, such as for the most part are moral words, have seldom, in two different men, the same precise signification; since one man's complex idea seldom agrees with another's, and often differs from his own, from that which he had yesterday or will have tomorrow.'[1] Again, as mixed modes are mental constructions, collections of ideas put together by the mind, it is difficult to find any fixed standard of meaning. The meaning of a word such as 'murder' depends simply on choice. And although 'common use regulates the meaning of words pretty well for common conversation',[2] there is no recognized authority which can determine the precise meaning of such words. Hence it is one thing to say that names stand for ideas and another thing to say precisely for what ideas they stand.

This 'imperfection' of language is scarcely avoidable. But there is also such a thing as an avoidable 'abuse' of words. In the first place, men not infrequently coin words which do not stand for any clear and distinct ideas. 'I shall not need here to heap up instances; every man's reading and conversation will sufficiently furnish him; or if he wants to be better stored, the great mint-masters of this kind of terms, I mean the Schoolmen and metaphysicians (under which, I think, the disputing natural and moral philosophers of these latter ages may be comprehended) have wherewithal abundantly to content him.'[3] Secondly, words are often abused in controversy through being used by the same man in different senses. Another abuse consists in taking words for things and supposing that the structure of reality must correspond to one's ways of talking about it. Locke also mentions figurative speech as one abuse of language. He would have done better perhaps to have cited it as a source of or occasion for the abuse of language. Indeed, he feels this himself to some extent. For he remarks that 'eloquence, like the fair sex, has too prevailing beauties in it to suffer itself ever to be spoken against'.[4] But his point is that 'eloquence' and rhetoric are used to move the passions and mislead the judgment, as indeed they not infrequently are; and he is too much of a rationalist to attempt to distinguish clearly

[1] *E.*, 3, 9, 6; II, p. 107. [2] *E.*, 3, 9, 8; II, p. 108.
[3] *E.*, 3, 10, 2; II, p. 123. [4] *E.*, 3, 10, 34; II, p. 147.

between the proper and improper use of emotive and evocative language.

The misuse of words is thus a prolific source of error, and Locke evidently considered this a subject of considerable importance. For at the end of the *Essay* he insists on the need for studying the science of signs. 'The consideration, then, of ideas and words as the great instruments of knowledge makes no despicable part of their contemplation who would take a view of human knowledge in the whole extent of it. And perhaps if they were distinctly weighed and duly considered, they would afford us another sort of logic and critic than what we have been hitherto acquainted with.'[1] But it is only in very recent times that Locke's suggestion has been taken with any great seriousness.

10. As general terms play such a prominent part in discourse, it is necessary to pay special attention to their origin, meaning and use. We must have general terms; for a language made up exclusively of proper names could not be memorized, and, even if it could, it would be useless for purposes of communication. If, for example, a man was unable to refer to cows in general but had to have a proper name for every particular cow which he had seen, the names would have no meaning for another man who was unacquainted with these particular animals. But although it is obviously necessary that there should be general names, the question arises how we come to have them. 'For since all things that exist are only particulars, how come we by general terms or where find we those general natures they are supposed to stand for?'[2]

Locke replies that words become general by being made signs of general ideas, and that general ideas are formed by abstraction. 'Ideas become general by separating from them the circumstances of time and place and any other ideas that may determine them to this or that particular existence. By this way of abstraction they are made capable of representing more individuals than one; each of which having in it a conformity to that abstract idea is (as we call it) of that sort.'[3] A child, let us suppose, is acquainted first of all with one man. It later becomes acquainted with other men. And it frames an idea of the common characteristics, leaving out the characteristics peculiar to this or that individual. It thus comes to have a general idea, which is itself signified by the general term 'man'. And with the growth of experience it can go on to

[1] *E.*, 4, 21, 4; II, p. 462. [2] *E.*, 3, 3, 6; II, p. 16. [3] *Ibid.*, pp. 16–17.

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form other wider and more abstract ideas, each of which will be signified by a general term.

It follows that universality and generality are not attributes of things, which are all individual or particular, but of ideas and words: they are 'the inventions and creatures of the understanding, made by it for its own use, and concern only signs, whether words or ideas'.[1] Of course, any idea or any word is also particular; it is this particular idea or this particular word. But what we call general or universal words and ideas are universal in their signification. That is to say, a universal or general idea signifies a sort of thing, like cow or sheep or man; and the general term stands for the idea as signifying a sort of thing. 'That, then, which general words signify is a *sort* of things; and each of them does that by being a sign of an abstract idea in the mind, to which idea, as things existing are found to agree, so they come to be ranked under that name; or, which is all one, be of that sort.'[2]

To say, however, that universality belongs only to words and ideas is not to say that there is no objective foundation for the universal idea. 'I would not here be thought to forget, much less to deny, that nature in the production of things makes several of them alike: there is nothing more obvious, especially in the races of animals and all things propagated by seed.'[3] But it is the mind which observes these likenesses among particular things and uses them as the occasion to form general ideas. And when a general idea has been formed, say the idea of gold, a particular thing is said to be or not to be gold in so far as it conforms or does not conform to this idea.

Locke occasionally speaks in a manner which suggested to Berkeley that the general idea was a composite image consisting of incompatible elements. For instance, he speaks of the general idea of a triangle, which 'must be neither oblique nor rectangle, neither equilateral, equicrural, nor scalenon; but all and none of these at once. . . . It is an idea wherein some parts of several different and inconsistent ideas are put together.'[4] But this statement must be understood in the light of what Locke says elsewhere about 'abstraction'. He does not say that the general idea of a triangle is an image; nor does he say that it is composed of mutually inconsistent or incompatible ideas. He says that it is composed of 'parts' of different and inconsistent ideas. That is to

[1] *E.*, 3, 3, 11; II, p. 21. [2] *E.*, 3, 3, 12; II, p. 22.
[3] *E.*, 3, 3, 13; II, p. 23. [4] *E.*, 4, 7, 9; II, p. 274.

say, the mind omits the notes peculiar to this or that kind of triangle and puts together the common characteristics of different kinds of triangle to form the general idea of triangularity. Abstraction is thus depicted as a process of elimination or leaving out and of putting together what remains, common characteristics. This may, indeed, be unfortunately vague; but there is no need to make Locke talk absolute nonsense by ascribing to him the view that general ideas are composed of mutually incompatible elements.

11. It is important not to understand the word 'abstraction' in the present context as meaning the abstraction of the real essence of a thing. Locke distinguishes two senses of the term 'real essence'. 'The one is of those who, using the word essence for they know not what, suppose a certain number of those essences, according to which all natural things are made, and wherein they do exactly every one of them partake, and so become of this or that species.'[1] This theory is, says Locke, an untenable hypothesis, as is shown by the production of monsters. For the theory presupposes fixed and stable specific essences, and it cannot explain the fact of borderline cases and of variations in type. In other words, it is incompatible with the available empirical data. Further, the hypothesis of stable but unknown specific essences is so useless that it might well be discarded even if it were not contradicted by the empirical data. 'The other and more rational opinion (about real essences) is of those who look on all natural things to have a real but unknown constitution of their insensible parts, from which flow those sensible qualities which serve us to distinguish them one from another, according as we have occasion to rank them into sorts under common denominations.'[2] But though this opinion is 'more rational', there can obviously be no question of abstracting unknown essences. Every collection of simple ideas depends on some 'real constitution' of a thing; but this real constitution is unknown by us. Hence it cannot be abstracted.

From real essences Locke distinguishes nominal essences. We are accustomed to decide whether a given thing is gold or not by observing whether it possesses those common characteristics, possession of which is regarded as necessary and sufficient for a thing to be classed as gold. And the complex idea of these characteristics is the nominal essence of gold. This is why Locke can say that 'the abstract idea for which the (general) name stands and

[1] *E.*, 3, 3, 17; II, p. 27. [2] *Ibid.*, pp. 27–8.

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the essence of the species is one and the same',[1] and that 'every distinct abstract idea is a distinct essence'.[2] It is the nominal essence, therefore, which is abstracted, by leaving out characteristics peculiar to individual things as individuals and retaining their common characteristics.

Locke adds that in the case of simple ideas and modes the real and nominal essences are the same. 'Thus a figure including a space between three lines is the real as well as nominal essence of a triangle.'[3] But in the case of substances they are different. The nominal essence of gold is the abstract idea of the observable characteristics common to the things which are classed as gold; but its real essence, or substance, is 'the real constitution of its insensible parts, on which depend all those properties of colour, weight, fusibility, fixedness, etc., which are to be found in it'.[4] And this real essence, the particular substance of gold, is unknown by us. Locke's way of speaking is certainly open to criticism. For in the case of the universal idea of triangularity it is inappropriate to speak about 'real essence' at all, if the latter is defined as the real but unknown constitution of the insensible parts of a material substance. But his general meaning is sufficiently clear, namely, that in the case of material substances it makes sense to speak of a real essence distinct from the nominal essence or abstract idea, whereas in the case of triangularity it does not.

[1] *E.*, 3, 3, 12; II, p. 23. [2] *E.*, 3, 3, 14; II, 9, 25.
[3] *E.*, 3, 3, 18; II, p. 29. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 29.

CHAPTER XV

LEIBNIZ (1)

Life—The De arte combinatoria *and the idea of harmony—Writings—Different interpretations of Leibniz's thought.*

1. GOTTFRIED WILHELM LEIBNIZ was born at Leipzig in 1646, his father being professor of moral philosophy in the university. A precocious boy, Leibniz studied both Greek and Scholastic philosophy, and he tells us, speaking of himself at about the age of thirteen, that he read Suárez with as much facility as people are accustomed to read romances. At the age of fifteen he entered the university and studied under James Thomasius. Making the acquaintance of 'modern' thinkers like Bacon, Hobbes, Gassendi, Descartes, Kepler and Galileo, he found in them examples of a 'better philosophy'. And according to his reminiscences he debated within himself during solitary walks whether to retain the Aristotelian theory of substantial forms and final causes or to adopt mechanism. Mechanism prevailed, though he later tried to combine Aristotelian elements with new ideas. Indeed, the influence of his early studies of Aristotelianism and Scholasticism is obvious in his later writings; and of all the leading philosophers of the pre-Kantian 'modern' period it was probably Leibniz who possessed the most extensive knowledge of the Scholastics. He was certainly much better acquainted with them than was Spinoza. And his baccalaureate thesis (1663) on the principle of individuation was written under the influence of Scholasticism, though of the nominalist direction.

In 1663 Leibniz went to Jena, where he studied mathematics under Erhard Weigel. He then gave himself to the study of jurisprudence and took the doctorate in Law at Altdorf in 1667. The offer of a university chair at Altdorf was refused, as Leibniz said that he had very different things in view. Having been given a post in the court of the Elector of Mainz, he was sent on a diplomatic mission to Paris in 1672, where he made the acquaintance of men like Malebranche and Arnauld. In 1673 he visited England, meeting Boyle and Oldenburg. Returning to Paris, he remained there until 1676, the final year of his stay being memorable for his discovery of the infinitesimal calculus. Though

Leibniz was unaware of the fact, Newton had already written on the same subject. But the latter was very slow to publish his results and did not do so until 1687, whereas Leibniz published his in 1684. Hence the unprofitable dispute about priority in discovery.

On his way back to Germany Leibniz visited Spinoza. He had already been in correspondence with Spinoza, and he was extremely curious about the latter's philosophy. The precise relations between Leibniz and Spinoza are not very clear. The former criticized and continued to criticize the latter's theories, and when he had studied Spinoza's posthumously published works he made persistent attempts to compromise Descartes by representing Spinozism as the logical outcome of Cartesianism. The philosophy of Descartes, according to Leibniz, leads by way of Spinozism to atheism. On the other hand, it is clear that Leibniz's insatiable curiosity in intellectual matters produced in him a lively interest in Spinoza's doctrine, even if he made no very profound study of it, and that he found it stimulating. Moreover, in view of Leibniz's diplomatic character it has even been suggested that his strong repudiation of Spinozism was partly inspired by his desire to maintain a reputation for orthodoxy. But though Leibniz was a diplomat, a courtier and a man of the world, which Spinoza was not, and though he had an eye to edifying his various patrons and eminent acquaintances, there is no real reason, I think, for believing that his opposition to Spinozism was insincere. He had already arrived at some of the main ideas of his own philosophy by the time he studied Spinoza, and though certain affinities between their respective philosophies stimulated his interest and probably also his eagerness to dissociate himself publicly from Spinoza, the differences between their respective positions were far-reaching.

Owing to his association with the House of Hanover, Leibniz found himself involved in compiling the history of the family; that is, the Brunswick family. But his interests and activities were manifold. In 1682 he founded at Leipzig the *Acta eruditorum*, and in 1700 he became the first president of the Society of the Sciences at Berlin, which later became the Prussian Academy. In addition to an interest in founding learned societies he occupied himself with the problem of uniting the Christian Confessions. First of all he endeavoured to find common ground for agreement between Catholics and Protestants. Later, when he realized that the

difficulties were greater than had been anticipated, he tried, though again without success, to prepare the way for the reunion of the Calvinist and Lutheran bodies. Another of his schemes was a plan for an alliance between Christian States, the formation of a kind of United Europe; and after having failed to interest Louis XIV of France, he addressed himself in 1711 to the Tsar Peter the Great. He also endeavoured to bring about an alliance between the Tsar and the Emperor. But his plans for inducing Christian monarchs to abandon their quarrels and to join in alliance against the non-Christian world, were as abortive as his schemes for the reunion of the Christian Confessions. One may mention also that Leibniz took a considerable interest in the information about the Far East which was beginning to percolate into Europe, and that he warmly defended the Jesuit missionaries in China in connection with the rites controversy.

Leibniz was one of the most distinguished men of his time, and he enjoyed the patronage of many eminent people. But the closing years of his life were embittered by neglect, and when the Elector of Hanover became George I of England in 1714 Leibniz was not chosen to accompany him to London. His death in 1716 passed unnoticed even in the Academy which he had founded at Berlin, the French Academy being the sole learned body to do honour to his memory.

2. It is against the background of this varied activity and many-sided interests that one has to see Leibniz's career as a philosophical writer. His history of the House of Brunswick falls, of course, into a class apart. Planned in 1692 and carried on intermittently until his death, though never completed, it was not published until 1843–5. Between his philosophical work, however, and his interest in founding learned societies, in uniting Christian bodies and in furthering an alliance of Christian States there is a much closer connection than might appear at first sight.

In order to grasp this connection it is necessary to bear in mind the part played in Leibniz's thought by the idea of universal harmony. The idea of the universe as a harmonious system in which there is at the same time unity and multiplicity, co-ordination and differentiation of parts, seems to have become a leading idea, probably the leading idea, of Leibniz at a very early age. For example, in a letter to Thomasius, written in 1669 when Leibniz was twenty-three, after mentioning sayings like 'Nature does nothing in vain' and 'everything shuns its own destruction',

he remarks: 'Since, however, there is really no wisdom or appetite in Nature, the beautiful order arises from the fact that Nature is the clock of God (*horologium Dei*).'[1] Similarly, in a letter to Magnus Wedderkopf, written in 1671, Leibniz affirms that God the Creator wills what is most harmonious. The idea of the cosmos as a universal harmony had been prominent in the writings of Renaissance philosophers like Nicholas of Cusa and Giordano Bruno, and it had been emphasized by Kepler and John Henry Bisterfeld, whom Leibniz mentions appreciatively in the *De arte combinatoria* (1666). He was to develop it later in terms of his theory of monads, but it was present in his mind long before he wrote the *Monadology*.

In the *De arte combinatoria* Leibniz proposed the development of a method suggested by the writings of Raymond Lull, the mediaeval Franciscan, and by modern mathematicians and philosophers. He envisaged first of all the analysis of complex terms into simple terms. 'Analysis is as follows. Let any given term be resolved into its formal parts, that is, let it be defined. Then let these parts be resolved into their own parts, or let definitions be given of the terms of the (first) definition, until (one reaches) simple parts or indefinable terms.'[2] These simple or indefinable terms would form an alphabet of human thoughts. For, as all words and phrases are combinations of the letters of the alphabet, so can propositions be seen to result from combinations of simple or indefinable terms. The second step in Leibniz's plan consists in representing these indefinable terms by mathematical symbols. If, then, one can find the right way of 'combining' these symbols, one will have formed a deductive logic of discovery, which would serve not only for demonstrating truths already known but also for discovering new truths.

Leibniz did not think that all truths can be deduced *a poriri*: there are contingent propositions which cannot be deduced in this way. For example, that Augustus was Roman emperor or that Christ was born at Bethlehem are truths known by research into the facts of history, not by logical deduction from definitions. And in addition to particular historical statements of this kind there are also universal propositions the truth of which is known

[1] *G.*, 1, 25. The letter *G* in references to Leibniz's writings signifies C. I. Gerhardt's edition of *Die philosophischen Schriften von G. W. Leibniz* (7 vols., 1875–90). Where possible page references are also given to *The Philosophical Works of Leibniz*, edited by G. M. Duncan (1890). This work, which contains only a selection of Leibniz's writings, is signified by the letter *D*.

[2] *De arte combinatoria*, 64; *G.*, 4, 64–5.

by observation and induction, not by deduction. Their truth 'is founded not in the essence (of things) but in their existence; and they are true as though by chance'.[1] I shall return later to Leibniz's distinction between contingent and necessary propositions: at the moment it is sufficient to notice that he made a distinction. But it is important to understand that by propositions *quarum veritas in essentia fundata est* he did not mean simply the propositions of formal logic and pure mathematics. His ideal of deductive and scientific logic was certainly largely due to that influence of mathematics which can be seen in the thought of other rationalist philosophers of the period; but, like them, he thought that the deductive method could be used to develop systems of true propositions in other spheres than logic and mathematics. He anticipated, in general idea, later symbolic logic; but the development of systems of pure logic and mathematics was but one aspect of his total plan. The deductive method can, he thought, be utilized in developing the essential ideas and truths of metaphysics, physics, jurisprudence and even theology. The discovery of the proper mathematical symbolism would provide a universal language, a *characteristica universalis*, and by using this language in the different branches of study human knowledge could be indefinitely developed in such a way that there would be no more room for rival theories than there is in pure mathematics.

Leibniz thus dreamed of a universal science, of which logic and mathematics would form only parts. And he was led to extend the scope of the deductive method beyond the frontiers of formal logic and pure mathematics largely because of his conviction that the universe forms a harmonious system. In the *De arte combinatoria*[2] he draws attention to Bisterfeld's doctrine of the essential connections between all beings. A deductive system of logic or of mathematics is an illustration or example of the general truth that the universe is a system. Hence there can be a deductive science of metaphysics, a science of being.

The fact that the implementation of Leibniz's grandiose scheme postulates the analysis of complex truths into simple truths and of definable terms into indefinable terms helps to explain his interest in the founding of learned societies. For he conceived the idea of a comprehensive encyclopaedia of human knowledge, from which the fundamental simple ideas could be, as it were, extracted; and he hoped that it would prove possible to enlist the aid of

[1] *De arte combinatoria*, 83; *G.*, 4, 69. [2] 85; *G.*, 4, 70.

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learned societies and academies in this undertaking. He also hoped that the Religious Orders, particularly the Jesuits, would co-operate in the construction of the projected encyclopaedia.

Leibniz's logical dream also helps to explain the attitude which he adopted on the subject of Christian reunion. For he thought that it should prove possible to deduce a number of essential propositions in theology on which all Confessions might agree. He never actually attempted to work out this plan, but in his *Systema theologicum* (1686) he endeavoured to find common ground on which Catholic and Protestants could agree. His ideal of harmony was, of course, more fundamental than the idea of logically deducing a kind of highest common factor for the Christian Confessions.

This ideal of harmony obviously shows itself also in Leibniz's dream of a union of Christian princes. It was manifested too in his view of the development of philosophy. The history of philosophy was for him a perennial philosophy. One thinker may overemphasize one aspect of reality or one truth and his successor another aspect or truth; but there is truth in all systems. Most schools of philosophy, he thought, are right in the greater part of what they affirm, but wrong in the greater part of what they deny. For instance, mechanists are right in affirming that there is efficient mechanical causality but wrong in denying that mechanical causality subserves purpose. There is truth in both mechanism and finalism.

3. The publication of Locke's *Essay*, with its attack on the doctrine of innate ideas, prompted Leibniz to prepare a detailed reply during the period 1701–9. The work was not completely finished, and its publication was for various reasons deferred. It appeared posthumously in 1765 under the title *New Essays on Human Understanding* (*Nouveaux essais sur l'entendement humain*). The only other large work by Leibniz is his *Essays in Theodicy* (*Essais de Théodicée*). This work, a systematic answer to Bayle's article 'Rorarius' in his *Historical and Critical Dictionary*, was published in 1710.

Leibniz's philosophy, that is, what is sometimes called his 'popular philosophy', was not expounded in any large systematic tome. One has to look for it in letters, in articles, in periodicals, and in brief works like the *Discourse on Metaphysics* (*Discours de métaphysique*, 1686), which he sent to Arnauld, the *New System of Nature and of the Interaction of Substances* (*Système nouveau de la*

nature et de la communication des substances, 1695), *The Principles of Nature and of Grace* (*Principes de la nature et de la grâce*, 1714) and the *Monadology* (*Monadologie*, 1714), which was written for Prince Eugene of Savoy. But he left behind him a mass of manuscripts which remained unpublished until comparatively recently. In 1903 L. Couturat published his important collection, *Opuscules et fragments inédits*, and in 1913 there appeared at Kazan *Leibnitiana, Elementa philosophiae arcanae, de summa rerum*, edited by J. Jagodinski. The complete edition of the writings of Leibniz, including all available letters, which was begun by the Prussian Academy of Sciences in 1923, was planned to comprise forty volumes. Political events unfortunately slowed down the continuance of this great project.

4. Most philosophies have given rise to divergent interpretations. In the case of Leibniz there have been pronounced differences. For example, according to Couturat and Bertrand Russell the publication of Leibniz's notes has shown that his metaphysical philosophy was based on his logical studies. The doctrine of monads, for instance, was closely connected with the subject-predicate analysis of propositions. On the other hand, there are inconsistencies and contradictions in his thought. In particular, his ethics and theology are at variance with his logical premisses. The explanation, in Bertrand Russell's opinion, is that Leibniz, having an eye to edification and to the maintenance of his reputation for orthodoxy, shrank from drawing the logical conclusions of his premisses. 'This is the reason why the best parts of his philosophy are the most abstract, and the worst those which most nearly concern human life.'[1] Indeed, Earl Russell does not hesitate to make a sharp distinction between Leibniz's 'popular philosophy' and his 'esoteric doctrine'.[2]

Jean Baruzi, however, in his *Leibniz et l'organisation religieuse de la terre d'après des documents inédits*, maintained that Leibniz was primarily a religious-minded thinker, animated above all by zeal for the glory of God. Another interpretation was that of Kuno Fischer, who saw in Leibniz the chief embodiment of the spirit of the Enlightenment. Leibniz combined in himself the different aspects of the Age of Reason, and in his schemes for Christian reunion and for the political alliance of Christian States we can see the expression of the point of view of rational

[1] *A Critical Exposition of the Philosophy of Leibniz*, p. 202.
[2] *History of Western Philosophy*, pp. 606 and 613.

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enlightenment as distinct from fanaticism, sectarianism and narrow nationalism. Again, for Windelband, as also for the Italian idealist Guido de Ruggiero, Leibniz was essentially the precursor of Kant. In the *New Essays* Leibniz showed his belief that the life of the soul transcends the sphere of distinct consciousness or clear awareness, and he foreshadowed the idea of the deeper unity of sensibility and understanding, which the rationalists of the Enlightenment had tended to separate with undue sharpness. On this matter he influenced Herder. 'More important still was another effect of the work of Leibniz. It was no less a thinker than Kant who undertook to build up the doctrine of the *Nouveaux Essais* into a system of epistemology.'[1] On the other hand, Louis Davillé, in his *Leibniz historien*, emphasized the historical activity of Leibniz and the pains he took in gathering materials in various places—in Vienna and Italy, for example—for his history of the House of Brunswick.

That there is truth in all these lines of interpretation scarcely needs saying. For they would not have been seriously proposed by their authors had there not been foundations in fact for each of them. It is, for example, undoubtedly true that there is a close connection between Leibniz's logical studies and his metaphysics; and it is also true that he wrote down reflections which indicate some apprehension about possible reactions to the conclusions of the lines of thought he was developing, were he to make those conclusions public. On the other hand, though it is an exaggeration to picture Leibniz as a profoundly religious figure, there is no real reason to think that his theological and ethical writings were insincere or that he had no genuine concern for the realization of religious and political harmony. Again, it is undeniable that Leibniz embodied many of the aspects of the Age of Reason, while it is also true that he endeavoured to overcome some of the features characteristic of the philosophers of the Enlightenment. Further, in some important ways he certainly prepared the way for Kant, while he was, on the other hand, also an historian.

But it is difficult to pigeon-hole Leibniz in any one compartment. The logical side of his philosophy is undoubtedly important, and Couturat and Russell did good service in drawing attention to its importance; but the ethical and theological parts of his philosophy are also real parts. There may be, indeed, as Russell maintains, inconsistencies and even contradictions in

[1] Windelband, *A History of Philosophy* (translated by J. H. Tufts), p. 465.

Leibniz's thought; but this does not mean that we are entitled to make a radical distinction between his 'esoteric' and his 'exoteric' thought. Leibniz was doubtless a complicated personality; but he was not a split personality. Again, Leibniz is too outstanding and many-sided a thinker for it to be legitimate to label him simply as 'a thinker of the Enlightenment' or as 'a precursor of Kant'. And as for Leibniz as historian, it would be strange to emphasize this aspect of his activity at the expense of his activity as logician, mathematician and philosopher. Moreover, as Benedetto Croce has argued, Leibniz lacked the sense of historical development which was shown by Vico. His tendency to panlogism smacks far more of the rationalist spirit of the Enlightenment and of its comparative neglect of history than of the historical outlook represented by Vico, even though his monadology was in a sense a philosophy of development. In fine, an ideal presentation of Leibniz would do justice to all aspects of his thought while over-emphasizing no one element at the expense of others. But, so far as the achievement of this ideal is a practical possibility, it would have to be the work of a Leibnizian expert thoroughly acquainted with the whole of the relevant literature and without any particular axe of his own to grind. It seems likely, however, that Leibniz will in practice always be a subject for controversy. Perhaps this is inevitable in the case of a man who never really attempted a fully systematic synthesis of his thought.

CHAPTER XVI

LEIBNIZ (2)

The distinction between truths of reason and truths of fact—Truths of reason or necessary propositions—Truths of fact or contingent propositions—The principle of perfection—Substance—The identity of indiscernibles—The law of continuity—The 'panlogism' of Leibniz.

1. In this chapter I propose to discuss some of Leibniz's logical principles. And the first point to be explained is the fundamental distinction between truths of reason and truths of fact. For Leibniz every proposition possesses the subject-predicate form or can be analysed into a proposition or set of propositions of this form. The subject-predicate form of proposition is thus fundamental. And truth consists in the correspondence of a proposition with reality, possible or actual. 'Let us content ourselves with seeking truth in the correspondence of the propositions in the mind with the things in question. It is true that I have also attributed truth to ideas in saying that ideas are true or false; but then I mean in reality the truth of propositions affirming the possibility of the object of the idea. In the same sense we can say also that a being is true, that is to say the proposition affirming its actual or at least possible existence.'[1]

But propositions are not all of the same kind, and a distinction must be made between truths of reason and truths of fact. The former are necessary propositions, in the sense that they are either themselves self-evident propositions or reducible thereto. If we really know what the propositions mean, we see that their contradictories cannot conceivably be true. All truths of reason are necessarily true, and their truth rests on the principle of contradiction. One cannot deny a truth of reason without being involved in contradiction. Leibniz also refers to the principle of contradiction as the principle of identity. 'The first of the truths of reason is the principle of contradiction or, what comes to

[1] *New Essays*, 4, 5, p. 452 (page references to the *New Essays* are to the translation by A. G. Langley, listed in the Appendix); *G.*, 5, 378.

the same thing, that of identity.'[1] To take an example given by Leibniz himself, I cannot deny the proposition that the equilateral rectangle is a rectangle without being involved in contradiction.

Truths of fact, on the other hand, are not necessary propositions. Their opposites are conceivable; and they can be denied without logical contradiction. The proposition, for example, that John Smith exists or that John Smith married Mary Brown is not a necessary but a contingent proposition. It is, indeed, logically and metaphysically inconceivable that John Smith should not exist while he is existing. But the proposition the opposite of which is inconceivable is not the existential statement that John Smith exists but the hypothetical statement that if John Smith exists, he cannot at the same time not exist. The true existential statement that John Smith actually exists is a contingent proposition, a truth of fact. We cannot deduce it from any *a priori* self-evident truth: we know its truth *a posteriori*. At the same time there must be a sufficient reason for the existence of John Smith. It would have been possible for there never to have been a John Smith. 'Truths of reason are necessary and their opposite is impossible: truths of fact are contingent and their opposite is possible.'[2] But if John Smith actually exists, there must be a sufficient reason for his existence; that is, if it is true to say that John Smith exists, there must be a sufficient reason why it is true to say that he exists. Truths of fact, then, rest on the principle of sufficient reason. But they do not rest on the principle of contradiction, since their truth is not necessary and their opposites are conceivable.

Now, for Leibniz contingent propositions or truths of fact are analytic in a sense which will be explained presently. If we are using his language, therefore, we cannot simply equate truths of reason with analytic and truths of fact with synthetic propositions. But since what he calls 'truths of reason' can be shown by us to

[1] *G.*, 4, 357. In the *New Essays* (4, 2, 1, pp. 404–5) Leibniz speaks of propositions such as 'each thing is what it is' and '*A* is *A*' as affirmative identicals. Negative identicals belong either to the principle of contradiction or to the disparates (e.g. heat is not the same thing as colour). 'The principle of contradiction is in general: *a proposition is either true or false*. This contains two true statements; one that the true and the false are not compatible in one and the same proposition, or *that a proposition cannot be true and false at once*; the other that the opposition or the negation of the true and the false are not compatible, or that there is no mean between the true and the false, or rather: *it is impossible for a proposition to be neither true nor false*' (*G.*, 5, 343).

[2] *Monadology*, 33; *G.*, 6, 612; *D.*, p. 223.

be analytic, that is, since in the case of truths of reason we can show that the predicate is contained in the subject while in the case of truths of fact we are unable to demonstrate that the predicate is contained in the subject, we can to that extent say that Leibniz's 'truths of reason' are analytic and his 'truths of fact' synthetic propositions. Moreover, we can make the following broad distinction between the range of truths of reason and that of truths of fact. The former embrace the sphere of the possible, while the latter embrace the sphere of the existential. There is, however, one exception to the rule that existential propositions are truths of fact and not of reason. For the proposition that God exists is a truth of reason or necessary proposition, and denial of it involves for Leibniz a logical contradiction. To this subject I shall return later. But apart from this one exception no truth of reason asserts existence of any subject. Conversely, if, except in the one case just mentioned, a true proposition asserts existence of a subject, it is a truth of fact, a contingent proposition, and not a truth of reason. Leibniz's distinction between truths of reason and truths of fact needs, however, some further elucidation, and I propose to say something more about each in turn.

2. Among truths of reason are those primitive truths which Leibniz calls 'identicals'. They are known by intuition, their truth being self-evident. They are called 'identicals', says Leibniz, 'because they seem only to repeat the same thing without giving us any information'.[1] Examples of affirmative identicals are 'each thing is what it is', and '*A* is *A*', 'the equilateral rectangle is a rectangle'. An example of a negative identical is 'what is *A* cannot be non-*A*'. But there are also negative identicals which are called 'disparates', that is, propositions which state that the object of one idea is not the object of another idea. For example, 'heat is not the same thing as colour'. 'All this,' says Leibniz, 'can be asserted independently of all proof or of reduction to opposition or to the principle of contradiction, when these ideas are sufficiently understood not to require here analysis.'[2] If we understand, for instance, what the terms 'heat' and 'colour' mean, we see at once, without any need of proof, that heat is not the same thing as colour.

If one looks at Leibniz's examples of primitive truths of reason, one notices at once that some of them are tautologies. For example, the propositions that an equilateral rectangle is a

[1] *New Essays* 4, 2, 1, p. 404; *G.*, 5, 343. [2] *New Essays*, pp. 405–6; G., 5, 344.

rectangle, that a rational animal is an animal and that *A* is *A* are clearly tautological. This, of course, is the reason why Leibniz says that identicals seem to repeat the same thing without giving us any information. Indeed, it appears to have been Leibniz's view that logic and pure mathematics are systems of propositions of the kind which are now sometimes called 'tautologies'. 'The great foundation of mathematics is the principle of contradiction or identity, that is, that a proposition cannot be true and false at the same time, and that, therefore, *A* is *A* and cannot be non-*A*. This single principle is sufficient to demonstrate every part of arithmetic and geometry, that is, all mathematical principles. But in order to proceed from mathematics to natural philosophy another principle is required, as I have observed in my *Theodicy*. I mean the principle of sufficient reason, that is, that nothing happens without a reason why it should be so rather than otherwise.'[1]

Leibniz was, of course, well aware that definitions are required in mathematics. And, according to him, the proposition that three is equal to two plus one is 'only the definition of the term three'.[2] But he would not allow that all definitions are arbitrary. We must distinguish between real and nominal definitions. The former 'show clearly that the thing is possible',[3] while the latter do not. Hobbes, says Leibniz, thought that 'truths were arbitrary because they depended on nominal definitions'.[4] But there are also real definitions, clearly defining the possible, and propositions derived from real definitions are true. Nominal definitions are of use; but they can be the source of knowledge of the truth 'only when it is well established otherwise that the thing defined is possible'.[5] 'In order to be assured that what I conclude from a definition is true, I must know that this notion is possible.'[6] Real definitions are thus fundamental.

In a science such as pure mathematics, therefore, we have self-evident propositions or fundamental axioms, definitions and propositions deduced therefrom; and the whole science concerns the sphere of the possible. There are here several points to notice. First, Leibniz defined the possible as the non-contradictory. The proposition that roundness is compatible with squareness is a contradictory proposition, and this is what is meant when it is said that the idea of a round square is contradictory and

[1] Second letter to S. Clarke, 1; *G.*, 7, 355–6; *D.*, p. 239.
[2] *New Essays*, 4, 2, 1, p. 410; *G.*, 5, 347.
[3] *Thoughts on Knowledge, Truth and Ideas*; *G.*, 4, 424–5; *D.*, p. 30.
[4] *Ibid.* [5] *Ibid.* [6] *G.*, 1, 384 (in a letter to Foucher).

impossible. Secondly, mathematical propositions are but one instance of truths of reason; and we can say that all truths of reason are concerned with the sphere of possibility. Thirdly, to say that truths of reason are concerned with the sphere of possibility is to say that they are not existential judgments. Truths of reason state what would be true in any case, whereas true existential judgments depend on God's choice of one particular possible world. The exception to the rule that truths of reason are not existential judgments is the proposition that God is a possible Being. For to state that God is possible is to state that God exists. Apart from this exception no truths of reason affirm existence of any subject. A truth of reason may hold good in regard to existent reality: we use mathematics in astronomy, for example. But it is not mathematics which tells us that the stars exist.

One must not be misled by Leibniz's example of heat not being the same thing as colour. If I say that heat is not the same thing as colour, I no more assert that heat or colour exist than I assert that triangular bodies exist when I say that a triangle has three sides. Similarly, when I say that man is an animal, I assert that the class 'man' falls under the class 'animal'; but I do not assert that there are existent members of the class. Statements like these concern the sphere of the possible; they concern essences or universals. Except in the one case of God truths of reason are not statements affirming the existence of any individual or individuals. 'That God exists, that all right angles are equal to each other, are necessary truths; but it is a contingent truth that I exist or that there are bodies which show an actual right angle.'[1]

I have said that Leibniz's truths of reason or necessary truths cannot be equated without more ado with analytic propositions because for him all true propositions are in a sense analytic. But contingent propositions or truths of fact are, for him, incapable of being reduced by us to self-evident propositions, whereas truths of reason are either self-evident truths or capable of being reduced by us to self-evident truths. We can say, then, that truths of reason are finitely analytic, and that the principle of contradiction says that all finitely analytic propositions are true. If, therefore, one means by analytic propositions those which are finitely analytic, that is, those which human analysis can show to be necessary propositions, we can equate Leibniz's truths of reason

[1] *On Necessity and Contingency* (to M. Coste); *G.*, 3, 400; *D.*, p. 170.

with analytic propositions understood in this sense. And as Leibniz speaks of truths of fact as being 'incapable of analysis'[1] and as not necessary, we can for all intents and purposes speak of truths of reason as analytic propositions, provided that one remembers that for Leibniz truths of fact can be known *a priori* by the divine mind, though not by us.

3. Connection between truths of reason is necessary, but connection between truths of fact is not always necessary. 'Connection is of two sorts: the one is absolutely necessary, so that its contrary implies contradiction, and this deduction occurs in eternal truths like those of geometry; the other is only necessary *ex hypothesi* and, so to speak, by accident, and it is contingent in itself, when the contrary does not imply contradiction.'[2] It is true that there are interconnections between things: the occurrence of event B may depend upon the occurrence of event A, and, given A, the occurrence of B may be certain. Then we have a hypothetical proposition, 'if A, then B'. But the existence of the system in which this connection finds a place is not necessary but contingent. 'We must distinguish between an absolute and a hypothetical necessity.'[3] Not all possibles are compossible. 'I have reason to believe that not all possible species are compossible in the universe, great as it is, and that this holds not only in regard to things which exist contemporaneously but also in regard to the whole series of things. That is to say, I believe that there are necessarily species which never have existed and never will exist, not being compatible with this series of creatures which God has chosen.'[4] If God chooses, for example, to create a system in which A finds a place, B, if logically incompatible with A, will be necessarily excluded. But it is excluded only on the assumption that God chooses the system in which A finds a place; He might have chosen the system in which B, and not A, finds a place. In other words, the series of existents is not necessary, and so all propositions affirming the existence either of the series as a whole, that is, the world, or any member of the series is a contingent proposition, in the sense that its contrary does not involve logical contradiction. There are different possible worlds. 'The universe is only the collection of a certain kind of compossibles, and the actual universe is the collection of all existent possibles. . . . And as there are different combinations of possibles, some better than

[1] *Scientia Generalis Characteristica*, 14; *G.*, 7, 200. [2] *G.*, 4, 437.
[3] Fifth letter to S. Clarke, 4; *G.*, 7, 389; *D.*, p. 254.
[4] *New Essays*, 3. 6, 12, p. 334; *G.*, 5, 286.

others, there are many possible universes, each collection of compossibles making one of them.'[1] And God was under no absolute necessity to choose one particular possible world. 'The whole universe might have been made differently, time, space and matter being absolutely indifferent to motions and figures. . . . Though all the facts of the universe are now certain in relation to God, . . . it does not follow that the truth which pronounces that one fact follows from another is necessary.'[2] Physical science, therefore, cannot be a deductive science in the same sense in which geometry is a deductive science. 'The laws of motion which actually occur in Nature and which are verified by experiments are not in truth absolutely demonstrable, as a geometrical proposition would be.'[3]

Now, if this were all that Leibniz had to say, the matter would be fairly simple. We could say that there are on the one hand truths of reason or analytic and necessary propositions, like the propositions of logic and pure mathematics, and on the other hand truths of fact or synthetic and contingent propositions, and that with one exception all existential statements fall into the second category. Nor would Leibniz's view that each contingent truth must have a sufficient reason cause any difficulty. When A and B are both finite things, the existence of B may be explicable in terms of the existence and activity of A. But the existence of A itself requires a sufficient reason. In the end we must say that the existence of the world, of the whole harmonious system of finite things, requires a sufficient reason why it exists. And this sufficient reason Leibniz finds in a free decree of God. 'For truths of fact or of existence depend upon the decree of God.'[4] Again, 'the true cause why certain things exist rather than others is to be derived from the free decrees of the divine will. . . .'[5]

But Leibniz complicates matters by implying that contingent propositions are in a sense analytic; and it is necessary to explain in what sense they can be called analytic. In *The Principles of Nature and of Grace* and the *Monadology*, both dated 1714, Leibniz was concerned with using the principle of sufficient reason to prove the existence of God. But in earlier papers he speaks in logical rather than in metaphysical terms and explains the principle of sufficient reason in terms of the subject-predicate

[1] *G.*, 3, 573 (in a letter to Bourguet).
[2] *On Necessity and Contingence* (to M. Coste); *G.*, 3, 400; *D.*, pp. 170–1.
[3] *Theodicy*, 345; *G.*, 6, 319. [4] *G.*, 2, 39.
[5] *Specimen inventorum de admirandis naturae generalis arcanis*; *G.*, 7, 309.

form of proposition. 'In demonstration I use two principles, of which one is that what implies contradiction is false, (while) the other is that a reason can be given for every truth (which is not identical or immediate), that is, that the notion of the predicate is always contained, explicitly or implicitly, in the notion of its subject, and that this holds good no less in extrinsic than in intrinsic denominations, no less in contingent than in necessary truths.'[1] For example, Caesar's resolve to cross the Rubicon was certain *a priori*: the predicate was contained in the notion of the subject. But it does not follow that we can see how the notion of the predicate is contained in that of the subject. In order to have an *a priori* certain knowledge of Caesar's resolve to cross the Rubicon we should have to know perfectly not merely Caesar but the whole system of infinite complexity in which Caesar plays a part. 'For, paradoxical as it may appear, it is impossible for us to have knowledge of individuals. . . . The most important factor in the problem is the fact that individuality includes infinity, and only he who is capable of comprehending it can have the knowledge of the principle of individuation of this or that thing.'[2] The ultimate sufficient reason and ground of certainty of a truth of fact is to be found in God, and an infinite analysis would be required in order to know it *a priori*. No finite mind can perform this analysis; and in this sense Leibniz speaks of truths of fact as 'incapable of analysis'.[3] Only God can possess that complete and perfect idea of the individuality of Caesar which would be necessary in order to know *a priori* all that will ever be predicated of him.

Leibniz sums up the matter in this way. 'It is essential to distinguish between necessary or eternal truths and contingent truths or truths of fact; and these differ from each other almost as rational numbers and surds. For necessary truths can be reduced to those which are identical, as commensurable quantities can be brought to a common measure; but in contingent truths, as in surd numbers, the reduction proceeds to infinity without ever terminating. And thus the certainty and the perfect reason of contingent truths is known to God alone, who embraces the infinite in one intuition. And when this secret is known, the difficulty about the absolute necessity of all things is removed, and it is apparent what the difference is between the infallible and the necessary.'[4] One can say, then, that while the principle of

[1] *G.*, 7, 199–200. [2] *New Essays*, 3, 3, 6, p. 309; *G.*, 5, 268.
[3] *G.*, 7, 200. [4] *Specimen* (cf. note 5, p. 279); *G.*, 7, 309.

contradiction states that all finitely analytic propositions are true, the principle of sufficient reason says that all true propositions are analytic, that is, that the predicate is contained in its subject. But it does not follow that all true propositions are finitely analytic, as are truths of reason ('analytic' propositions proper).

A natural conclusion to draw from this is that for Leibniz the difference between truths of reason and truths of fact, that is, between necessary and contingent propositions, is essentially relative to human knowledge. In this case all true propositions would be necessary in themselves and would be recognized as such by God, though the human mind, owing to its limited and finite character, is able to see the necessity only of those propositions which can be reduced by a finite process to what Leibniz calls 'identicals'. And Leibniz certainly implies this on occasion. 'There is a difference between analysis of the necessary and analysis of the contingent. Analysis of the necessary, which is that of essences, goes from the posterior by nature to the prior by nature and ends in primitive notions, and it is thus that numbers are resolved into units. But in contingents or existents this analysis from the subsequent by nature to the prior by nature proceeds to infinity, without a reduction to primitive elements being ever possible.'[1]

This conclusion would not, however, represent Leibniz's position accurately. It is true that when an individual finite subject like Caesar is considered as a possible being, that is, without reference to its actual existence, the complete notion of this individual comprises all its predicates save existence. 'Every predicate, necessary or contingent, past, present or future, is comprised in the notion of the subject.'[2] But there are two points to notice. In the first place, the meaning which Leibniz attached to the statement that voluntary actions, like Caesar's resolve to cross the Rubicon, are contained in the notion of the subject cannot be understood without introducing the notion of the good, and so of final causality. In the second place, existence, which Leibniz regarded as a predicate, is unique in that it is not comprised in the notion of any finite being. The existence of all actual finite beings is therefore contingent. And when we ask why these beings exist rather than those, we have again to introduce the idea of the good and the principle of perfection. This subject will now be discussed (and it raises its own difficulties); but it is as well to have pointed out in

[1] *G.*, 3, 582 (in a letter to Bourguet). [2] *G.*, 2, 46.

advance that for Leibniz existential propositions are unique. Caesar's resolve to cross the Rubicon was indeed comprised in the notion of Caesar; but it does not follow that the possible world in which Caesar is a member is necessary. Granted that God selected this particular possible world, it was *a priori* certain that Caesar would resolve to cross the Rubicon; but it was not logically or metaphysically necessary for God to select this particular world. The only existential proposition which is necessary in the strict sense is the proposition affirming God's existence.

4. If from among possible worlds God has freely selected one particular world for creation, the question can be raised, why did God choose this particular world? Leibniz was not content to answer simply that God made this choice. For to answer in this way would be equivalent to 'maintaining that God wills something without any sufficient reason for His will', which would be 'contrary to the wisdom of God as though He could operate without acting by reason'.[1] There must, therefore, be a sufficient reason for God's choice. Similarly, though Caesar chose freely to cross the Rubicon, there must be a sufficient reason for his making this choice. Now, though the principle of sufficient reason tells us that God had a sufficient reason for creating this actual world and that there was a sufficient reason for Caesar's decision to cross the Rubicon, it does not by itself tell us what the sufficient reason was in either case. Something more, that is, a complementary principle to the principle of sufficient reason, is required; and Leibniz finds this complementary principle in the principle of perfection.

In Leibniz's opinion, it is ideally possible to assign a maximum amount of perfection to every possible world or set of compossibles. Therefore, to ask why God chose to create one particular world rather than another is to ask why He chose to confer existence on one system of compossibles, possessing a certain maximum of perfection, rather than on another system of compossibles, possessing a different maximum of perfection. And the answer is that God chose the world which has the greatest maximum of perfection. Further, God has created man in such a way that he chooses what seems to him to be the best. The reason why Caesar chose to cross the Rubicon was that his choice seemed to him to be the best. The principle of perfection states, therefore, that God acts for the objectively best and that man acts with a

[1] Third letter to S. Clarke, 7; *G.*, 7, 365; *D.*, p. 245. Leibniz is talking about the spatial situations of bodies, but he refers to his 'axiom' or 'general rule'.

view to what seems to him to be the best. This principle, as Leibniz saw clearly, meant the reintroduction of final causality. Thus of physics he says that 'so far from excluding final causes and the consideration of a Being acting with wisdom, it is from this that everything must be deduced in physics'.[1] Again, dynamics 'is to a great extent the foundation of my system; for we there learn the difference between truths the necessity of which is brute and geometric and truths which have their source in fitness and final causes'.[2]

Leibniz is careful, especially in his published writings, to make this view square with his admission of contingency. God chose the most perfect world freely; and Leibniz even speaks of God choosing freely to act with a view to the best. 'The true cause why certain things exist rather than others is to be derived from the free decrees of the divine will, the first of which is to will to do all things in the best possible way.'[3] God was not under any absolute compulsion to choose the best possible world. Again, though it was certain that Caesar would resolve to cross the Rubicon, his decision was a free decision. He made a rational decision, and therefore he acted freely. 'There is contingency in a thousand actions of nature; but when there is no judgment in the agent there is no liberty.'[4] God has so made man that he chooses what appears to him to be the best, and for an infinite mind man's actions are certain *a priori*. Yet to act in accordance with a judgment of the reason is to act freely. 'To ask whether there is freedom in our will is the same as to ask whether there is choice in our will. Free and voluntary mean the same thing. For the free is the same as the spontaneous with reason; and to will is to be carried to action by a reason perceived by the intellect. . . .'[5] If freedom, then, is understood in this sense, Caesar chose freely to cross the Rubicon in spite of the fact that his choice was certain *a priori*.

These statements by Leibniz leave some important questions unanswered. It is all very well to say that God chose freely to act for the best. But must there not be, on Leibniz's own principles, a sufficient reason for this choice; and must not this sufficient reason be found in the divine nature? Leibniz admits that this is so. 'Absolutely speaking, it must be said that another state (of things)

[1] *On a General Principle Useful in the Explanation of the Laws of Nature* to Bayle); *G.*, 3, 54; *D.*, p. 36. [2] *G.*, 3, 645 (in a letter to Remond).
[3] *Specimen* (cf. note 5, p. 279); *G.*, 7, 309–10. [4] *Theodicy* 34; *G.*, 6, 122.
[5] *Animadversions on Descartes' Principles of Philosophy*, on Article 39; *G.*, 4, 362; *D.*, p. 54.

could exist; yet (it must also be said) that the present state exists because it follows from the nature of God that He should prefer the most perfect.'[1] But if it follows from the nature of God that He should prefer the most perfect, does it not also follow that the creation of the most perfect world is necessary? Leibniz admits this too up to a point. 'In my opinion, if there were no best possible series, God would certainly have created nothing, since He cannot act without a reason or prefer the less perfect to the more perfect.'[2] Further, Leibniz speaks of possibles as having 'a certain need of existence and, so to speak, some claim to existence', and he draws the conclusion that 'among the infinite combinations of possibles and of possible series that one exists by which the most of essence or of possibility is brought into existence'.[3] This seems to imply that creation is in some sense necessary.

Leibniz's answer is to be found in a distinction between logica or metaphysical necessity on the one hand and moral necessity on the other. To say that God chose freely to act for the best is not to say that it was uncertain whether He would act for the best or not. It was morally necessary that He should act for the best, and so it was certain that He would act in this way. But it was not logically or metaphysically necessary for Him to choose the best possible world. 'One can say in a certain sense that it is necessary . . . that God should choose what is best. . . . But this necessity is not incompatible with contingency; for it is not that necessity which I call logical, geometric or metaphysical, the denial of which involves contradiction.'[4] Similarly, given the world and human nature as God created them, it was morally necessary that Caesar should choose to cross the Rubicon; but it was not logically or metaphysically necessary for him to make this choice. He decided under the prevailing inclination to choose what appears to be the best, and it was certain that he would make the decision he did make; but to choose in accordance with this prevailing inclination is to choose freely. 'The demonstration of this predicate of Caesar (that he decided to cross the Rubicon) is not as absolute as those of numbers or of geometry but presupposes the series of things which God has chosen freely and which is founded on the first free decree of God, namely to do always what is most perfect, and on the decree which God has made, in consequence of the

[1] Grua, *Textes inédits*, 1, 393. [2] *G.*, 2, 424–5 (in a letter to des Bosses).
[3] *On the Ultimate Origin of Things*; *G.*, 7, 303; *D.*, p. 101.
[4] *Theodicy*, 282; *G.*, 6, 284.

first, in regard to human nature, which is that man will always do, though freely, what appears best. Now every truth which is founded on decrees of this kind is contingent, although it is certain.'[1]

The difficulty might be raised that God's existence is necessary and that He must be necessarily good if He is good at all. The necessary Being cannot be contingently good. But Leibniz made a distinction between metaphysical perfection and moral perfection or goodness. The former is quantity of essence or reality. 'The good is what contributes to perfection. But perfection is what involves the most of essence.'[2] As God is infinite being, He necessarily possesses infinite metaphysical perfection. But 'goodness' is distinct from metaphysical perfection: it arises when the latter is the object of intelligent choice.[3] Since, therefore, intelligent choice is free, it seems that there is a sense in which God's moral goodness, arising from a free choice, can be called 'contingent' for Leibniz.

If one understands by free choice purely arbitrary and capricious choice, it is, of course, impossible to make Leibniz consistent. But he explicitly rejected any such conception of freedom as being 'absolutely chimerical, even in creatures'.[4] 'In maintaining that the eternal truths of geometry and morals, and consequently also the rules of justice, goodness and beauty, are the effect of a free or arbitrary choice of the will of God, it seems that He is deprived of His wisdom and justice, or rather of His understanding and will, having left only a certain unmeasured power from which all emanates and which deserves the name of Nature rather than that of God.'[5] God's choice must have a sufficient reason, and the same is true of man's free acts. What this sufficient reason is, is explained by the principle of perfection, which says that God always and certainly, though freely, chooses the objectively best and that man certainly, though freely, chooses what appears to him to be the best. Creation is not absolutely necessary; but, if God creates, He certainly, though freely, creates the best possible world. Leibniz's principle of contingency is thus the principle of perfection. 'All contingent propositions have reasons for being as they are rather than otherwise. . . ; but they do not have necessary demonstrations, since these reasons are founded only on the principle of contingency, or of the existence of things, that is, on

[1] *G.*, 4, 438. [2] *G.*, 7, 195. [3] Cf. Grua, *Textes inédits*, 1, 393.
[4] Third letter to S. Clarke, 7; *G.*, 7, 365; *D.*, p. 245. [5] *G.*, 4, 344

what is or appears the best among several equally possible things.'[1] The principle of perfection is, therefore, not identical with the principle of sufficient reason. For the former introduces the notion of the good, whereas the latter by itself says nothing about the good. Even an inferior world would have its sufficient reason, though this could not be the principle of perfection. The principle of sufficient reason needs some complement to make it definite; but this complement need not have been the principle of perfection. If the latter principle says that all propositions, the infinite analysis of which converges on some characteristic of the best possible world, are true, it still remains that they need not, absolutely speaking, have been true. For God was not logically or metaphysically compelled to choose the best possible world.

At the same time Leibniz's logical theory, especially his view that all predicates are contained virtually in their subjects, seems difficult to reconcile with freedom, if by 'freedom' one means something more than spontaneity. Leibniz himself thought that it could be reconciled, and we are not, I think, entitled to speak as though he denied in his logical papers what he affirmed in his published writings. His correspondence with Arnauld shows that he was conscious of the fact that his subject-predicate theory, when applied to human actions, was unlikely to meet with a favourable reception, were it clearly set forth in a work like the *Monadology*. And he may have allowed readers to attach a meaning to terms like 'freedom' which they would hardly have been able to attach to them, had they been aware of his logical views. But though Leibniz may have exercised a certain prudence, it does not follow that he considered his 'esoteric philosophy' and his 'popular philosophy' to be incompatible: it simply means that in some works he withheld the full explanation of what he meant. He was afraid of being accused of Spinozism, but it does not follow that he was secretly a Spinozist. None the less, it is difficult to see how, on Leibniz's logical principles and given his notion of possibles as pressing forward, as it were, to existence, God was not compelled by His very nature to create the best possible world. Presumably the predicate, God's decision to create this world, was contained in the subject, and it is not easy to understand how, on Leibniz's principles, God's choice was anything else but necessary. It is true that for him existence is not comprised in the notion of any subject save God; but what precisely does it mean to say that

[1] *G.*, 4. 438.

God was under a moral necessity, and not under an absolute necessity, of choosing the best possible world? God's choice of the principle of perfection, the principle of contingency, must itself have had its sufficient reason in the divine nature. If so, it seems to me that the principle of perfection must be in some sense subordinate to the principle of sufficient reason.

Possibly one of the reasons why some people seem inclined to think that Leibniz had his tongue in his cheek when he spoke as though contingency is not simply relative to our knowledge is that they regard unpredictability as being essential to the notion of free choice. Leibniz spoke of choices and decisions as being *a priori* certain and yet free. These two characteristics are incompatible, and Leibniz, as a man of outstanding ability, must have seen that they were incompatible. Therefore we must take it that his real mind was revealed in his private papers and not in his published writings. This view ignores the fact, however, that Leibniz was by no means alone in regarding predictability as compatible with freedom. The Jesuit Molina (d. 1600) had held that God, and God alone, knows man's future free acts through His 'supercomprehension' of the agent, while the followers of the Dominican Bañez (d. 1604) had held that God knows man's future free acts in virtue of His decree to predetermine the free agent to act, though freely, in a certain way in certain circumstances. One may think that neither of these views is true, but the fact remains that they had been put forward and that Leibniz was well acquainted with Scholastic controversies. Like the Scholastics, Leibniz accepted the traditional view that God created the world freely and that man is free. In his analysis, however, of the meaning of these propositions he approached the matter from a logical point of view and interpreted them in the light of his subject-predicate logic, whereas the Bannesians, for example, had approached the matter from a predominantly metaphysical point of view. We can no more say that Leibniz denied freedom than we can say that the Bannesians denied freedom; but if one understands by 'freedom' something which they did not understand by the term and which Leibniz called 'chimerical', one can say that it is difficult to see how their analysis of freedom does not amount to an explaining-away. In this sense one can speak of a discrepancy between Leibniz's logical studies and his popular writings. But this discrepancy is no more a proof of insincerity than would be an exhortatory sermon by a follower of Bañez in which no

explicit mention was made of God's predetermining decrees or by a follower of Molina who did not refer to the 'supercomprehension' of the infinite mind.

5. The foregoing remarks are not meant, of course, to deny the influence of Leibniz's logical studies on his philosophy. And if we turn to his general idea of substance, we find a clear instance of such influence. Leibniz did not obtain his idea of substance from the analysis of propositions, nor did he think that our conviction that there are substances is a result of the forms of language. 'I believe that we have a clear but not a distinct idea of substance, which comes, in my opinion, from the fact that we have the internal feeling of it in ourselves, who are substances.'[1] It is not, I think, true to say that Leibniz derived the idea of substance or the conviction that there are substances by arguing from the subject-predicate form of the proposition. At the same time he connected his idea of substance with his logical studies; and these in turn reacted on his philosophy of substance. We can say, then, with Bertrand Russell, that Leibniz 'definitely brought his notion of substance into dependence upon this logical relation',[2] namely the relation of subject to predicate, provided that we do not understand this as meaning that for Leibniz we are led simply by the forms of language into thinking that there are substances.

In the *New Essays*[3] Philalethes gives Locke's view that because we find clusters of 'simple ideas' (qualities) going together but are unable to conceive their existing by themselves, we assume a substratum in which they inhere and to which we give the name 'substance'. Theophilus (that is, Leibniz) replies that there is reason for thinking in this way, since we conceive several predicates as belonging to one and the same subject. He adds that metaphysical terms like 'support' or 'substratum' mean simply this, namely, that several predicates are conceived as belonging to the same subject. Here we have a clear instance of Leibniz connecting the metaphysic of substance with the subject-predicate form of the proposition. An allied example is cited in the following paragraph.

A substance is not simply the subject of predicates: it also pertains to the notion of substance that it is an enduring subject of which different attributes are successively predicated. Now, our idea of an enduring substance is derived primarily from inner

[1] *G.*, 3, 247 (in a letter to T. Burnett).
[2] *A Critical Exposition of the Philosophy of Leibniz*, p. 42.
[3] 2, 23, 1, p. 225; *G.*, 5, 201–2.

experience, that is, of a permanent self. But there must also be, according to Leibniz, an *a priori* reason for the persistence of substance as well as the *a posteriori* reason provided by our experience of our continuing self-identity. 'Now, it is impossible to find any other (*a priori* reason) except that my attributes of the earlier time and state, as well as my attributes of the later time and state, are predicates of the same subject. But what is meant by saying that the predicate is in the subject, if not that the notion of the predicate is found in some way in the notion of the subject?'[1] Leibniz thus connects the persistence of substances under changing modifications or accidents with the virtual inclusion of the notions of successive predicates in the notions of the subjects. Indeed, a substance is a subject which virtually contains all the attributes which will ever be predicated of it. Translated into the language of substance, this theory of the inclusion of predicates in their subjects means that all the actions of any substances are virtually contained in it. 'This being so, we may say that the nature of an individual substance or complete being is to have a notion so complete that it suffices to comprehend, and to render deducible from it, all the predicates of the subject to which this notion is attributed.'[2] The quality of being a king, which belongs to Alexander, does not give us a complete notion of the individuality of Alexander; and, indeed, we cannot have a complete notion of it. 'But God, seeing the individual notion or haecceity of Alexander, sees in it at the same time the foundation and the reason of all the predicates which can truly be attributed to him, as for example, whether he would conquer Darius and Porus, even to knowing *a priori*, and not by experience, whether he would die a natural death or by poison, which we can know only by history.'[3] In fine, 'in saying that the individual notion of Adam involves all that will ever happen to him, I mean nothing else but what all philosophers mean when they say that the predicate is in the subject of a true proposition'.[4]

A substance, then, is a subject which contains virtually all the predicates which it will ever have. But it could not develop its potentialities, that is to say, it could not pass from one state to another while remaining the same subject, unless it had an inner tendency to this self-development or self-unfolding. 'If things were so formed by the mandate (of God) as to render them fit to accomplish the will of the legislator, then it must be admitted that

[1] *G.*, 2, 43. [2] *G.*, 4, 433. [3] *Ibid.* [4] *G.*, 2, 43.

a certain efficacy, form or force . . . was impressed on things from which proceeds the series of phenomena according to the prescription of the first command.'[1] Activity, then, is an essential characteristic of substance. In fact, though a different system of things might have been created by God, 'the activity of substance is rather of metaphysical necessity and would have had a place, if I am not mistaken, in any system whatever'.[2] Again, 'I hold that naturally a substance cannot exist without action.'[3] I do not mean to suggest that Leibniz derived his notion of substance as essentially active simply from reflection on the virtual inclusion of predicates in their subjects; but he connected his theory of substance as actively self-unfolding with his theory of the subject-predicate relation. And in general it is not so much that he derived his metaphysic from his logic as that he brought the two into connection with one another, so that the one influenced the other. They form different aspects of his philosophy.

6. Leibniz tried to deduce from the principle of sufficient reason the conclusion that there cannot be two indiscernible substances. 'I infer from the principle of sufficient reason, among other consequences, that there are not in Nature two real, absolute beings indiscernible from each other; because if there were, God and Nature would act without reason in ordering the one otherwise than the other.'[4] By 'absolute beings' Leibniz means substances, and his contention is that each substance must differ internally from every other substance. In the total system of substances God would have no sufficient reason for placing two indiscernible substances one in one position in the series and the other in a different position. If two substances were indistinguishable from one another, they would be the same substance.

The principle of the identity of indiscernibles was important in Leibniz's eyes. 'Those great principles of sufficient reason and of the identity of indiscernibles change the state of metaphysics.'[5] The principle was for him bound up with the notion of universal harmony, implying a systematic and harmonious unity of different beings, any two of which are internally different from one another, even though the difference may in some cases be infinitesimal and imperceptible. But the precise status of the principle is not

[1] *On Nature in Itself*, 6; *G.*, 4, 507; *D.*, p. 116.
[2] *G.*, 2, 169 (in a letter to de Volder).
[3] *New Essays*, preface, p. 47; *G.*, 5, 46.
[4] Fifth letter to S. Clarke, 21; *G.*, 7, 393; *D.*, p. 259.
[5] Fourth letter to S. Clarke, 5; *G.*, 7, 372; *D.*, p. 247.

very clear. According to Leibniz, it is possible to conceive two indiscernible substances, though it is false and contrary to the principle of sufficient reason to suppose that two indiscernible substances exist.[1] This seems to imply that the principle of the identity of indiscernibles is contingent. Abstractly or absolutely speaking, two indiscernible substances are conceivable and possible, but it is incompatible with the principle of sufficient reason, interpreted in the light of the principle of perfection, which is a contingent principle, that they should exist. God, having freely chosen to act for the best, would have no sufficient reason for creating them. Elsewhere, however, Leibniz seems to imply that two indiscernibles are inconceivable and metaphysically impossible. 'If two individuals were perfectly alike and equal and, in a word, indistinguishable in themselves, there would be no principle of individuation; and I even venture to assert that there would be no individual distinction or different individuals under this condition.'[2] He goes on to say that this is why the notion of atoms is chimerical. If two atoms possess the same size and shape, they could be distinguished only by external denominations. 'But it is always necessary that besides the difference of time and place there should be an internal principle of distinction.'[3] For different external relations implied for Leibniz different attributes in the related substances. He may have thought that a substance can be defined only in terms of its predicates, with the consequence that two substances could not be spoken of as 'two' and as 'different' unless they had different predicates.[4] But the difficulty then arises, as Bertrand Russell points out, of seeing how there can be more than one substance. 'Until predicates have been assigned, the two substances remain indiscernible; but they cannot have predicates by which they cease to be indiscernible, unless they are first distinguished as numerically different.'[5] If, however, we assume that Leibniz's real view is that two indiscernibles are conceivable and metaphysically possible, though it is incompatible with the principle of perfection that they should actually exist, this difficulty might be overcome. But it is difficult to see how two indiscernibles are conceivable within the framework of Leibniz's philosophy of substance, predicates and relations.

[1] Fifth letter to S. Clarke, 21; *G.*, 7, 394; *D.*, p. 259.
[2] *New Essays*, 2, 27, 3, p. 239; *G.*, 5, 214.
[3] *New Essays*, 2, 27, 1, p. 238; *G.*, 5, 213.
[4] Cf. *New Essays*, 2, 23, 1–2, p. 226; *G.*, 5, 201–2.
[5] *A Critical Exposition of the Philosophy of Leibniz*, p. 59.

7. In a letter to Bayle, Leibniz speaks of 'a certain principle of general order', which is 'absolutely necessary in geometry but also holds good in physics', since God acts as a perfect geometrician. He states the principle in the following way. 'When the difference of two cases can be diminished below any magnitude given in the data or in what is posited, it must also be possible to diminish it below any magnitude given in what is sought (*in quaesitis*) or in what results. Or, to express it more familiarly, when the cases (or what is given) continually approach each other and are finally merged in one another, the results or events (or what is sought) must do so too. This depends again on a more general principle, namely: when the data form a series, what is sought does so also (*datis ordinatis etiam quaesita sunt ordinata*).'[1] Leibniz gives examples from geometry and physics. A parabola can be considered as an ellipse with an infinitely distant focus or as a figure which differs from some ellipse by less than any given difference. The geometrical theorems which are true of the ellipse in general can then be applied to the parabola, when considered as an ellipse. Again, rest can be considered as an infinitely small velocity or as an infinite slowness. What is true of velocity or of slowness will then be true of rest when considered in this way, 'so much so that the rule of rest ought to be considered as a particular case of the rule of motion'.[2]

Leibniz thus applied the idea of infinitesimal differences to show how there is continuity between, for example, the parabola and the ellipse in geometry and between motion and rest in physics. He applied it also in his philosophy of substance in the form of the law of continuity, which states that there are no leaps or discontinuities in Nature. 'Nothing is accomplished all at once, and it is one of my great maxims, and one of the most completely verified, that Nature makes no leaps: a maxim which I called the law of continuity.'[3] This law holds good 'not only of transitions from place to place but also of those from form to form or from state to state'.[4] Changes are continuous, and leaps are apparent only, though, says Leibniz, the beauty of Nature demands them so that there can be distinct perceptions. We do not see the infinitesimal stages of change, and so there seems to be discontinuity where there is none in reality.

The law of continuity is complementary to the principle of the

[1] *On a General Principle Useful in the Explanation of the Laws of Nature* (to Bayle); *G.*, 3, 52; *D.*, p. 33. [2] *Ibid.*, G., 3, 53; *D.*, p. 34.
[3] *New Essays*, preface, p. 50; *G.*, 5, 49. [4] *G.*, 2, 168 (in a letter to de Volder).

identity of indiscernibles. For the law of continuity states that in the series of created things every possible position is occupied, while the principle of the identity of indiscernibles states that every possible position is occupied once and once only. But as far as the created world of substances is concerned, the law of continuity is not metaphysically necessary. It is dependent on the principle of perfection. 'The hypothesis of leaps cannot be refuted except by the principle of order, by the help of the supreme reason, which does everything in the most perfect way.'[1]

8. It can hardly be denied, I think, that there is a close connection between Leibniz's logical and mathematical reflections on the one hand and his philosophy of substances on the other. As we have seen, it is legitimate to speak, in regard to certain important points at any rate, of a tendency to subordinate the latter to the former and to interpret, for example, the theory of substance and attributes in the light of a particular logical theory about propositions. There is a close connection between the logical theory of analytic propositions and the metaphysical theory of windowless monads or substances, that is, of substances which develop their attributes purely from within according to a preestablished series of continuous changes. And in the law of continuity, as applied to substances, we can see the influence of Leibniz's study of infinite analysis in mathematics. This study is also reflected in his idea of contingent propositions as requiring infinite analysis, that is, as being only infinitely analytic and not finitely analytic like truths of reason.

On the other hand, Leibniz's 'panlogism' is only one aspect of his thought, not the whole of it. He may, for example, have connected his idea of substance as essentially active with his idea of a subject as that in which an infinity of predicates are virtually contained; but this is not to say that he actually derived his idea of activity or force from logic. It is difficult to see how any such derivation would be plausible or possible. Moreover, apart from his own reflections on the self and on the existent world, Leibniz was acquainted not only with the writings of men like Descartes, Hobbes and Spinoza but also with those of Renaissance thinkers who had anticipated several of his leading ideas. The fundamental idea in Leibniz's philosophy was probably that of the universal harmony of the potentially infinite system of Nature, and this idea was certainly present in the philosophy of Nicolas

[1] *G.*, 2, 193 (in a letter to de Volder)

of Cusa in the fifteenth and again in that of Bruno in the sixteenth century. Further, the ideas that no two things are exactly alike and that each thing mirrors the universe in its own way had both been put forward by Nicholas of Cusa. Leibniz may have brought these and allied ideas into relation with his logical and mathematical studies: he could hardly do otherwise, unless he was prepared to admit a fundamental dichotomy in his thought. But this does not justify us regarding him as simply a 'panlogist'. For the matter of that, even if one can show how certain metaphysical theories were derivable from Leibniz's logic, it does not necessarily follow that they were actually so derived. And though there may be inconsistencies between some of Leibniz's logical theories and some of his metaphysical speculations, and even though he may have consciously refrained from publishing some of his conclusions to all and sundry, it is rash to conclude that his mature published writings contain only a popular and edifying philosophy in which he did not really believe. He was a complex and many-sided figure; and even if his logical studies form in some ways the characteristic note of his thinking, the other aspects of his thought cannot be simply disregarded. Moreover, if we remember that he never worked out a system in the way that Spinoza had tried to do, it becomes easier to understand his inconsistencies. It may very well be the case that, as Bertrand Russell has maintained, some of Leibniz's logical reflections would more readily lead to Spinozism than to the monadology; but it does not follow that Leibniz was not sincere in his rejection of Spinozism. He was convinced, for example, that Spinozism is not supported by experience and that his own monadology did gain some support from experience. To this monadology I shall now turn.

CHAPTER XVII

LEIBNIZ (3)

Simple substances or monads—Entelechies and prime matter—Extension—Body and corporeal substance—Space and time—The pre-established harmony—Perception and appetite—Soul and body—Innate ideas.

1. LEIBNIZ connected the psychological origin of the idea of substance with self-consciousness. 'To think a colour and to observe that one thinks it are two very different thoughts, as different as is the colour from the ego which thinks it. And as I conceive that other beings may also have the right to say "I", or that it could be said for them, it is through this that I conceive what is called "substance" in general.'[1] And it is also the consideration of the ego itself which furnishes other metaphysical notions, like cause, effect, action, similarity, etc., and even those of logic and ethics. There are primitive truths of fact as well as primitive truths of reason; and the proposition 'I exist' is a primitive truth of fact, an immediate truth, though it is not the only one. These primitive truths of fact are 'immediate internal experiences of an immediacy of feeling':[2] they are not necessary propositions but propositions 'founded on an immediate experience'.[3] I am certain, then, that I exist, and I am aware of myself as a unity. Hence I derive the general idea of substance as a unity. At the same time, the connection of the idea of substance with the self-consciousness of the ego militates against the Spinozistic conception of a unique substance of which I am but a mode. However much some of Leibniz's logical speculations may have pointed towards Spinozism, his lively awareness of spiritual individuality made it impossible for him to entertain seriously the general metaphysic of Spinoza. He was not prepared to follow Descartes in making the *Cogito* the one fundamental existential proposition; but he agreed that 'the Cartesian principle is valid', though 'it is not the only one of its kind'.[4]

It is not possible to demonstrate by any argument giving

[1] *On the Supersensible Element in Knowledge and on the Immaterial in Nature* (to Queen Charlotte of Prussia); *G.*, 6, 493; *D.*, p. 151.
[2] *New Essays*, 4, 2, 1, p. 410; *G.*, 5, 347. [3] *New Essays*, 4, 7, 7, p. 469; *G.*, 5, 392.
[4] *New Essays*, 4, 2, 1, p. 410; *G.*, 5, 348.

PART I

POST-KANTIAN IDEALIST SYSTEMS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Preliminary remarks—Kant's philosophy and idealist metaphysics—The meaning of idealism, its insistence on system and its confidence in the power and scope of philosophy—The idealists and theology—The romantic movement and German idealism—The difficulty in fulfilling the idealist programme—The anthropomorphic element in German idealism—Idealist philosophies of man.

1. In the German philosophical world during the early part of the nineteenth century we find one of the most remarkable flowerings of metaphysical speculation which have occurred in the long history of western philosophy. We are presented with a succession of systems, of original interpretations of reality and of human life and history, which possess a grandeur that can hardly be called in question and which are still capable of exercising on some minds at least a peculiar power of fascination. For each of the leading philosophers of the period professes to solve the riddle of the world, to reveal the secret of the universe and the meaning of human existence.

True, before the death of Schelling in 1854 Auguste Comte in France had already published his *Course of Positive Philosophy* in which metaphysics was represented as a passing stage in the history of human thought. And Germany was to have its own positivist and materialist movements which, while not killing metaphysics, would force metaphysicians to reflect on and define more closely the relation between philosophy and the particular sciences. But in the early decades of the nineteenth century the shadow of positivism had not yet fallen across the scene and speculative philosophy enjoyed a period of uninhibited and luxuriant growth. With the great German idealists we find a superb confidence in the power of the human reason and in the scope of philosophy. Looking on reality as the self-manifestation of infinite reason, they thought

that the life of self-expression of this reason could be retraced in philosophical reflection. They were not nervous men looking over their shoulders to see if critics were whispering that they were producing poetic effusions under the thin disguise of theoretical philosophy, or that their profundity and obscure language were a mask for lack of clarity of thought. On the contrary, they were convinced that the human spirit had at last come into its own and that the nature of reality was at last clearly revealed to human consciousness. And each set out his vision of the Universe with a splendid confidence in its objective truth.

It can, of course, hardly be denied that German idealism makes on most people today the impression of belonging to another world, to another climate of thought. And we can say that the death of Hegel in 1831 marked the end of an epoch. For it was followed by the collapse of absolute idealism[1] and the emergence of other lines of thought. Even metaphysics took a different turn. And the superb confidence in the power and range of speculative philosophy which was characteristic of Hegel in particular has never been regained. But though German idealism sped through the sky like a rocket and after a comparatively short space of time disintegrated and fell to earth, its flight was extremely impressive. Whatever its shortcomings, it represented one of the most sustained attempts which the history of thought has known to achieve a unified conceptual mastery of reality and experience as a whole. And even if the presuppositions of idealism are rejected, the idealist systems can still retain the power of stimulating the natural impulse of the reflective mind to strive after a unified conceptual synthesis.

Some are indeed convinced that the elaboration of an overall view of reality is not the proper task of scientific philosophy. And even those who do not share this conviction may well think that the achievement of a final systematic synthesis lies beyond the capacity of any one man and is more of an ideal goal than a practical possibility. But we should be prepared to recognize intellectual stature when we meet it. Hegel in particular towers up in impressive grandeur above the vast majority of those who have tried to belittle him. And we can always learn from an outstanding philosopher, even if it is only by reflecting on our reasons for disagreeing with him. The historical collapse of metaphysical idealism does not necessarily entail the conclusion that the great idealists

[1] The fact that there were later idealist movements in Britain, America, Italy and elsewhere does not alter the fact that after Hegel metaphysical idealism in Germany suffered an eclipse.

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have nothing of value to offer. German idealism has its fantastic aspects, but the writings of the leading idealists are very far from being all fantasy.

2. The point which we have to consider here is not, however, the collapse of German idealism but its rise. And this indeed stands in need of some explanation. On the one hand the immediate philosophical background of the idealist movement was provided by the critical philosophy of Immanuel Kant, who had attacked the claims of metaphysicians to provide theoretical knowledge of reality. On the other hand the German idealists looked on themselves as the true spiritual successors of Kant and not as simply reacting against his ideas. What we have to explain, therefore, is how metaphysical idealism could develop out of the system of a thinker whose name is for ever associated with scepticism about metaphysics' claim to provide us with theoretical knowledge about reality as a whole or indeed about any reality other than the *a priori* structure of human knowledge and experience.[1]

The most convenient starting-point for an explanation of the development of metaphysical idealism out of the critical philosophy is the Kantian notion of the thing-in-itself.[2] In Fichte's view Kant had placed himself in an impossible position by steadfastly refusing to abandon this notion. On the one hand, if Kant had asserted the existence of the thing-in-itself as cause of the given or material element in sensation, he would have been guilty of an obvious inconsistency. For according to his own philosophy the concept of cause cannot be used to extend our knowledge beyond the phenomenal sphere. On the other hand, if Kant retained the idea of the thing-in-itself simply as a problematical and limiting notion, this was tantamount to retaining a ghostly relic of the very dogmatism which it was the mission of the critical philosophy to overcome. Kant's Copernican revolution was a great step forward, and for Fichte there could be no question of moving backwards to a pre-Kantian position. If one had any understanding of the development of philosophy and of the demands of modern thought, one could only go forward and complete Kant's work. And this meant eliminating the thing-in-itself. For, given Kant's premisses, there was no room for an unknowable occult entity supposed to be independent of mind. In other words, the critical philosophy had to

[1] I say 'could develop' because reflection on Kant's philosophy can lead to different lines of thought, according to the aspects which one emphasizes. See Vol. VI, pp. 433–4.

[2] See Vol. VI, pp. 268–72, 384–6.

be transformed into a consistent idealism; and this meant that things had to be regarded in their entirety as products of thought.

Now, it is immediately obvious that what we think of as the extramental world cannot be interpreted as the product of conscious creative activity by the human mind. As far as ordinary consciousness is concerned, I find myself in a world of objects which affect me in various ways and which I spontaneously think of as existing independently of my thought and will. Hence the idealist philosopher must go behind consciousness, as it were, and retrace the process of the unconscious activity which grounds it.

But we must go further than this and recognize that the production of the world cannot be attributed to the individual self at all, even to its unconscious activity. For if it were attributed to the individual finite self as such, it would be very difficult, if not impossible, to avoid solipsism, a position which can hardly be seriously maintained. Idealism is thus compelled to go behind the finite subject to a supra-individual intelligence, an absolute subject.

The word 'subject', however, is not really appropriate, except as indicating that the ultimate productive principle lies, so to speak, on the side of thought and not on the side of the sensible thing. For the words 'subject' and 'object' are correlative. And the ultimate principle is, considered in itself, without object. It grounds the subject-object relationship and, in itself, transcends the relationship. It is subject and object in identity, the infinite activity from which both proceed.

Post-Kantian idealism was thus necessarily a metaphysics. Fichte, starting from the position of Kant and developing it into idealism, not unnaturally began by calling his first principle the ego, turning Kant's transcendental ego into a metaphysical or ontological principle. But he explained that he meant by this the absolute ego, not the individual finite ego. But with the other idealists (and with Fichte himself in his later philosophy) the word 'ego' is not used in this context. With Hegel the ultimate principle is infinite reason, infinite spirit. And we can say that for metaphysical idealism in general reality is the process of the self-expression or self-manifestation of infinite thought or reason.

This does not mean, of course, that the world is reduced to a process of thinking in the ordinary sense. Absolute thought or reason is regarded as an activity, as productive reason which posits or expresses itself in the world. And the world retains all the reality

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which we see it to possess. Metaphysical idealism does not involve the thesis that empirical reality consists of subjective ideas; but it involves the vision of the world and human history as the objective expression of creative reason. This vision was fundamental in the outlook of the German idealist: he could not avoid it. For he accepted the necessity of transforming the critical philosophy into idealism. And this transformation meant that the world in its entirety had to be regarded as the product of creative thought or reason. If, therefore, we look on the need for transforming the philosophy of Kant into idealism as a premiss, we can say that this premiss determined the basic vision of the post-Kantian idealists. But when it comes to explaining what is meant by saying that reality is a process of creative thought, there is room for different interpretations, for the several particular visions of the different idealist philosophers.

The direct influence of Kant's thought was naturally felt more strongly by Fichte than by Schelling or Hegel. For Schelling's philosophizing presupposed the earlier stages of Fichte's thought, and Hegel's absolute idealism presupposed the earlier phases of the philosophies of both Fichte and Schelling. But this does not alter the fact that the movement of German idealism as a whole presupposed the critical philosophy. And in his account of the history of modern philosophy Hegel depicted the Kantian system as representing an advance on preceding stages of thought and as demanding to be itself developed and surpassed in succeeding stages.

In this section reference has been made so far only to the process of eliminating the thing-in-itself and transferring Kant's philosophy into metaphysical idealism. But it was certainly not my intention to suggest that the post-Kantian idealists were influenced only by the idea that the thing-in-itself had to be eliminated. They were also influenced by other aspects of the critical philosophy. For example, Kant's doctrine of the primacy of the practical reason had a powerful appeal for Fichte's strongly-marked ethical outlook. And we find him interpreting the absolute ego as an infinite practical reason or moral will which posits Nature as a field and instrument for moral activity. In his philosophy the concepts of action, of duty and of moral vocation are extremely prominent. And we are perhaps entitled to say that Fichte turned Kant's second *Critique* into a metaphysics, employing his development of the first *Critique* as a means of doing so. With Schelling, however,

the prominence given to the philosophy of art, to the role of genius and to the metaphysical significance of aesthetic intuition and artistic creation links him with the third *Critique* rather than with the first or second.

But instead of dwelling at length on the particular ways in which different parts or aspects of Kant's philosophy influenced this or that idealist, it will be more appropriate in our introductory chapter if we take a broader and more general view of the relation between the critical philosophy and metaphysical idealism.

The desire to form a coherent and unified interpretation of reality is natural to the reflective mind. But the actual task to be performed presents itself in different ways at different times. For example, the development of physical science in the post-mediaeval world meant that the philosopher who wished to construct an overall interpretation had to grapple with the problem of reconciling the scientific view of the world as a mechanical system with the demands of the moral and religious consciousness. Descartes was faced with this problem. And so was Kant.[1] But though Kant rejected the ways of dealing with this problem which were characteristic of his philosophical predecessors and offered his own original solution, it is arguable that in the long run he left us with 'a bifurcated reality'.[2] On the one hand we have the phenomenal world, the world of Newtonian science, governed by necessary causal laws.[3] On the other hand there is the supersensuous world of the free moral agent and of God. There is no valid reason for asserting that the phenomenal world is the only reality.[4] But at the same time there is no theoretical proof of the existence of a supersensuous reality. It is a matter of practical faith, resting on the moral consciousness. It is true that in the third *Critique* Kant endeavoured to bridge the gulf between the two worlds to the extent in which he considered this to be possible for the human mind.[5] But it is understandable if other philosophers were not satisfied with his performance. And the German idealists were able to proceed beyond Kant by means of their development and transformation of his philosophy. For if reality is the unified

[1] See Vol. IV, pp. 55–6 and Vol. VI, pp. 233–4; 428–9.
[2] Vol. IV, p. 60.
[3] Necessity and causality are for Kant *a priori* categories. But he does not deny, indeed he affirms, that the world of science is 'phenomenally real'.
[4] This is true at least if we refrain from pressing Kant's doctrine of the restricted field of application of the categories to an extent which would exclude any meaningful talk about supersensuous reality, even in the context of moral faith.
[5] See Vol. VI, ch. 15.

process by which absolute thought or reason manifests itself, it is intelligible. And it is intelligible by the human mind, provided that this mind can be regarded as the vehicle, as it were, of absolute thought reflecting on itself.

This condition possesses an obvious importance if there is to be any continuity between Kant's idea of the only possible scientific metaphysics of the future and the idealists' conception of metaphysics. For Kant the metaphysics of the future is a transcendental critique of human experience and knowledge. We can say in fact that it is the human mind's reflective awareness of its own spontaneous formative activity. In metaphysical idealism, however, the activity in question is productive in the fullest sense (the thing-in-itself having been eliminated); and this activity is attributed, not to the finite human mind as such, but to absolute thought or reason. Hence philosophy, which is reflection by the human mind, cannot be regarded as absolute thought's reflective awareness of itself unless the human mind is capable of rising to the absolute point of view and becoming the vehicle, as it were, of absolute thought or reason's reflective awareness of its own activity. If this condition is fulfilled, there is a certain continuity between Kant's idea of the only possible scientific type of metaphysics and the idealist conception of metaphysics. There is also, of course, an obvious inflation, so to speak. That is to say, the Kantian theory of knowledge is inflated into a metaphysics of reality. But the process of inflation retains a certain measure of continuity. While going far beyond anything that Kant himself envisaged, it is not a simple reversion to a pre-Kantian conception of metaphysics.

The transformation of the Kantian theory of knowledge into a metaphysics of reality carries with it, of course, certain important changes. For example, if with the elimination of the thing-in-itself the world becomes the self-manifestation of thought or reason, the Kantian distinction between the *a priori* and the *a posteriori* loses its absolute character. And the categories, instead of being subjective forms or conceptual moulds of the human understanding, become categories of reality; they regain an objective status. Again, the teleological judgment is no longer subjective, as with Kant. For in metaphysical idealism the idea of purposiveness in Nature cannot be simply a heuristic or regulative principle of the human mind, a principle which performs a useful function but the objectivity of which cannot be theoretically

proved. If Nature is the expression and manifestation of thought or reason in its movement towards a goal, the process of Nature must be teleological in character.

It cannot indeed be denied that there is a very great difference between Kant's modest idea of the scope and power of metaphysics and the idealists' notion of what metaphysical philosophy is capable of achieving. Kant himself repudiated Fichte's demand for the transformation of the critical philosophy into pure idealism by the elimination of the thing-in-itself. And it is easy to understand the attitude of the neo-Kantians who, later in the century, announced that they had had enough of the airy metaphysical speculations of the idealists and that it was time to return to the spirit of Kant himself. At the same time the development of Kant's system into metaphysical idealism is not unintelligible, and the remarks in this section may have helped to explain how the idealists were able to look on themselves as Kant's legitimate spiritual successors.

3. It will be clear from what has been said about the development of metaphysical idealism that the post-Kantian idealists were not subjective idealists in the sense of holding that the human mind knows only its own ideas as distinct from extramentally existing things. Nor were they subjective idealists in the sense of holding that all objects of knowledge are the products of the finite human subject. True, Fichte's use of the word 'ego' in his earlier writings tended to give the impression that this was precisely what he did hold. But the impression was mistaken. For Fichte insisted that the productive subject was not the finite ego as such but the absolute ego, a transcendental and supra-individual principle. And as for Schelling and Hegel, any reduction of things to products of the individual finite mind was entirely foreign to their thought.

But though it is easily understood that post-Kantian idealism did not involve subjective idealism in either of the senses alluded to in the last paragraph, it is not so easy to give a general description of the movement which will apply to all the leading idealist systems. For they differ in important respects. Moreover, the thought of Schelling in particular moved through successive phases. At the same time there is, of course, a family likeness between the different systems. And this fact justifies one in venturing on some generalizations.

Inasmuch as reality is looked on as the self-expression or self-

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unfolding of absolute thought or reason, there is a marked tendency in German idealism to assimilate the causal relation to the logical relation of implication. For example, the empirical world is conceived by Fichte and by Schelling (in at any rate the earlier phases of the latter's thought) as standing to the ultimate productive principle in the relation of consequent to antecedent. And this means, of course, that the world follows necessarily from the first productive principle, the priority of which is logical and not temporal. Obviously, there is not and cannot be any question of external compulsion. But the Absolute spontaneously and inevitably manifests itself in the world. And there is really no place for the idea of creation in time, in the sense of there being an ideally assignable first moment of time.[1]

This notion of reality as the self-unfolding of absolute reason helps to explain the idealists' insistence on system. For if philosophy is the reflective reconstruction of the structure of a dynamic rational process, it should be systematic, in the sense that it should begin with the first principle and exhibit the essential rational structure of reality as flowing from it. True, the idea of a purely theoretical deduction does not in practice occupy such an important place in metaphysical idealism as the foreground dialectical process of Fichte and above all Hegel tends to suggest. For idealist philosophy is the conceptual reconstruction of a dynamic activity, a self-unfolding infinite life, rather than a strict analysis of the meaning and implications of one or more initial basic propositions. But the general world-view is embryonically contained in the initial idea of the world as the process of absolute reason's self-manifestation. And it is the business of philosophy to give systematic articulation to this idea, reliving the process, as it were, on the plane of reflective awareness. Hence, though it would be possible to start from the empirical manifestations of absolute reason and work backwards, metaphysical idealism naturally follows a deductive form of exposition, in the sense that it systematically retraces a teleological movement.

Now, if we assume that reality is a rational process and that its essential dynamic structure is penetrable by the philosopher, this assumption is naturally accompanied by a confidence in the power and scope of metaphysics which contrasts sharply with Kant's modest estimate of what it can achieve. And this contrast is

[1] Hegel admits the idea of free creation on the level of the language of the religious consciousness. But this language is for him pictorial or figurative.

obvious enough if one compares the critical philosophy with Hegel's system of absolute idealism. Indeed, it is probably true to say that Hegel's confidence in the power and reach of philosophy was unequalled by any previous philosopher of note. At the same time we have seen in the last section that there was a certain continuity between Kant's philosophy and metaphysical idealism. And we can even say, though it is a paradoxical statement, that the closer idealism kept to Kant's idea of the only possible form of scientific metaphysics, the greater was its confidence in the power and scope of philosophy. For if we assume that philosophy is thought's reflective awareness of its own spontaneous activity, and if we substitute a context of idealist metaphysics for the context of Kant's theory of human knowledge and experience, we then have the idea of the rational process, which is reality, becoming aware of itself in and through man's philosophical reflection. In this case the history of philosophy is the history of absolute reason's self-reflection. In other words, the Universe knows itself in and through the mind of man. And philosophy can be interpreted as the self-knowledge of the Absolute.

True, this conception of philosophy is characteristic more of Hegel than of the other leading idealists. Fichte ended by insisting on a divine Absolute which in itself transcends the reach of human thought, and in his later philosophy of religion Schelling emphasized the idea of a personal God who reveals himself to man. It is with Hegel that the idea of the philosopher's conceptual mastery of all reality and the interpretation of this mastery as the self-reflection of the Absolute become most prominent. But to say this is simply to say that it is in Hegelianism, the greatest achievement of metaphysical idealism, that the faith in the power and scope of speculative philosophy which inspired the idealist movement finds its purest and most grandiose expression.

4. Mention has just been made of Fichte's later doctrine of the Absolute and of Schelling's philosophy of religion. And it is appropriate to say something here of the relations between German idealism and theology. For it is important to understand that the idealist movement was not simply the result of a transformation of the critical philosophy into metaphysics. All three of the leading idealists started as students of theology, Fichte at Jena, Schelling and Hegel at Tübingen. And though it is true that they turned very quickly to philosophy, theological themes played a conspicuous role in the development of German idealism. Nietzsche's

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statement that the philosophers in question were concealed theologians was misleading in some respects, but it was not altogether without foundation.

The importance of the role played by theological themes in German idealism can be illustrated by the following contrast. Though not a professional scientist Kant was always interested in science. His first writings were mainly concerned with scientific topics,[1] and one of his primary questions was about the conditions which render scientific knowledge possible. Hegel, however, came to philosophy from theology. His first writings were largely theological in character, and he was later to declare that the subject-matter of philosophy is God and nothing but God. Whether the term 'God', as here used, is to be understood in anything approaching a theistic sense is not a question which need detain us at present. The point to be made is that Hegel's point of departure was the theme of the relation between the infinite and the finite, between God and creatures. His mind could not remain satisfied with a sharp distinction between the infinite Being on the one hand and finite beings on the other, and he tried to bring them together, seeing the infinite in the finite and the finite in the infinite. In the theological phase of his development he was inclined to think that the elevation of the finite to the infinite could take place only in the life of love, and he then drew the conclusion that philosophy must in the long run yield to religion. As a philosopher, he tried to exhibit the relation between the infinite and the finite conceptually, in thought, and tended to depict philosophical reflection as a higher form of understanding than the way of thinking which is characteristic of the religious consciousness. But the general theme of the relation between the infinite and the finite which runs through his philosophical system was taken over, as it were, from his early theological reflections.

It is not, however, simply a question of Hegel. In Fichte's earlier philosophy the theme of the relation between the infinite and the finite is not indeed conspicuous, for he was primarily concerned with the completion, as he saw it, of Kant's deduction of consciousness. But in his later thought the idea of one infinite divine Life comes to the fore, and the religious aspects of his philosophy were developed. As for Schelling, he did not hesitate to say that the relation between the divine infinite and the finite is the chief problem of philosophy. And his later thought was profoundly

[1] See Vol. VI, pp. 181–2, 185–7.

religious in character, the ideas of man's alienation from and return to God playing a prominent role.

Being philosophers, the idealists tried, of course, to understand the relation between the infinite and the finite. And they tended to view it according to the analogy of logical implication. Further, if we make the necessary exception for Schelling's later religious philosophy, we can say that the idea of a personal God who is both infinite and fully transcendent seemed to the idealists to be both illogical and unduly anthropomorphic. Hence we find a tendency to transform the idea of God into the idea of the Absolute, in the sense of the all-comprehensive totality. At the same time the idealists had no intention of denying the reality of the finite. Hence the problem which faced them was that of including, as it were, the finite within the life of the infinite without depriving the former of its reality. And the difficulty of solving this problem is responsible for a good deal of the ambiguity in metaphysical idealism when it is a question of defining its relation to theism on the one hand and pantheism on the other. But in any case it is clear that a central theological theme, namely the relation between God and the world, looms large in the speculations of the German idealists.

It has been said above that Nietzsche's description of the German idealists as concealed theologians is misleading in some respects. For it suggests that the idealists were concerned with reintroducing orthodox Christianity by the backdoor, whereas in point of fact we find a marked tendency to substitute metaphysics for faith and to rationalize the revealed mysteries of Christianity, bringing them within the scope of the speculative reason. To use a modern term, we find a tendency to demythologize Christian dogmas, turning them in the process into a speculative philosophy. Hence we may be inclined to smile at J. H. Stirling's picture of Hegel as the great philosophical champion of Christianity. We may be more inclined to accept McTaggart's view, and also Kierkegaard's, that the Hegelian philosophy undermined Christianity from within as it were, by professing to lay bare the rational content of the Christian doctrines in their traditional form. And we may feel that the connection which Fichte sought to establish between his later philosophy of the Absolute and the first chapter of St. John's Gospel was somewhat tenuous.

At the same time there is no cogent reason for supposing, for instance, that Hegel had his tongue in his cheek when he referred to St. Anselm and to the process of faith seeking understanding.

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His early essays showed marked hostility to positive Christianity; but he came to change his attitude and to take the Christian faith under his wing, so to speak. It would be absurd to claim that Hegel was in fact an orthodox Christian. But he was doubtless sincere when he represented the relation of Christianity to Hegelianism as being that of the absolute religion to the absolute philosophy, two different ways of apprehending and expressing the same truth-content. From an orthodox theological standpoint Hegel must be judged to have substituted reason for faith, philosophy for revelation, and to have defended Christianity by rationalizing it and turning it, to borrow a phrase from McTaggart, into exoteric Hegelianism. But this does not alter the fact that Hegel thought of himself as having demonstrated the truth of the Christian religion. Nietzsche's statement, therefore, was not altogether wide of the mark, especially if one takes into account the development in the religious aspects of Fichte's thought and the later phases of Schelling's philosophy. And in any case the German idealists certainly attributed significance and value to the religious consciousness and found a place for it in their systems. They may have turned from theology to philosophy, but they were very far from being irreligious men or rationalists in a modern sense.

5. But there is another aspect of metaphysical idealism which must also be mentioned, namely its relation to the romantic movement in Germany. The description of German idealism as the philosophy of romanticism is indeed open to serious objection. In the first place it suggests the idea of a one-way influence. That is to say, it suggests that the great idealist systems were simply the ideological expression of the romantic spirit, whereas in point of fact the philosophies of Fichte and Schelling exercised a considerable influence on some of the romantics. In the second place, the leading idealist philosophers stood in somewhat different relations to the romantics. We can say indeed that Schelling gave notable expression to the spirit of the romantic movement. But Fichte indulged in some sharp criticism of the romantics, even if the latter had derived inspiration from certain of his ideas. And Hegel had scant sympathy with some aspects of romanticism. In the third place it is arguable that the term 'philosophy of romanticism' would be better applied to the speculative ideas developed by romantics such as Friedrich Schlegel (1772–1829) and Novalis (1772–1801) than to the great idealist systems. At the same time there was undoubtedly some spiritual affinity between

the idealist and romantic movements. The romantic spirit as such was indeed an attitude towards life and the universe rather than a systematic philosophy. One may perhaps borrow Rudolf Carnap's terms and speak of it as a *Lebensgefühl* or *Lebenseinstellung*.[1] And it is perfectly understandable that Hegel saw a considerable difference between systematic philosophical reflection and the utterances of the romantics. But when we look back on the German scene in the first part of the nineteenth century, we are naturally struck by affinities as well as by differences. After all, metaphysical idealism and romanticism were more or less contemporary German cultural phenomena, and an underlying spiritual affinity is only what one might expect to find.

The romantic spirit is notoriously difficult to define. Nor indeed should one expect to be able to define it. But one can, of course, mention some of its characteristic traits. For example, as against the Enlightenment's concentration on the critical, analytic and scientific understanding the romantics exalted the power of the creative imagination and the role of feeling and intuition.[2] The artistic genius took the place of *le philosophe*. But the emphasis which was laid on the creative imagination and on artistic genius formed part of a general emphasis on the free and full development of the human personality, on man's creative powers and on enjoyment of the wealth of possible human experience. In other words, stress was laid on the originality of each human person rather than on what is common to all men. And this insistence on the creative personality was sometimes associated with a tendency to ethical subjectivism. That is to say, there was a tendency to depreciate fixed universal moral laws or rules in favour of the free development of the self in accordance with values rooted in and corresponding to the individual personality. I do not mean to imply by this that the romantics had no concern for morality and moral values. But there was a tendency, with F. Schlegel for example, to emphasize the free pursuit by the individual of his own moral ideal (the fulfilment of his own 'Idea') rather than obedience to universal laws dictated by the impersonal practical reason.

[1] According to Rudolf Carnap, metaphysical systems express a feeling for or attitude towards life. But such terms are much more applicable to the romantic spirit than, say, to Hegel's dialectical system.

[2] Two comments are appropriate here. First, I do not mean to imply that the romantic movement proper followed immediately upon the Enlightenment. But I pass over the intervening phases. Secondly, the generalization in the text should not be interpreted as meaning that the men of the Enlightenment had no understanding at all of the importance of feeling in human life. See, for example, Vol. VI, pp. 24–7.

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In developing their ideas of the creative personality some of the romantics derived inspiration and stimulus from Fichte's early thought. This is true of both F. Schlegel and Novalis. But it does not follow, of course, that the use which they made of Fichte's ideas always corresponded with the philosopher's intentions. An example will make this clear. As we have seen, in his transformation of the Kantian philosophy into pure idealism Fichte took as his ultimate creative principle the transcendental ego, considered as unlimited activity. And in his systematic deduction or reconstruction of consciousness he made copious use of the idea of the productive imagination. Novalis seized on these ideas and represented Fichte as opening up to view the wonders of the creative self. But he made an important change. Fichte was concerned with explaining on idealist principles the situation in which the finite subject finds itself in a world of objects which are given to it and which affect it in various ways, as in sensation. He therefore represented the activity of the so-called productive imagination, when it posits the object as affecting the finite self, as taking place below the level of consciousness. By transcendental reflection the philosopher can be aware *that* this activity takes place, but neither he nor anyone else is aware of it *as* taking place. For the positing of the object is logically prior to all awareness or consciousness. And this activity of the productive imagination is certainly not modifiable at the will of the finite self. Novalis, however, depicted the activity of the productive imagination as modifiable by the will. Just as the artist creates works of art, so is man a creative power not only in the moral sphere but also, in principle at least, in the natural sphere. Fichte's transcendental idealism was thus turned into Novalis's 'magical idealism'. In other words, Novalis seized on some of Fichte's philosophical theories and used them in the service of a poetic and romantic extravaganza, to exalt the creative self.

Further, the romantics' emphasis on the creative genius links them with Schelling much more than with Fichte. As will be seen in due course, it was the former and not the latter who laid stress on the metaphysical significance of art and on the role of artistic genius. When Friedrich Schlegel asserted that there is no greater world than the world of art and that the artist exhibits the Idea in finite form, and when Novalis asserted that the poet is the true 'magician', the embodiment of the creative power of the human self, they were speaking in ways which were more in tune with the

thought of Schelling than with the strongly ethical outlook of Fichte.

Emphasis on the creative self was, however, only one aspect of romanticism. Another important aspect was the romantics' conception of Nature. Instead of conceiving Nature simply as a mechanical system, so that they would be forced to make a sharp contrast (as in Cartesianism) between man and Nature, the romantics tended to look on Nature as a living organic whole which is in some way akin to spirit and which is clothed in beauty and mystery. And some of them showed a marked sympathy with Spinoza, that is, a romanticized Spinoza.

This view of Nature as an organic totality akin to spirit again links the romantics with Schelling. The philosopher's idea of Nature below man as slumbering spirit and the human spirit as the organ of Nature's consciousness of herself was thoroughly romantic in tone. It is significant that the poet Hölderlin (1770–1843) was a friend of Schelling when they were fellow-students at Tübingen. And the poet's view of Nature as a living comprehensive whole seems to have exercised some influence on the philosopher. In turn Schelling's philosophy of Nature exercised a powerful stimulative influence on some of the romantics. As for the romantics' sympathy with Spinoza, this was shared by the theologian and philosopher Schleiermacher. But it was certainly not shared by Fichte who had a profound dislike for anything approaching a divinization of Nature, which he looked on simply as a field and instrument for free moral activity. In this respect he was anti-romantic in his outlook.

The romantics' attachment to the idea of Nature as an organic living totality does not mean, however, that they emphasized Nature to the detriment, so to speak, of man. We have seen that they also stressed the free creative personality. In the human spirit Nature reaches, as it were, its culmination. Hence the romantic idea of Nature could be and was allied with a marked appreciation of the continuity of historical and cultural development and of the significance of past cultural periods for the unfolding of the potentialities of the human spirit. Hölderlin, for example, had a romantic enthusiasm for the genius of ancient Greece,[1] an enthusiasm which was shared by Hegel in his student days. But special attention can be drawn here to the reawakened interest in

[1] It is a mistake to suppose that Hölderlin's attachment to Greece necessarily makes of him a classicist as opposed to a romantic.

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the Middle Ages. The man of the Enlightenment had tended to see in the mediaeval period a dark night which preceded the dawn of the Renaissance and the subsequent emergence of *les philosophes*. But for Novalis the Middle Ages represented, even if imperfectly, an ideal of the organic unity of faith and culture, an ideal which should be recovered. Further, the romantics showed a strong attachment to the idea of the spirit of a people (*Volksgeist*) and an interest in the cultural manifestation of this spirit, such as language. In this respect they continued the thought of Herder[1] and other predecessors.

The idealist philosophers not unnaturally shared this appreciation of historical continuity and development. For history was for them the working-out in time of a spiritual Idea, a *telos* or end. Each of the great idealists had his philosophy of history, that of Hegel being particularly notable. As Fichte looked on Nature primarily as an instrument for moral activity, he naturally laid more emphasis on the sphere of the human spirit and on history as a movement towards the realization of an ideal moral world-order. In Schelling's philosophy of religion history appears as the story of the return to God of fallen humanity, of man alienated from the true centre of his being. With Hegel the idea of the dialectic of national spirits plays a prominent role, though this is accompanied by an insistence on the part played by so-called world-historical individuals. And the movement of history as a whole is depicted as a movement towards the realization of spiritual freedom. In general, we can say, the great idealists regarded their epoch as a time in which the human spirit had become conscious of the significance of its activity in history and of the meaning or direction of the whole historical process.

Above all perhaps romanticism was characterized by a feeling for and longing for the infinite. And the ideas of Nature and of human history were brought together in the conception of them as manifestations of one infinite Life, as aspects of a kind of divine poem. Thus the notion of infinite Life served as a unifying factor in the romantic world-outlook. At first sight perhaps the romantics' attachment to the idea of the *Volksgeist* may appear to be at variance with their emphasis on the free development of the individual personality. But there was really no radical incompatibility. For the infinite totality was conceived, generally speaking, as infinite Life which manifested itself in and through finite beings

[1] See Vol. VI, pp. 138–46, 172–9.

but not as annihilating them or as reducing them to mere mechanical instruments. And the spirits of peoples were conceived as manifestations of the same infinite Life, as relative totalities which required for their full development the free expression of the individual personalities which were the bearers, so to speak, of these spirits. And the same can be said of the State, considered as the political embodiment of the spirit of a people.

The typical romantic was inclined to conceive the infinite totality aesthetically, as an organic whole with which man felt himself to be one, the means of apprehending this unity being intuition and feeling rather than conceptual thought. For conceptual thought tends to fix and perpetuate defined limits and boundaries, whereas romanticism tends to dissolve limits and boundaries in the infinite flow of Life. In other words, romantic feeling for the infinite was not infrequently a feeling for the indefinite. And this trait can be seen as well in the tendency to obscure the boundary between the infinite and the finite as in the tendency to confuse philosophy with poetry or, within the artistic sphere itself, to intermingle the arts.

Partly, of course, it was a question of seeing affinities and of synthesizing different types of human experience. Thus F. Schlegel regarded philosophy as akin to religion on the ground that both are concerned with the infinite and that every relation of man to the infinite can be said to belong to religion. Indeed art too is religious in character, for the creative artist sees the infinite in the finite, in the form of beauty. At the same time the romantics' repugnance to definite limits and clear-cut form was one of the reasons which led Goethe to make his famous statement that the classical is the healthy and the romantic the diseased. For the matter of that, some of the romantics themselves came to feel the need for giving definite shape to their intuitive and rather hazy visions of life and reality and for combining the nostalgia for the infinite and for the free expression of the individual personality with a recognition of definite limits. And certain representatives of the movement, such as F. Schlegel, found in Catholicism a fulfilment of this need.

The feeling for the infinite obviously constitutes common ground for romanticism and idealism. The idea of the infinite Absolute, conceived as infinite Life, comes to the fore in Fichte's later philosophy, and the Absolute is a central theme in the philosophies of Schelling, Schleiermacher and Hegel. Further, we can say that the German idealists tend to conceive the infinite not

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as something set over against the finite but as infinite life or activity which expresses itself in and through the finite. With Hegel especially there is a deliberate attempt to mediate between the finite and the infinite, to bring them together without either identifying the infinite with the finite or dismissing the latter as unreal or illusory. The totality lives in and through its particular manifestations, whether it is a question of the infinite totality, the Absolute, or of a relative totality such as the State.

The spiritual affinity between the romantic and idealist movements is thus unquestionable. And it can be illustrated by many examples. For instance, when Hegel depicts art, religion and philosophy as concerned with the Absolute, though in different ways, we can see an affinity between his view and the ideas of F. Schlegel to which reference was made in the last paragraph. At the same time it is necessary to emphasize an important contrast between the great idealist philosophers and the romantics, a contrast which can be illustrated in the following manner.

Friedrich Schlegel assimilated philosophy to poetry and dreamed of their becoming one. In his view philosophizing was primarily a matter of intuitive insights, not of deductive reasoning or of proof. For every proof is a proof of something, and the intuitive grasp of the truth to be proved precedes all argument, which is a purely secondary affair.[1] As Schlegel put it, Leibniz asserted and Wolff proved. Evidently, this remark was not intended as a compliment to Wolff. Further, philosophy is concerned with the Universe, the totality. And we cannot prove the totality: it is apprehended only in intuition. Nor can we describe it in the same way in which we can describe a particular thing and its relations to other particular things. The totality can in a sense be displayed or shown, as in poetry, but to say precisely what it is transcends our power. The philosopher, therefore, is concerned with attempting to say what cannot be said. And for this reason philosophy and the philosopher himself are for the true philosopher a matter for ironic wit.

When, however, we turn from Friedrich Schlegel, the romantic, to Hegel, the absolute idealist, we find a resolute insistence on systematic conceptual thought and a determined rejection of appeals to mystical intention and feeling. Hegel is indeed concerned with the totality, the Absolute, but he is concerned with

[1] Schlegel's view can be compared with the view advanced by some modern writers on metaphysics, that what really matters in a metaphysical system is the 'vision' and that arguments are persuasive devices to commend or put across a vision.

thinking it, with expressing the life of the infinite and its relation to the finite in conceptual thought. It is true that he interprets art, including poetry, as having the same subject-matter as philosophy, namely absolute Spirit. But he also insists on a difference of form which it is essential to preserve. Poetry and philosophy are distinct, and they should not be confused.

It may be objected that the contrast between the romantics' idea of philosophy and that of the great idealists is not nearly so great as a comparison between the views of F. Schlegel and Hegel tends to suggest. Fichte postulated a basic intellectual intuition of the pure or absolute ego an idea which was exploited by some of the romantics. Schelling insisted, at least in one stage of his philosophizing, that the Absolute can be apprehended in itself only in mystical intuition. And he also emphasized an aesthetic intuition through which the nature of the Absolute is apprehended not in itself but in symbolic form. For the matter of that, romantic traits can be discerned even within the Hegelian dialectical logic, which is a logic of movement, designed to exhibit the inner life of the Spirit and to overcome the conceptual antitheses which ordinary logic tends to render fixed and permanent. Indeed, the way in which Hegel depicts the human spirit as passing successively through a variety of attitudes and as restlessly moving from position to position can reasonably be regarded as an expression of the romantic outlook. Hegel's logical apparatus itself is alien to the romantic spirit, but this apparatus belongs to the foreground of his system. Underneath we can see a profound spiritual affinity with the romantic movement.

It is not, however, a question of denying the existence of a spiritual affinity between metaphysical idealism and romanticism. We have already argued that there is such an affinity. It is a question of pointing out that, in general, the idealist philosophers were concerned with systematic thought whereas the romantics were inclined to emphasize the role of intuition and feeling and to assimilate philosophy to poetry. Schelling and Schleiermacher stood indeed closer to the romantic spirit than did Fichte or Hegel. It is true that Fichte postulated a basic intellectual intuition of the pure or absolute ego; but he did not think of this as some sort of privileged mystical insight. For him it was an intuitive grasp of an activity which manifests itself to the reflective consciousness. What is required is not some mystical or poetic capacity but transcendental reflection, which is open in principle to all. And in his

attack on the romantics Fichte insisted that his philosophy, though demanding this basic intellectual intuition of the ego as activity, was a matter of logical thought which yielded science, in the sense of certain knowledge. Philosophy is the knowledge of knowledge, the basic science; it is not an attempt to say what cannot be said. As for Hegel, it is doubtless true that we, looking back, can discern romantic traits even within his dialectic. But this does not alter the fact that he insisted that philosophy is not a matter of apocalyptic utterances or poetic rhapsodies or mystical intuitions but of systematic logical thought which thinks its subject-matter conceptually and makes it plain to view. The philosopher's business is to understand reality and to make others understand it, not to edify or to suggest meaning by the use of poetic images.

6. As we have seen, the initial transformation of Kant's philosophy into pure idealism meant that reality had to be looked on as a process of productive thought or reason. In other words, being had to be identified with thought. And the natural programme of idealism was to exhibit the truth of this identification by means of a deductive reconstruction of the essential dynamic structure of the life of absolute thought or reason. Further, if the Kantian conception of philosophy as thought's reflective awareness of its own spontaneous activity was to be retained, philosophical reflection had to be represented as the self-awareness or self-consciousness of absolute reason in and through the human mind. Hence it pertained also to the natural programme of idealism to exhibit the truth of this interpretation of philosophical reflection.

When, however, we turn to the actual history of the idealist movement, we see the difficulty encountered by the idealists in completely fulfilling this programme. Or, to put the matter in another way, we see marked divergences from the pattern suggested by the initial transformation of the critical philosophy into transcendental idealism. For example, Fichte starts with the determination not to go beyond consciousness, in the sense of postulating as his first principle a being which transcends consciousness. He thus takes as his first principle the pure ego as manifested in consciousness, not as a thing but as an activity. But the demands of his transcendental idealism force him to push back, as it were, the ultimate reality behind consciousness. And in the later form of his philosophy we find him postulating absolute infinite Being which transcends thought.

With Schelling the process is in a sense reversed. That is to say, while at one stage of his philosophical pilgrimage he asserts the existence of an Absolute which transcends human thought and conceptualization, in his subsequent religious philosophy he attempts to reconstruct reflectively the essence and inner life of the personal Deity. At the same time, however, he abandons the idea of deducing in a *a priori* manner the existence and structure of empirical reality and emphasizes the idea of God's free self-revelation. He does not entirely abandon the idealist tendency to look on the finite as though it were a logical consequence of the infinite; but once he has introduced the idea of a free personal God his thought necessarily departs to a large extent from the original pattern of metaphysical idealism.

Needless to say, the fact that both Fichte and Schelling, especially the latter, developed and changed their initial positions does not by itself constitute any proof that the developments and changes were unjustified. My point is rather that these illustrate the difficulty in carrying through to completion what I have called the idealist programme. One can say that neither with Fichte nor with Schelling is being in the long run reduced to thought.

It is with Hegel that we find by far the most sustained attempt to fulfil the idealist programme. He has no doubt that the rational is the real and the real the rational. And in his view it is quite wrong to speak of the human mind as merely finite and on this ground to question its power to understand the self-unfolding life of the infinite Absolute. The mind has indeed its finite aspects, but it is also infinite, in the sense that it is capable of rising to the level of absolute thought, at which level the Absolute's knowledge of itself and man's knowledge of the Absolute are one. And Hegel makes what is undoubtedly a most impressive attempt to show in a systematic and detailed way how reality is the life of absolute reason in its movement towards the goal of self-knowledge, thus becoming in actual existence what it always is in essence, namely self-thinking thought.

Clearly, the more Hegel identifies the Absolute's knowledge of itself with man's knowledge of the Absolute, the more completely does he fulfil the demand of the idealist programme that philosophy should be represented as the self-reflection of absolute thought or reason. If the Absolute were a personal God, eternally enjoying perfect self-awareness quite independently of the human spirit, man's knowledge of God would be an outside view, so to speak. If,

however, the Absolute is all reality, the Universe, interpreted as the self-unfolding of absolute thought which attains self-reflection in and through the human spirit, man's knowledge of the Absolute is the Absolute's knowledge of itself. And philosophy is productive thought thinking itself.

But what is then meant by productive thought? It is arguable at any rate that it can hardly mean anything else but the Universe considered teleologically, that is, as a process moving towards self-knowledge, this self-knowledge being in effect nothing but man's developing knowledge of Nature, of himself and of his history. And in this case there is nothing behind the Universe, as it were, no thought or reason which expresses itself in Nature and human history in the way that an efficient cause expresses itself in its effect. Thought is teleologically prior, in the sense that man's knowledge of the world-process is represented as the goal of the process and as giving it its significance. But that which is actually or historically prior is Being in the form of objective Nature. And in this case the whole pattern of idealism, as suggested by the initial transformation of Kant's philosophy, is changed. For this transformation inevitably suggests the picture of an activity of infinite thought which produces or creates the objective world, whereas the picture described above is simply the picture of the actual world of experience interpreted as a teleological process. The *telos* or goal of the process is indeed depicted as the world's self-reflection in and through the human mind. But this goal or end is an ideal which is never complete at any given moment of time. Hence the identification of being and thought is never actually achieved.

7. Another aspect of the divergences from the natural pattern of post-Kantian idealism can be expressed in this way. F. H. Bradley, the English absolute idealist, maintained that the concept of God inevitably passes into the concept of the Absolute. That is to say, if the mind tries to think the infinite in a consistent manner, it must in the end acknowledge that the infinite cannot be anything else but the universe of being, reality as a whole, the totality. And with this transformation of God into the Absolute religion disappears. 'Short of the Absolute God cannot rest, and, having reached that goal, he is lost and religion with him.'[1] A similar view was expressed by R. G. Collingwood. 'God and the absolute are not identical but irretrievably distinct. And yet they are identical

[1] *Appearance and Reality* (2nd edition), p. 447.

in this sense: God is the imaginative or intuitive form in which the absolute reveals itself to the religious consciousness.'[2] If we preserve speculative metaphysics, we must admit in the long run that theism is a half-way house between the frank anthropomorphism of polytheism on the one hand and the idea of the all-inclusive Absolute on the other.

It is indeed obvious that in the absence of any clear idea of the analogy of being the notion of a finite being which is ontologically distinct from the infinite cannot stand. But let us pass over this point, important as it is, and note instead that post-Kantian idealism in what one might call its natural form is thoroughly anthropomorphic. For the pattern of human consciousness is transferred to reality as a whole. Let us suppose that the human ego comes to self-consciousness only indirectly. That is to say, attention is first directed to the not-self. The not-self has to be posited by the ego or subject, not in the sense that the not-self must be ontologically created by the self but in the sense that it must be recognized as an object if consciousness is to arise at all. The ego can then turn back upon itself and become reflectively aware of itself in its activity. In post-Kantian idealism this process of human consciousness is used as a key-idea for the interpretation of reality as a whole. The absolute ego or absolute reason or whatever it may be called is regarded as positing (in an ontological sense) the objective world of Nature as a necessary condition for returning to itself in and through the human spirit.

This general scheme follows naturally enough from the transformation of the Kantian philosophy into metaphysical idealism. But inasmuch as Kant was concerned with human knowledge and consciousness, the inflation of his theory of knowledge into cosmic metaphysics inevitably involves interpreting the process of reality as a whole according to the pattern of human consciousness. And in this sense post-Kantian idealism contains a marked element of anthropomorphism, a fact which it is just as well to notice in view of the not uncommon notion that absolute idealism is much less anthropomorphic than theism. Of course, we cannot conceive God other than analogically; and we cannot conceive the divine consciousness except according to an analogy with human consciousness. But we can endeavour to eliminate in thought the aspects of consciousness which are bound up with finitude. And it is arguable, to put it mildly, that to attribute to the infinite a

[2] *Speculum Mentis*, p. 151.

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process of becoming self-conscious is an evident expression of anthropomorphic thinking.

Now, if there is a spiritual reality which is at any rate logically prior to Nature and which becomes self-conscious in and through man, how are we to conceive it? If we conceive it as an unlimited activity which is not itself conscious but grounds consciousness, we have more or less Fichte's theory of the so-called absolute ego.

But the concept of an ultimate reality which is at the same time spiritual and unconscious is not easily understood. Nor, of course, does it bear much resemblance to the Christian concept of God. If, however, we maintain with Schelling in his later religious philosophy that the spiritual reality which lies behind Nature is a personal Being, the pattern of the idealist scheme is inevitably changed. For it cannot then be maintained that the ultimate spiritual reality becomes self-conscious in and through the cosmic process. And inasmuch as Schelling outlived Hegel by more than twenty years we can say that the idealist movement which immediately followed the critical philosophy of Kant ended, chronologically speaking, in a reapproximation to philosophical theism. As we have seen, Bradley maintained that the concept of God is required by the religious consciousness but that, from the philosophical point of view, it must be transformed into the concept of the Absolute. Schelling would have accepted the first contention but rejected the second, at least as understood by Bradley. For in his later years Schelling's philosophy was pretty well a philosophy of the religious consciousness. And he believed that the religious consciousness demanded the transformation of his own former idea of the Absolute into the idea of a personal God. In his theosophical speculations he undoubtedly introduced obvious anthropomorphic elements, as will be seen later. But at the same time the movement of his mind towards theism represented a departure from the peculiar brand of anthropomorphism which was characteristic of post-Kantian idealism.

There is, however, a third possibility. We can eliminate the idea of a spiritual reality, whether unconscious or conscious, which produces Nature, and we can at the same time retain the idea of the Absolute becoming self-conscious. The Absolute then means the world, in the sense of the universe. And we have the picture of man's knowledge of the world and of his own history as the self-knowledge of the Absolute. In this picture, which represents the general line of one of the main interpretations of Hegel's absolute

idealism,[1] nothing is added, as it were, to the empirical world except a teleological account of the world-process. That is to say, no existent transcendent Being is postulated; but the universe is interpreted as a process moving towards an ideal goal, namely complete self-reflection in and through the human spirit.

This interpretation can hardly be taken as merely equivalent to the empirical statements that in the course of the world's history man has as a matter of fact appeared and that as a matter of fact he is capable of knowing and of increasing his knowledge of himself, his history and his environment. For presumably none of us, whether materialists or idealists, whether theists, pantheists or atheists, would hesitate to accept these statements. At the very least the interpretation is meant to suggest a teleological pattern, a movement towards human knowledge of the universe, considered as the universe's knowledge of itself. But unless we are prepared to admit that this is only one possible way of regarding the world-process and thus to lay ourselves open to the objection that our choice of this particular pattern is determined by an intellectualist prejudice in favour of knowledge for the sake of knowledge (that is, by a particular valuational judgment), we must claim, it appears, that the world moves by some inner necessity towards the goal of self-knowledge in and through man. But what ground have we for making this claim unless we believe either that Nature itself is unconscious mind (or, as Schelling put it, slumbering Spirit) which strives towards consciousness or that behind Nature there is unconscious mind or reason which spontaneously posits Nature as a necessary precondition for attaining consciousness in and through the human spirit? And if we accept either of these positions, we transfer to the universe as a whole the pattern of the development of human consciousness. This procedure may indeed be demanded by the transformation of the critical philosophy into metaphysical idealism; but it is certainly not less anthropomorphic in character than philosophical theism.

8. In this chapter we have been mainly concerned with German idealism as a theory, or rather set of theories, about reality as a whole, the self-manifesting Absolute. But a philosophy of man is also a prominent feature of the idealist movement. And this is indeed only what one would expect if one considers the metaphysical premisses of the several philosophers. According to

[1] The adequacy of this interpretation of Hegel is highly disputable. But this is a question which need not detain us here.

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Fichte, the absolute ego is an unlimited activity which can be represented as striving towards consciousness of its own freedom. But consciousness exists only in the form of individual consciousness. Hence the absolute ego necessarily expresses itself in a community of finite subjects or selves, each of which strives towards the attainment of true freedom. And the theme of moral activity inevitably comes to the fore. Fichte's philosophy is essentially a dynamic ethical idealism. Again, for Hegel the Absolute is definable as Spirit or as self-thinking Thought. Hence it is more adequately revealed in the human spirit and its life than in Nature. And more emphasis must be placed on the reflective understanding of man's spiritual life (the life of man as a rational being) than on the philosophy of Nature. As for Schelling, when he comes to assert the existence of a personal and free God, he occupies himself concurrently with the problem of freedom in man and with man's fall from and return to God.

In the idealist philosophies of man and society insistence on freedom is a conspicuous feature. But it does not follow, of course, that the word 'freedom' is used throughout in the same sense. With Fichte the emphasis is on individual freedom as manifested in action. And we can doubtless see in this emphasis a reflection of the philosopher's own dynamic and energetic temperament. For Fichte man is from one point of view a system of natural drives, instincts and impulses; and if he is looked at simply from this point of view, it is idle to talk about freedom. But as spirit man is not tied, so to speak, to the automatic satisfaction of one desire after another: he can direct his activity to an ideal goal and act in accordance with the idea of duty. As with Kant, freedom tends to mean rising above the life of sensual impulse and acting as a rational, moral being. And Fichte is inclined to speak as though activity were its own end, emphasizing free action for the sake of free action.

But though Fichte's primary emphasis is on the individual's activity and on his rising above the slavery of natural drive and impulse to a life of action in accordance with duty, he sees, of course, that some content has to be given to the idea of free moral action. And he does this by stressing the concept of moral vocation. A man's vocation, the series of actions which he ought to perform in the world, is largely determined by his social situation, by his position, for example, as the father of a family. And in the end we have the vision of a multiplicity of moral vocations converging

towards a common ideal end, the establishment of a moral world-order.

As a young man Fichte was an enthusiastic supporter of the French Revolution which he regarded as liberating men from forms of social and political life which hindered their free moral development. But then the question arose, what form of social, economic and political organization is best fitted to favour man's moral development? And Fichte found himself compelled to lay increasing emphasis on the positive role of political society as a morally educative power. But though in his later years reflection on contemporary political events, namely the Napoleonic domination and the war of liberation, was partly responsible for the growth in his mind of a nationalistic outlook and for a strong emphasis on the cultural mission of a unified German State in which alone the Germans could find true freedom, his more characteristic idea was that the State is a necessary instrument to preserve the system of rights as long as man has not attained his full moral development. If man as a moral being were fully developed, the State would wither away.

When we turn to Hegel, however, we find a different attitude. Hegel too was influenced in his youth by the ferment of the French Revolution and the drive to freedom. And the term 'freedom' plays a conspicuous role in his philosophy. As will be seen in due course, he represents human history as a movement towards the fuller realization of freedom. But he distinguishes sharply between negative freedom, as mere absence of restraint, and positive freedom. As Kant saw, moral freedom involves obeying only that law which one gives oneself as a rational being. But the rational is the universal. And positive freedom involves identifying oneself with ends that transcend one's desires as a particular individual. It is attained, above all, by identifying one's particular will with Rousseau's General Will which finds expression in the State. Morality is essentially social morality. The formal moral law receives its content and field of application in social life, especially in the State.

Both Fichte and Hegel, therefore, attempt to overcome the formalism of the Kantian ethic by placing morality in a social setting. But there is a difference of emphasis. Fichte places the emphasis on individual freedom and action in accordance with duty mediated by the personal conscience. We have to add as a corrective that the individual's moral vocation is seen as a member

of a system of moral vocations, and so in a social setting. But in Fichte's ethics the emphasis is placed on the individual's struggle to overcome himself, to bring his lower self, as it were, into tune with the free will which aims at complete freedom. Hegel, however, places the emphasis on man as a member of political society and on the social aspects of ethics. Positive freedom is something to be attained through membership in a greater organic whole. As a corrective or counterweight to this emphasis we must add that for Hegel no State can be fully rational unless it recognizes the value of and finds room for subjective or individual freedom. When at Berlin Hegel lectured on political theory and described the State in highfaluting terms, he was concerned with making his hearers socially and politically conscious and with overcoming what he regarded as an unfortunate one-sided emphasis on the inwardness of morality rather than with turning them into totalitarians. Further, political institutions constitute, according to Hegel, the necessary basis for man's higher spiritual activities, art, religion and philosophy, in which the freedom of the spirit reaches its supreme expression.

What one misses, however, in both Fichte and Hegel is perhaps a clear theory of absolute moral values. If we talk with Fichte about action for action's sake, freedom for the sake of freedom, we may show an awareness of the unique character of each human being's moral vocation. But at the same time we run the risk of emphasizing the creative personality and the uniqueness of its moral vocation at the expense of the universality of the moral law. If, however, we socialize morality with Hegel, we give it concrete content and avoid the formalism of the Kantian ethic, but at the same time we run the risk of implying that moral values and standards are simply relative to different societies and cultural periods. Obviously, some would maintain that this is in fact the case. But if we do not agree, we require a clearer and more adequate theory of absolute values than Hegel actually provides.

Schelling's outlook was rather different from that either of Fichte or of Hegel. At one period of his philosophical development he utilized a good many of the former's ideas and represented the moral activity of man as tending to create a second Nature, a moral world-order, a moral world within the physical world. But the difference between his attitude and Fichte's showed itself in the fact that he proceeded to add a philosophy of art and of aesthetic intuition to which he attributed a great metaphysical significance.

With Fichte the emphasis was placed on the moral struggle and on free moral action, with Schelling it was placed on aesthetic intuition as a key to the ultimate nature of reality, and he exalted the artistic genius rather than the moral hero. When, however, theological problems came to absorb his interest, his philosophy of man naturally took on a marked religious colouring. Freedom, he thought, is the power to choose between good and bad. And personality is something to be won by the birth of light out of darkness, that is, by a sublimation of man's lower nature and its subordination to the rational will. But these themes are treated in a metaphysical setting. For example, the views on freedom and personality to which allusion has just been made lead Schelling into theosophical speculation about the nature of God. In turn, his theories about the divine nature react on his view of man.

To return to Hegel, the greatest of the German idealists. His analysis of human society and his philosophy of history are certainly very impressive. Many of those who listened to his lectures on history must have felt that the significance of the past and the meaning of the movement of history were being revealed to them. Moreover, Hegel was not exclusively concerned with understanding the past. As has already been remarked, he wished to make his students socially, politically and ethically conscious. And he doubtless thought that his analysis of the rational State could furnish standards and aims in political life, especially in German political life. But the emphasis is placed on understanding. Hegel is the author of the famous saying that the owl of Minerva spreads her wings only with the falling of the dusk, and that when philosophy spreads her grey on grey, then has a shape of life grown cold. He had a vivid realization of the fact that political philosophy is apt to canonize, as it were, the social and political forms of a society or culture which is about to pass away. When a culture or society has become mature and ripe, or even over-ripe, it becomes conscious of itself in and through philosophical reflection, just at the moment when the movement of life is demanding and bringing forth new societies or new social and political forms.

With Karl Marx we find a different attitude. The business of the philosopher is to understand the movement of history in order to change existing institutions and forms of social organization in accordance with the demands of the teleological movement of history. Marx does not, of course, deny the necessity and value of understanding, but he emphasizes the revolutionary function of

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understanding. In a sense Hegel looks backward, Marx forward. Whether Marx's idea of the philosopher's function is tenable or not is a question which we need not discuss here. It is sufficient to note the difference between the attitudes of the great idealist and the social revolutionary. If we wish to find among the idealist philosophers something comparable to Marx's missionary zeal, we have to turn to Fichte rather than to Hegel. As will be seen in the relevant chapters, Fichte had a passionate belief in the saving mission of his own philosophy for human society. But Hegel felt, as it were, the weight and burden of all history on his shoulders. And looking back on the history of the world, his primary aim was to understand it. Further, though he certainly did not imagine that history had stopped with the coming of the nineteenth century, he was too historically minded to have much faith in the finality of any philosophical Utopia.

of the meaningless universe, rather than as a yea-saying attitude.[1] Or are we to say that the interpretation of the world as without a given meaning or goal and as a series of endless cycles is a fiction which expresses man's Will to Power? If so, the question whether the world has or has not a given meaning or goal remains open.

A final remark. Professional philosophers who read Nietzsche may be interested principally in his critique of morality or in his phenomenological analyses or in his psychological theories. But it is probably true to say that the attention of the general reader is usually concentrated on the remedies which he offers for the overcoming of what he calls nihilism, the spiritual crisis of modern man. It is the idea of the transvaluation of values, the concept of the order of rank and the myth of Superman which strike their attention. It is arguable, however, that what is really significant in what one may call the non-academic Nietzsche is not his proposed antidotes to nihilism but rather his existence and thought considered precisely as a dramatic expression of a lived spiritual crisis from which there is no issue in terms of his own philosophy.

[1] Unless indeed we understand by a yea-saying attitude an acceptance of the fact of differences between the strong and the weak, as opposed to an attempt to set all on the same level. But in this case a yea-saying attitude should also involve acceptance of the fact that the majority sets limits to the activities of the independent rebels.

CHAPTER XXIII

RETROSPECT AND PROSPECT

Some questions arising out of nineteenth-century German philosophy—The positivist answer—The philosophy of existence—The rise of phenomenology; Brentano, Meinong, Husserl, the widespread use of phenomenological analysis—Return to ontology; N. Hartmann—The metaphysics of Being; Heidegger, the Thomists—Concluding reflections.

1. KANT endeavoured to overcome what he regarded as the scandal of conflicting metaphysical systems and to set philosophy on a secure basis. And at the beginning of the period covered in this volume we find Fichte insisting that philosophy is the fundamental science which grounds all other sciences. But when Fichte declared that philosophy was the fundamental science, he was referring, of course, to the *Wissenschaftslehre*, that is, to his own philosophy. And his system simply forms one member of the series of highly personal, though interesting and often fascinating, interpretations of reality which span the nineteenth century like a series of mountain peaks. Other examples are the speculative theism of Schelling, the absolute idealism of Hegel, Schopenhauer's philosophy of the world as presentation and will, Kierkegaard's vision of human history and Nietzsche's philosophy of the Will to Power. And it would need a bold man to maintain that the series provides empirical confirmation of the validity of Fichte's claim on behalf of the scientific character of philosophy.

It is indeed arguable that the differences between philosophies, even when these differences are very considerable, do not prove that philosophy has no cognitive value. For it may be that each philosophy expresses a truth, an apprehension of a real aspect of reality or of human life and history, and that these truths are mutually complementary. That is to say, the element of conflict does not arise from any incompatibility between the fundamental ideas which lie at the bases of the different systems, but rather from the fact that each philosopher exaggerates one aspect of the world or of human life and history, thus turning a part into the whole. For example, Marx undoubtedly draws attention to real aspects of man and of human history; and there is no fundamental

incompatibility between these aspects and, say, the religious aspects of human existence which are emphasized by Schelling. The incompatibility arises when Marx turns one idea which expresses a partial aspect of man and his history into a key-idea to unlock all doors.

One trouble, however, with this way of looking at things is that it involves whittling down philosophical systems to what amount practically to truisms, and that this process deprives the systems of most of their interest. It can be argued, for example, that Marx's philosophy is of interest precisely because of the element of exaggeration which sets the whole of human history in a certain perspective. If Marxism is whittled down to indubitable truths such as that without man's economic life there could be no philosophy or art or science, it loses a great deal of its interest and all of its provocative character. Similarly, if Nietzsche's philosophy is whittled down to the statement that the will to power or drive to power is one of the influential factors in human life, it becomes compatible with the reduced version of Marxism, but only at the cost of being itself reduced to a fairly obvious proposition.

A possible way of countering this line of argument is to say that the exaggerations in a philosophical system serve a useful purpose. For it is precisely the element of striking and arresting exaggeration which serves to draw attention in a forcible way to the basic truth which is contained in the system. And once we have digested this truth, we can forget about the exaggeration. It is not so much a question of whittling down the system as of using it as a source of insight and then forgetting the instrument by which we attained this insight, unless indeed we need to refer to it again as a means of recovering the insight in question.

But though this is in itself a not unreasonable line of thought, it is of very little use for supporting Fichte's contention that philosophy is the science of sciences. For suppose that we reduce the philosophies of Schopenhauer, Marx and Nietzsche respectively to such statements as that there is a great deal of evil and suffering in the world, that we have to produce food and consume it before we can develop the sciences, and that the will to power can operate in devious and concealed forms. We then have three propositions of which the first two are for most people obviously true while the third, which is rather more interesting, is a psychological proposition. None of them would normally be called a specifically philosophical proposition. The philosophical propositions of

Schopenhauer, Marx and Nietzsche would thus become instruments for drawing attention to propositions of some other type. And this is obviously not at all the sort of thing which Fichte had in mind when he claimed that philosophy was the basic science.

It may be objected that I have been concentrating simply on the outstanding original systems, on the mountain peaks, and neglecting the foothills, the general movements such as Neo-Kantianism. It may be suggested, that is to say, that while it is true that if we are looking for highly personal imaginative interpretations of the universe or of human life we must turn to the famous philosophers, it is also true that in those general movements in which the particular tends to be merged in the universal we can find more plebeian scientific work in philosophy, patient co-operative efforts at tackling separate problems.

But is it true? In Neo-Kantianism, for example, there are, of course, family-likenesses which justify our describing it as a definite movement, distinct from other movements. But once we start to inspect it at close hand we see not only somewhat different general tendencies within the movement as a whole but also a multitude of individual philosophies. Again, in the movement of inductive metaphysics this philosopher uses one idea as a key-idea for interpreting the world while that philosopher uses another. Wundt uses his voluntaristic interpretation of human psychology as a basis for a general philosophy, while Driesch uses his theory of entelechies, derived from reflection on biological processes. True, a sense of proportion and the requirements of mental economy suggest that in many cases individual systems are best forgotten or allowed to sink into the background of a general movement. But this does not alter the fact that the closer we look at the philosophy of the nineteenth century, the more do the massive groupings tend to break up into individual philosophies. Indeed, it is not altogether an exaggeration to say that as the century wears on each professor of philosophy seems to think it necessary to produce his own system.

Obviously, there can be different opinions within the framework of a common conviction about the nature and function of philosophy. Thus the Neo-Kantians were more or less agreed about what philosophy is incompetent to achieve. But though conflicting views about the nature and function of philosophy are not necessarily coextensive with different philosophical views or even systems, there were obviously in nineteenth-century German

thought some very different concepts about what philosophy ought to be. For instance, when Fichte said that philosophy ought to be a science, he meant that it should be derived systematically from one fundamental principle. The inductive metaphysicians, however, had a different idea of philosophy. And when we turn to Nietzsche, we find him rejecting the concept of absolute truth and emphasizing the valuational foundations of different kinds of philosophy, the value-judgments themselves depending on the types of men who make them.[1]

Needless to say, the fact that two philosophers differ does not of itself prove that neither is right. And even if they are both wrong, some other philosopher may be right. At the same time the conflicting systems of the nineteenth century, and still more perhaps the conflicting views about the nature and competence of philosophy, show that Kant's attempt to settle once and for all the true nature and function of philosophy was from the historical point of view a failure. And the old questions present themselves to the mind with renewed force. Can philosophy be a science? If so, how? What sort of knowledge can we legitimately expect from it? Has philosophy been superseded by the growth and development of the particular sciences? Or has it still a field of its own? If so, what is it? And what is the appropriate method for investigating this field?

It is not indeed surprising that Kant's judgment about the nature and limits of scientific philosophy should have failed to win universal acceptance. For it was closely related to his own system. In other words, it was a philosophical judgment, just as the pronouncements of Fichte, Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche, Eucken and others were philosophical judgments. In fact, provided that one is not making a statement either about the current conventional use of terms or about the various uses of the word 'philosophy' in history, any pronouncement that one may make about the 'true' nature and function of philosophy is a philosophical statement, one which is made from within philosophy and commits one to or expresses a particular philosophical position.

[1] This view naturally brings to mind Fichte's statement that the kind of philosophy which a man chooses depends on the kind of man that he is. But even if we prescind from the fact that Fichte did not intend this statement to be understood in a sense which would exclude the concept of philosophy as a science and see in it an anticipation of the tendency to subordinate the concept of truth to the concept of human life or existence, in tracing the concrete development of this tendency we find it splitting up into different conceptions of man and of human life and existence. One has only to mention the names of Kierkegaard and Nietzsche, for example.

It is obviously not the intention of the present writer to suggest that no definite philosophical position should be adopted or that it is improper to make philosophical judgments about the nature and function of philosophy. Nor is it his intention to suggest that no good reasons can be adduced in favour of accepting one judgment rather than another. At the same time he does not wish to make an abrupt transition at this moment from the role of historian to the role of one who speaks in the name of a definite philosophical system. He prefers instead to take a brief glance at some of the general lines of answer which have been offered in German thought during the first part of the twentieth century to the type of question mentioned above. This procedure will serve to provide some sort of bridge between past and present.

2. One possible line of answer to questions about the scope of philosophy is to maintain that the particular sciences are the only source of knowledge about the world and that philosophy has no field of its own in the sense that its function is to investigate a special level or type of being. It is indeed perfectly understandable that at one time men sought to acquire knowledge about the world through philosophical speculation. But in the course of their development the various sciences have taken over one part after another of the field of exploration which was once attributed to philosophy. There has thus been a gradual substitution of scientific knowledge for philosophical speculation. And it is no wonder if philosophers who think that they can increase our knowledge of reality by other means than the employment of the scientific method of hypothesis, deduction and verification only succeed in producing conflicting systems which may possess some aesthetic value or emotive significance but which can no longer be seriously considered as possessing cognitive value. If philosophy is to be scientific and not a form of poetry masquerading as science, its function must be purely analytic in character. For example, it may be able to clarify some of the fundamental concepts employed in the sciences and to inquire into scientific methodology, but it cannot go beyond the sciences by adding to or supplementing our scientific knowledge of the world.

This general positivist attitude, the conviction that the empirical sciences are the only reliable source of knowledge about the world, is obviously widespread. In the nineteenth century it attained its classical expression in the philosophy of Auguste Comte, and we have seen that it also found expression, though on a less impressive

scale, in the materialist and positivist current of thought in Germany. But we also noted how some of the German philosophers who represented this current of thought went well beyond the particular sciences by developing a general view of reality. Haeckel's monism was a case in point. And it was just this tendency of philosophy to develop into a *Weltanschauung* or world-view which the positivism of the twentieth century was concerned to exclude.

An obvious objection to the reduction of philosophy to the position of a handmaid of science is that there are questions and problems which are not raised by any particular science, which demand answers and which have been traditionally and properly regarded as belonging to the field of philosophical inquiry. The positivist is convinced, of course, that questions about ultimate reality or the Absolute, about the origin of finite existents, and so on have not in fact been answered by the metaphysical philosophers, such as Schelling for instance. But even if one agreed that the questions had not in fact been definitely answered, or even that we were not in a position to answer them, one might still wish to say that the raising and discussion of such questions has a great value. For it helps to show the limits of scientific knowledge and reminds us of the mysteries of finite existence. Hence an effective exclusion of metaphysical philosophy requires the establishment of two complementary theses. It must be shown that metaphysical problems are unanswerable in principle and not merely in the sense that we are not in a position to answer them here and now. And it must further be shown that problems which are unanswerable in principle are pseudo-problems in the sense that they are not real questions at all but verbal expressions which lack any clear meaning.

This is precisely what the neopositivists of the Vienna Circle and their associates set out to show in the twenties of the present century by developing a criterion of meaning, the so-called principle of verifiability, which would effectively exclude metaphysical problems and statements from the class of meaningful problems and statements. Apart from the purely formal propositions of logic and pure mathematics, meaningful propositions were interpreted as empirical hypotheses, the meaning of which was coincident with the thinkable, though not necessarily practically realizable, mode of verification in sense-experience. And as, for instance, we can conceive no empirical verification in sense-

experience of the statement of Parmenides that all things are really one changeless being, this statement could not be accepted as meaningful.[1]

As stated in this form, however, the neopositivist criterion of meaning was unable to stand up to criticism, whether from outside or inside the neopositivist movement, and it either came to be interpreted as a purely methodological principle for the purpose of delimiting the range of what could properly be called scientific hypotheses or was so whittled down and explained away that it became quite ineffective for excluding speculative philosophy.

The fact of the matter is, I think, that neopositivism as a philosophy was an attempt to provide a theoretical justification of positivism as a mentality or attitude. And the neopositivist criterion of meaning was heavily loaded with the implicit philosophical presuppositions of this attitude. Further, its effectiveness as a weapon against metaphysical philosophy depended on these presuppositions not being made explicit. For once they have been made explicit, neopositivism stands revealed as one more questionable philosophy. This obviously does not entail the disappearance of positivism as a mentality or attitude. But the whole episode of the rise and criticism (partly autocriticism) of neopositivism had the great advantage of dragging concealed presuppositions into the light of day. It was a question of the positivist mentality, which had become widespread in the nineteenth century, becoming reflectively conscious of itself and seeing its own presuppositions. True, this self-consciousness was attained within the philosophical field and left untouched great areas of the positivist mentality or attitude. But this simply helps to illustrate the need of philosophy, one of the functions of which is precisely to render explicit and subject to critical examination the concealed implicit presuppositions of non-reflective philosophical attitudes.[2]

3. According to the neopositivists, philosophy can become scientific, but only at the cost of becoming purely analytic and relinquishing any claim to increase our factual knowledge of

[1] That is to say, the statement might be expressive and evocative of emotive attitudes, thus possessing 'emotive' significance; but according to strict neopositivist principles it would be meaningless in the sense that it would be incapable of being either true or false.

[2] A bibliography of neopositivism is provided in *Logical Positivism* (an anthology), edited by A. J. Ayer, Glencoe, Ill., and London, 1959. Some writings illustrating the discussion of the principle of verifiability, together with a selected bibliography, can be found in *A Modern Introduction to Philosophy* edited by P. Edwards and A. Pap, pp. 543–621, Glencoe, Ill. 1957. Cf. also *Contemporary Philosophy*, by F. C. Copleston, pp. 26–60, London, 1956, for a critical discussion of neopositivism.

reality. Another possible way of describing the function and nature of philosophy is to say that it has a field of its own, inasmuch as it is concerned with Being, and at the same time to deny that it is or can be a science, whether a universal science or a special science alongside the particular empirical sciences. In one sense philosophy is what it always has been, namely concerned with Being (*das Sein*) as distinct from *die Seienden*. But it was a mistake to suppose that there can be a science of Being. For Being is unobjectifiable; it cannot be turned into an object of scientific investigation. The primary function of philosophy is to awaken man to an awareness of Being as transcending beings and grounding them. But as there can be no science of Being, no metaphysical system can possess universal validity. The different systems are so many personal decipherings of unobjectifiable Being. This does not mean, however, that they are valueless. For any great metaphysical system can serve to push open, as it were, the door which positivism would keep shut. Thus to speak of the scandal of conflicting systems betrays a misconception of the true nature of philosophy. For the objection is valid only if philosophy, to be justified at all, should be a science. And this is not the case. True, by claiming that philosophy is a science, the metaphysicians of the past have themselves provided the ground for talk about the scandal of different and incompatible systems. But once this claim is relinquished and we understand the true function of metaphysics as being that of awakening man to an awareness of the enveloping Being in which he and all other finite existents are grounded, the ground for scandal disappears. For that there should be different personal decipherings of transcendent Being is only what one ought to expect. The important thing is to see them for what they are and not to take the extravagant claims of their authors at their face value.

This point of view represents one aspect of the philosophy of Professor Karl Jaspers (b. 1883). But he combines acceptance of the Kantian contention that speculative metaphysics cannot provide us with theoretical knowledge with a theory of 'existence' which shows the influence of Kierkegaard. The human being can be objectified and studied scientifically by, say, the physiologist and the psychologist. The individual is then exhibited as classifiable in this or that way. But when looked at from the point of view of the free agent himself, from within the life of free choice, the individual is seen as this unique existent, the being who freely

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transcends what he already is and creates himself, as it were, through the exercise of his freedom. Indeed, from this point of view man is always in the making, his own making: *Existenz* is always possible existence, *mögliche Existenz*. Of man regarded under this aspect there can be no scientific study. But philosophy can draw attention to or illuminate 'existence' in such a way as to enable the existing individual to understand what is meant in terms of his own experience. It can also draw attention to the movement by which, especially in certain situations, the individual becomes aware both of his finitude and of the enveloping presence of Being as the Transcendent in which he and all other beings are grounded. But as transcendent Being can be neither objectified nor reduced to the conclusion of a demonstration or proof, the man who becomes aware of it as the unobjectifiable complement and ground of finite beings is free either to affirm it with Kierkegaard, through what Jaspers calls 'philosophical faith', or to reject it with Nietzsche.

We cannot enter into further descriptions of the philosophy of Karl Jaspers,[1] as it has been mentioned less for its own sake than as one of the ways of depicting the nature and functions of philosophy which have been exemplified in German thought during the first half of the twentieth century. It should be noted, however, that Jaspers, like Kant before him, endeavours to place belief in human freedom and in God beyond the reach of scientific criticism. Indeed, we can see an evident recurrence of Kantian themes. For example, Jaspers' distinction between man as seen from the external scientific point of view and man as seen from the internal point of view of 'existence' corresponds in some way to the Kantian distinction between the phenomenal and noumenal levels. At the same time there are also evident differences between Kant and Jaspers. For instance, Kant's emphasis on the moral law, on which practical faith in God is grounded, disappears, and the Kierkegaardian concept of the existing individual comes to the fore. Besides, Jaspers' 'philosophical faith', which is a more academic version of Kierkegaard's leap of faith, is directed towards God as Being, not, as with Kant, to the idea of God as an instrument for synthesizing virtue and happiness.

An obvious objection to Jaspers' way of setting metaphysics beyond the reach of scientific criticism is that in speaking at all

[1] As a sympathetic study one can recommend *Karl Jaspers et la philosophie de l'existence*, by M. Dufrenne and P. Ricoeur, Paris, 1947.

about freedom and, still more, about Being he is inevitably objectifying what according to him cannot be objectified. If Being is really unobjectifiable, it cannot be mentioned. We can only remain silent. But one might, of course, employ Wittgenstein's distinction and say that for Jaspers philosophy tries to 'show' what cannot be 'said'. Indeed, Jaspers' emphasis on the 'illuminating' function of philosophy points in precisely this direction.

4. For the neopositivists, philosophy can be scientific, but by the very fact of becoming scientific it is not a science in the sense of having a field peculiar to itself. For Jaspers philosophy has in a sense a field of its own,[1] but it is not a science and moves on a different plane from those of the sciences. The phenomenologists, however, have tried both to assign to philosophy a field or fields and to vindicate its scientific character.

(i) In a few notes on the rise of phenomenology there is no need to go back beyond Franz Brentano (1838–1917). After studying with Trendelenburg Brentano became a Catholic priest. In 1872 he was appointed to a chair at Würzburg, and in 1874 at Vienna. But in 1873 he had abandoned the Church, and his status as a married ex-priest did not make his life as a university professor in the Austrian capital an easy one. In 1895 he retired from teaching and took up residence at Florence, moving to Switzerland on the outbreak of the First World War.

In 1874 Brentano published a book bearing the title *Psychology from the Empirical Standpoint* (*Psychologie vom empirischen Standpunkt*).[2] Empirical psychology, he insists, is not a science of the soul, a term which has metaphysical implications, but of psychical phenomena. Further, when Brentano talks about empirical psychology, it is descriptive rather than genetic psychology which he has in mind. And descriptive psychology is for him an inquiry into psychical acts or acts of consciousness as concerned with 'inexistent' objects, that is, with objects as contained within the acts themselves. All consciousness is consciousness *of*. To think is to think of something, and to desire is to desire something. Thus every act of consciousness is 'intentional': it 'intends' an object. And

[1] The term 'philosophy of existence' suggests that *Existenz* constitutes this field. But Jaspers insists more on Being, the illumination of 'existence' being the path to the awareness of Being. Being, however, is not a field for scientific investigation by philosophy, though the philosopher may be able to reawaken or keep alive the awareness of Being.

[2] Among other writings we can mention *On the Origin of Moral Knowledge* (*Vom Ursprung der sittlichen Erkenntnis*, 1889), *On the Future of Philosophy* (*Ueber die Zukunft der Philosophie*, 1893) and *The Four Phases of Philosophy* (*Die vier Phasen der Philosophie*, 1895).

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we can consider the object precisely as intended and as inexistent, without raising questions about its extramental nature and status.

This theory of the intentionality of consciousness, which goes back to Aristotelian-Scholastic thought, is not in itself a subjectivist theory. The descriptive psychologist, as Brentano interprets his function, does not say that the objects of consciousness have no existence apart from consciousness. But he considers them only as inexistent, for the good reason that he is concerned with psychical acts or acts of consciousness and not with ontological questions about extramental reality.

Now, it is clear that in considering consciousness one can concentrate either on the inexistent objects of consciousness or on the intentional reference as such. And Brentano tends to concentrate on the second aspect of consciousness, distinguishing three main types of intentional reference. First there is simple presentation, in which there is no question of truth or falsity. Secondly there is judgment which involves recognition (*Anerkennen*) or rejection (*Verwerfen*), in other words affirmation or denial. Thirdly there are the movements of the will and of feelings (*Gemütsbewegungen*), where the fundamental attitudes or structures of consciousness are love and hate or, as Brentano also says, of pleasure and displeasure.

We may add that just as Brentano believed that there are logical judgments which are evidently true, so did he believe that there are moral sentiments which are evidently correct or right. That is to say, there are goods, objects of moral approval or pleasure, which are evidently and always preferable. But from the point of view of the rise of phenomenology the important feature of Brentano's thought is the doctrine of the intentionality of consciousness.

(ii) Brentano's reflections exercised an influence on a number of philosophers who are sometimes grouped together as the Austrian School, such as Anton Marty (1847–1914), a professor at Prague, Oskar Kraus (1872–1942), a pupil of Marty and himself a professor at Prague, and Carl Stumpf (1848–1936), who was a noted psychologist and had Edmund Husserl among his pupils.

Special mention, however, must be made of Alexius Meinong (1853–1920) who studied under Brentano at Vienna and subsequently became professor of philosophy at Graz. In his theory of objects (*Gegenstandstheorie*) Meinong distinguished different types of objects. In ordinary life we generally understand by the term 'objects' particular existing things such as trees, stones, tables, and

so on. But if we consider 'objects' as objects of consciousness, we can easily see that there are other types as well. For example, there are ideal objects, such as values and numbers, which can be said to possess reality though they do not exist in the sense in which trees and cows exist. Again, there are imaginary objects such as a golden mountain or the king of France. There is no existing golden mountain and there has been no king of France for many years. But if we can talk about golden mountains, we must be talking about something. For to talk about nothing is not to talk. There is an object present to consciousness, even if there is no corresponding extramentally existent thing.

Bertrand Russell's theory of descriptions was designed to circumvent Meinong's line of argument and to depopulate, as it were, the world of objects which are in some sense real but do not exist. However, this is irrelevant to our present purpose. The main point is that Meinong's theory helped to concentrate attention on objects considered precisely as objects of consciousness, as, to use Brentano's term, inexistent.

(iii) The effective founder of the phenomenological movement was, however, neither Brentano nor Meinong but Edmund Husserl (1859–1938). After having taken his doctorate in mathematics Husserl attended Brentano's lectures at Vienna (1884–6) and it was Brentano's influence which led him to devote himself to philosophy. He became professor of philosophy at Göttingen and subsequently at Freiburg-im-Breisgau where Martin Heidegger was one of his pupils.

In 1891 Husserl published a *Philosophy of Arithmetic* (*Philosophie der Arithmetik*) in which he showed a certain tendency to psychologism, that is, to grounding logic on psychology. For example, the concept of multiplicity, which is essential for the concept of number, is grounded on the psychical act of binding together diverse contents of consciousness in one representation. This view was subjected to criticism by the celebrated mathematician and logician Gottlob Frege (1848–1925) and in his *Logical Investigations* (*Logische Untersuchungen*, 1900–1) Husserl maintained clearly that logic is not reducible to psychology.[1] Logic is concerned with the sphere of meaning, that is, with what is meant (*gemeint*) or intended, not with the succession of real psychical acts. In other words, we must distinguish between consciousness

[1] In his rejection of psychologism Husserl was probably influenced not only by Frege but also by Bolzano (see pp. 256–9).

as a complex of psychical facts, events or experiences (*Erlebnisse*) and the objects of consciousness which are meant or intended. The latter 'appear' to or for consciousness: in this sense they are phenomena. The former, however, do not appear: they are lived through (*erlebt*) or experienced. Obviously, this does not mean that psychical acts cannot themselves be reduced to phenomena by reflection; but then, considered precisely as appearing to consciousness, they are no longer real psychical acts.

This involves a distinction between meanings and things, a distinction which is of considerable importance. For failure to make this distinction was one of the main reasons why the empiricists found it necessary to deny the existence of universal concepts or ideas. Things, including real psychical acts, are all individual or particular, whereas meanings can be universal. And as such they are 'essences'.

In the work which in its English translation bears the title *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology* (*Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie*, 1913) Husserl calls the act of consciousness *noesis* and its correlative object, which is meant or intended, *noema*. Further, he speaks of the intuition of essences (*Wesensschau*). In pure mathematics, for example, there is an intuition of essences which gives rise to propositions which are not empirical generalizations but belong to a different type, that of *a priori* propositions. And phenomenology in general is the descriptive analysis of essences or ideal structures. There could thus be, for example, a phenomenology of values. But there could also be a phenomenological analysis of the fundamental structures of consciousness, provided, of course, that these structures are 'reduced' to essences or *eidē*.

A point insisted on by Husserl is the suspension of judgment (the so-called *epoche*) in regard to the ontological or existential status or reference of the objects of consciousness. By means of this suspension existence is said to be 'bracketed'. Suppose, for example, that I wished to develop a phenomenological analysis of the aesthetic experience of beauty. I suspend all judgment about the subjectivity or objectivity of beauty in an ontological sense and direct my attention simply to the essential structure of aesthetic experience as 'appearing' to consciousness.

The reason why Husserl insists on this suspension of judgment can be seen by considering the implications of the title of one of his writings, *Philosophy as Strict Science* (*Philosophie als strenge*

Wissenschaft, 1910–11). Like Descartes before him, Husserl wished to put philosophy on a firm basis. And in his opinion this meant going behind all presuppositions to that which one cannot doubt or question. Now, in ordinary life we make all sorts of existential assumptions, about, for instance, the existence of physical objects independently of consciousness. We must therefore prescind from or bracket this 'natural attitude' (*natürliche Einstellung*). It is not a question of saying that the natural attitude is wrong and its assumptions unjustified. It is a question of methodologically prescinding from such assumptions and going behind them to consciousness itself which it is impossible either to doubt or to prescind from. Further, we cannot, for example, profitably discuss the ontological status of values until we are quite clear what we are talking about, what value 'means'. And this is revealed by phenomenological analysis. Hence phenomenology is fundamental philosophy: it must precede and ground any ontological philosophy, any metaphysics.

As already hinted, Husserl's employment of the *epoche* bears a resemblance to Descartes' use of methodological doubt. And in point of fact Husserl saw in Descartes' philosophy a certain measure of anticipation of phenomenology. At the same time he insisted that the existence of a self in the sense of a spiritual substance or, as Descartes put it, a 'thinking thing' (*res cogitans*) must itself be bracketed. True, the ego cannot be simply eliminated. But the subject which is required as correlative to the object of consciousness is simply the pure or transcendental ego, the pure subject as such, not a spiritual substance or soul. The existence of such a substance is something about which we must suspend judgment, so far as pure phenomenology is concerned.

The methodological use of the *epoche* does not by itself commit Husserl to idealism. To say that the existence of consciousness is the only undeniable or indubitable existence is not necessarily to say that consciousness is the only existent. But in point of fact Husserl proceeds to make the transition to idealism by trying to deduce consciousness from the transcendental ego and by making the reality of the world relative to consciousness. Nothing can be conceived except as an object of consciousness. Hence the object must be constituted by consciousness.[1]

Already discernible in *Ideas*, this idealistic orientation of

[1] Constituting an object can mean making it an object *for* consciousness. And this does not necessarily mean idealism. Or it can be taken to refer to a creative activity by which things are given the only reality they possess, namely as related to consciousness, as consciousness-dependent. It is the transition to this second meaning which involves idealism.

Husserl's thought became more marked in *Formal and Transcendental Logic* (*Formale und transzendentale Logik*, 1929) where logic and ontology tend to coincide, and in *Cartesian Meditations* (*Méditations cartésiennes*, 1931). It is understandable that this transition to idealism did not favour the acceptance by other phenomenologists of Husserl's original insistence on the *epoche*. Martin Heidegger, for example, decisively rejected the demand for the *epoche* and attempted to use the phenomenological method in the development of a non-idealistic philosophy of Being.

(iv) Phenomenological analysis is capable of fruitful application in a variety of fields. Alexander Pfänder (1870–1941) applied it in the field of psychology, Oskar Becker (b. 1889), a disciple of Husserl, in the philosophy of mathematics, Adolf Reinach (1883–1917) in the philosophy of law, Max Scheler (1874–1928) in the field of values, while others have applied it in the fields of aesthetics and the religious consciousness. But the use of the method does not necessarily mean that the user can be called a 'disciple' of Husserl. Scheler, for example, was an eminent philosopher in his own right. And phenomenological analysis has been practised by thinkers whose general philosophical position is markedly different from Husserl's. One has only to mention the French existentialists Jean-Paul Sartre (b. 1905) and Maurice Merleau-Ponty (b. 1908) or indeed the contemporary Thomists.

It is not unreasonable to argue that this widespread use of phenomenological analysis not only constitutes an eloquent testimony to its value but also shows that it is a unifying factor. At the same time it is also arguable that the fact that Husserl's demand for the *epoche* has generally been disregarded or rejected and that phenomenology has been used within the frameworks of different philosophies rather than as a foundation for a philosophy to put an end to conflicting systems shows that it has not fulfilled Husserl's original hopes. Besides, the nature of what is called phenomenological analysis can itself be called in question. For example, though the relations between continental phenomenology and the conceptual or 'linguistic' analysis practised in England is one of the main themes which permit a fruitful dialogue between groups of philosophers who in other respects may find it difficult to understand one another, one of the principal issues in such a dialogue is precisely the nature of what is called phenomenological

analysis. Is it legitimate to speak of a phenomenological analysis of 'essences'? If so, in what precise sense? Is phenomenological analysis a specifically philosophical activity? Or does it fall apart into psychology on the one hand and so-called linguistic analysis on the other? We cannot discuss such questions here. But the fact that they can be raised suggests that Husserl was as over-optimistic as Descartes, Kant and Fichte before him in thinking that he had at last overcome the fragmentation of philosophy.

5. We have seen that at the turn of the century Neo-Kantianism was the dominant academic philosophy or *Schulphilosophie* in the German universities. And one obviously associates with this tradition a concern with the forms of thought and of the judgment rather than with objective categories of things. Yet it was a pupil of Cohen and Natorp at Marburg, namely Nicolai Hartmann (1882–1950), who expressed in his philosophy what we may call a return to things and developed an impressive realist ontology. And though it would be out of place to dwell here at any length on the ideas of a philosopher who belonged so definitely to the twentieth century, some general indication of his line of thought will serve to illustrate an important view of the nature and function of philosophy.

In his *Principles of a Metaphysics of Knowledge* (*Grundzüge einer Metaphysik der Erkenntnis*, 1921) Nicolai Hartmann passed from Neo-Kantianism to a realist theory of knowledge, and in subsequent publications he developed an ontology which took the form of an analysis of the categories of different modes or levels of being. Thus in his *Ethics* (*Ethik*, 1926) he devoted himself to a phenomenological study of values, which possess ideal being, while in *The Problem of Spiritual Being* (*Das Problem des geistigen Seins*, 1933) he considered the life of the human spirit both in its personal form and in its objectification. *A Contribution to the Foundation of Ontology* (*Zur Grundlegung der Ontologie*, 1935), *Possibility and Actuality* (*Möglichkeit und Wirklichkeit*, 1938), *The Construction of the Real World. Outline of the General Doctrine of Categories* (*Der Aufbau der realen Welt. Grundriss der allgemeinen Kategorienlehre*, 1940) and *New Ways in Ontology* (*Neue Wege der Ontologie*, 1941) represent general ontology, while in *Philosophy of Nature* (*Philosophie der Natur*, 1950) special attention is paid to the categories of the inorganic and organic levels.[1]

[1] We can also mention the posthumously-published works, *Teleological Thought* (*Teleologisches Denken*, 1951) and *Aesthetics* (*Aesthetik*, 1953), a study of beauty and aesthetic values.

In general, therefore, Hartmann's thought moves from a study of the universal structural principles or categories of being, such as unity and multiplicity, persistence and becoming or change, to regional ontologies, that is, to the analysis of the specific categories of inorganic being, organic being and so on. And to this extent he distinguishes between being-there (*Dasein*) and being-thus-or-thus (*Sosein*). But his ontology takes throughout the form of a phenomenological analysis of the categories exemplified in the beings given in experience. The idea of subsistent being, in the sense of the infinite act of existence, *ipsum esse subsistens*, is entirely foreign to his thought. And any metaphysics of transcendent being, in the sense in which God is transcendent, is excluded. Indeed, metaphysics for Hartmann deals with insoluble problems, whereas ontology in his sense is perfectly capable of attaining definite results.

Hartmann's ontology, therefore, is an overcoming of Neo-Kantianism inasmuch as it involves a study of the objective categories of real being. It is an overcoming of positivism inasmuch as it assigns to philosophy a definite field of its own, namely the different levels or types of being considered precisely as such. And though Hartmann employs the method of phenomenological analysis, he is not involved in that restriction to a subjective sphere to which an observance of Husserl's *epoche* would have condemned him. At the same time his ontology is a doctrine of categories, not a metaphysics of Being (*das Sein*) as grounding beings (*die Seienden*). In his view scientific philosophy has no place for an inquiry into Being which goes beyond a study of beings as beings. There is indeed the ideal being of values which are recognized in varying degrees by the human mind. But though these values possess ideal reality, they do not, as such, exist. And existent beings are those which form the world.

6. (i) The recall of philosophy to the thought of Being (*das Sein*) is principally represented in contemporary German thought by that enigmatic thinker, Martin Heidegger (b. 1889). According to Heidegger the whole of western philosophy has forgotten Being and immersed itself in the study of beings.[1] And the idea of Being has meant either an empty and indeterminate concept, obtained by thinking away all the determinate characteristics of beings, or the supreme being in the hierarchy of beings, namely God. Being as the Being of beings, as that which is veiled by beings and as that

[1] Obviously, Nicolai Hartmann is included in this judgment.

which grounds the duality of subject and object that is presupposed by the study of beings, is passed over and forgotten: it remains hidden, veiled. Heidegger asks, therefore, what is the meaning of Being? For him this is not a grammatical question. It is to ask for an unveiling of the Being of beings.

The very fact that man can ask this question shows, for Heidegger, that he has a pre-reflective sense of Being. And in the first part of *Being and Time* (*Sein und Zeit*, 1927) Heidegger sets out to give a phenomenological-ontological analysis of man as the being who is able to raise the question and who is thus open to Being. What he calls fundamental ontology thus becomes an existential analysis of man as 'existence' (*Dasein*). But though Heidegger's aim is in this way to bring Being to show itself, as it were, he never really gets further than man. And inasmuch as man's finitude and temporality are brought clearly to light, the work not unnaturally tends to give the impression, even if incorrect, that Being is for the author essentially finite and temporal. The second part of *Being and Time* has never been published.

In Heidegger's later writings we hear a great deal about man's openness to Being and of the need for keeping it alive, but it can hardly be said that he has succeeded in unveiling Being. Nor indeed would he claim to have done so. In fact, though Heidegger proclaims that the world in general and philosophers in particular have forgotten Being, he seems unable to explain clearly what they have forgotten or why this forgetfulness should be as disastrous as he says it is.

(ii) Heidegger's pronouncements about Being, as distinct from his existential analysis of man, are so oracular that they cannot be said to amount to a science of Being. The idea of metaphysics as a science of Being is most clearly maintained by the modern Thomists, especially by those who employ what they call the transcendental method. Inspired by Kant and, more particularly (inasmuch as Kant is concerned only with the transcendental deduction of the forms of thought) by German idealists such as Fichte, the transcendental method contains two main phases. To establish metaphysics as a science it is necessary to work backwards, as it were, to a foundation which cannot itself be called in question; and this is the reductive phase or moment.[1] The other

[1] Some see the proper starting-point in an analysis of the judgment as an act of absolute affirmation. So, for example, J. B. Lotz in *Das Urteil und das Sein. Eine Grundlegung der Metaphysik* (Pullach bei München, 1957) and *Metaphysica operationis humanae methodo transcendentali explicata* (Rome, 1958). Others go behind the judgment to the *question*, what is the ultimate foundation of all knowledge and judgment? So E. Coreth in *Metaphysik. Eine methodisch-systematische Grundlegung* (Innsbruck, Vienna and Munich, 1961).

phase consists in the systematic deduction of metaphysics from the ultimate starting-point.

In effect the transcendental method is used by the philosophers in question to establish Thomist metaphysics on a secure foundation and deduce it systematically, not to produce a new system of metaphysics as far as content is concerned, still less to discover startling new truths about the world. Hence to the outsider at least it seems to be a question of putting the same old wine into a new bottle. At the same time it is obvious that the question of scientific method inevitably tends to loom large and to grow in importance in proportion as emphasis is placed, as with the Thomists under discussion, on the task of converting man's unreflective and implicit apprehension of Being into systematically-grounded explicit knowledge.

7. This admittedly sketchy outline of some currents in thought in German philosophy during the first half of the twentieth century does not afford much ground for saying that the divergencies of systems and tendencies has been at last overcome. At the same time it suggests that in order to justify its claim to be more than a mere handmaid of the sciences philosophy must be metaphysical. If we assume that the aspects of the world under which it is considered by the particular sciences are the only aspects under which it can properly be considered, philosophy, if it is to continue to exist at all, must concern itself either with the logic and methodology of the sciences or with the analysis of ordinary language. For it obviously cannot compete with the sciences on their own ground. To have a field of its own other than analysis of the language of the sciences or of ordinary language, it must consider beings simply as beings. But if it confines itself, as with Nicolai Hartmann, to an inquiry into the categories of the different levels of finite being as revealed in experience, the crucial question of the being or existence of beings is simply passed over. And unless this question is ruled out as meaningless, there can be no justification for this neglect. If, however, the question is once admitted as a genuine philosophical question, the problem of the Absolute comes once more into the foreground. And in the long run Schelling will be shown to be justified in claiming that no more important philosophical problem can be conceived than that of the relation of finite existence to the unconditioned Absolute.

This reference to Schelling is not equivalent to a demand for a return to German idealism. What I have in mind is this. Man is spirit-in-the-world. He is in the world not only as locally present in it but also as, by nature, involved in it. He finds himself in the world as dependent on other things for his life, for the satisfaction of his needs, for the material of his knowledge, for his activity. At the same time, by the very fact that he conceives himself as a being in the world he stands out from the world: he is not, as it were, totally immersed in the world-process. He is an historical being, but in the sense that he can objectify history he is a supra-historical being. It is not, of course, possible to make a complete separation between these two aspects of man. He is a being in the world, a 'worldly' being, as standing out from the world; and he stands out from the world as a being in the world. Considered as spirit, as standing out from the world, he is able, and indeed impelled, to raise metaphysical problems, to seek a unity behind or underlying the subject-object situation. Considered as a being involved in the world, he is naturally inclined to regard these problems as empty and profitless. In the development of philosophical thought these divergent attitudes or tendencies recur, assuming different historical, and historically explicable, forms. Thus German idealism was one historically-conditioned form assumed by the metaphysical tendency or drive. Inductive metaphysics was another. And we can see the same fundamental tendency reasserting itself in different ways in the philosophies of Jaspers and Heidegger.

On the plane of philosophy each tendency or attitude seeks to justify itself theoretically. But the dialectic continues. I do not mean to imply that there is no means of discriminating between the proffered justifications. For example, inasmuch as man can objectify himself and treat himself as an object of scientific investigation, he is inclined to regard talk about his standing out from the world or as having a spiritual aspect as so much nonsense. Yet the mere fact that it is he who objectifies himself shows, as Fichte well saw, that he cannot be completely objectified, and that a phenomenalistic reduction of the self is uncritical and naïve. And once reflective thought understands this, metaphysics begins to reassert itself. Yet the pull of the 'worldly' aspect of man also reasserts itself, and insights once gained are lost sight of, only to be regained once more.

Obviously, reference to two tendencies or attitudes based on

the dual nature of man would be a gross over-simplification if it were taken to be a sufficient key to the history of philosophy. For in explaining the actual development of philosophy very many factors have to be taken into account. Yet even if there is no simple repetition in history, it is only to be expected that persistent tendencies should constantly tend to recur in varying historical shapes. For, as Dilthey remarked, he who understands history also made history. The dialectic of philosophy reflects the complex nature of man.

The conclusion may appear to be pessimistic, namely that there is no very good reason to suppose that we shall ever reach universal and lasting agreement even about the scope of philosophy. But if fundamental disagreements spring from the very nature of man himself, we can hardly expect anything else but a dialectical movement, a recurrence of certain fundamental tendencies and attitudes in different historical shapes. This is what we have had hitherto, in spite of well-intentioned efforts to bring the process to a close. And it can hardly be called undue pessimism if one expects the continuation of the process in the future.

principles of non-deductive inference which justify our belief in the existence of the external world and of other people. When these two alternatives are clearly presented, nobody, Russell argues, would honestly and sincerely choose solipsism. He is doubtless right. But in this case an examination of the relevant principles of inference becomes a matter of importance.[1]

[1] Obviously, the problem of solipsism presupposes the epistemological theses which give rise to it. And one's natural comment is that these theses might well be re-examined. But this is not the path which Russell chooses.

CHAPTER XX

BERTRAND RUSSELL (2)

The postulates of non-demonstrative inference and the limits of empiricism—Language; the complexity of language and the idea of a hierarchy of languages, meaning and significance, truth and falsity—Language as a guide to the structure of the world.

1. RUSSELL has drawn attention to three books in particular as representing the outcome of his reflections in the years after the First World War on the theory of knowledge and relevant subjects.[1] These are *The Analysis of Mind* (1921), *An Inquiry into Meaning and Truth* (1940), and *Human Knowledge: Its Scope and Limits* (1948). In this section, where we shall be considering Russell's ideas about non-demonstrative inference, we shall be referring mainly to the last-named book.[2]

If we assume with Russell that the physical objects of common sense and of science are logical constructions out of events and that each event is a logically self-sufficient entity, it follows that from one event or group of events we cannot infer with certainty the occurrence of any other event or group of events. Demonstrative inference belongs to logic and pure mathematics, not to the empirical sciences. Indeed, on the face of it it appears that we have no real ground for making any inferences at all in science. At the same time we are all convinced that valid inferences, leading to conclusions which possess varying degrees of probability, can be made both on the level of common sense and in science. To be sure, not all inferences are valid. Many scientific hypotheses have had to be discarded. But this does not alter the fact that no sane man doubts that by and large science has increased and is increasing human knowledge. On this assumption, therefore, the question arises, how can scientific inference be theoretically justified?

Some philosophers would say, and the plain man would probably be inclined to agree with them, that scientific inference stands in need of no other justification than a pragmatic one, namely its success. Scientists can and do make successful predictions.

[1] Cf. *My Philosophical Development*, p. 128.
[2] It will be referred to simply as *Human Knowledge*.

Science works. And the philosopher who looks for a further justification is looking for what cannot be had and is in any case not required.

In Russell's opinion this attitude is equivalent to blocking inquiry from the outset. He is, needless to say, as well aware as anyone else that by and large science delivers the goods. But he is also acutely aware of the fact that purely empiricist premisses lead to the conclusion that the factual success of scientific inference is simply fortuitous. Yet nobody really believes that this is the case. Hence we must look for some justification of scientific inference other than its factual success. To attempt to block inquiry at the outset is unworthy of a genuine philosopher. And if inquiry leads us to the conclusion that pure empiricism is an inadequate theory of knowledge, we just have to accept the fact and not shut our eyes to it.

Russell regards his task as that of finding 'the minimum principles required to justify scientific inference'.[1] Such principles or premisses[2] must state something about the world. For inference from the observed to the unobserved or from one group of events to another can be justified only 'if the world has certain characteristics which are not logically necessary'.[3] It is not a question of logically necessary principles which are known to possess absolute validity independently of all experience. For scientific inference is non-demonstrative inference. Rather is it a question of reflecting on actual scientific inference and discovering the minimum number of principles, premisses or postulates which are required to justify them.

The matter has, however, to be expressed more precisely. There is obviously no question of justifying all inferences and generalizations. For, as we know by experience, some generalizations are false. What we are looking for is the minimum number of principles which will confer an antecedent finite probability on certain inferences and generalizations and not on others. In other words, we have to examine what are universally regarded as genuine instances of scientific inference and generalization and discover the principles which are required in order to justify these types of inference and generalization by conferring on them an antecedent finite probability that is not conferred on the types which

[1] *Human Knowledge*, p. 11.
[2] Russell calls them 'postulates'. The reason for this will be discussed presently.
[3] *Human Knowledge*, p. 10.

experience has taught us to reject as inherently fallacious and unscientific.[1]

To cut a long story short, Russell finds five principles or premisses of scientific inference. But he lays no particular emphasis upon the number five. He considers indeed that the principles which he enunciates are sufficient; but he allows for the possibility that the number might be reduced. Further, he does not insist on his actual formulation of the principles.[2] Greater precision might well be possible. It is to be noted, however, that all the principles state probabilities only, not certainties, and that they are conceived as conferring a finite antecedent probability on certain types of inductive inference.

The first principle, described by Russell as the postulate of quasi-permanence, states that, given any event A, it frequently happens that an event very similar to A occurs in a neighbouring place at a neighbouring time. This postulate enables us to operate, for instance, with the common sense concepts of person and thing without introducing the metaphysical notion of substance. For the 'very similar' event can be regarded as part of the history of the series of events which constitutes the person or thing.

The second principle, the postulate of separable causal lines, states that it is often possible to form a series of events such that from one or two members of the series we can infer something about the other members. This principle or postulate is clearly essential for scientific inference. For it is only on the basis of the idea of causal lines that we can infer distant from near events.

The third principle, the postulate of spatio-temporal continuity, which presupposes the second principle and refers to causal lines, denies action at a distance and states that when there is a causal connection between non-contiguous events, there will be found to be intermediate links in the chain.

The fourth principle, 'the structural postulate', states that when a number of structurally similar complex events occur around a centre from which they are not too widely separated, it is generally the case that all are members of causal lines which have their origin in an event of similar structure at the centre. Suppose, for

[1] Russell thus presupposes that what is generally regarded as scientific knowledge really is knowledge. If we start with undiluted scepticism, we shall get nowhere. After all, the problem of justifying scientific inference only arises because we are convinced that there is such a thing but at the same time see no adequate basis for it in pure empiricism.
[2] For Russell's actual formulation of the five principles the reader is referred to *Human Knowledge*, pp. 506 ff.

example, that a number of persons are situated in different parts of a public square where an orator is holding forth or a radio is blaring, and that they have similar auditory experiences. This postulate confers antecedent probability on the inference that their similar experiences are causally related to the sounds made by the orator or radio.[1]

The fifth principle, the postulate of analogy, states that if, when two classes of events, *A* and *B*, are observed, there is reason to believe that *A* causes *B*, then if, in a given case, *A* occurs but we cannot observe whether *B* occurs or not, it is probable that it does occur. Similarly, if the occurrence of *B* is observed while the occurrence of *A* cannot be observed, it is probable that *A* has occurred. According to Russell, an important function of this postulate is to justify belief in other minds.

This doctrine of the principles of non-demonstrative inference is partly intended to solve a problem raised by J. M. Keynes (1883–1946) in his *Treatise on Probability* (1921).[2] But the point to which we wish to draw attention here is the unprovability of the principles. They are not offered as eternal truths which can be intuited *a priori*. Nor are they supposed to be deducible from such truths. At the same time they cannot be proved nor even rendered probable by empirical arguments. For they are the very principles on which the validity of such arguments rests. If we tried to justify them by appealing to scientific inference, we should be involved in a vicious circle. Hence the principles must necessarily be described as 'postulates' of scientific inference.

In view of the fact that these postulates cannot be proved, nor even rendered probable, by empirical argument, Russell explicitly admits the failure of empiricism, in the sense that it is inadequate as a theory of knowledge and is unable to justify the presuppositions on which all inferred empirical knowledge depends for its validity. It has therefore sometimes been said that he approaches a Kantian position. But the similarity is limited to a common recognition of the limitations of pure empiricism. Russell is very far from developing a theory of the *a priori* on the lines of Kant's first *Critique*. Instead he proceeds to give a biological-psychological account of the origins of the postulates of non-demonstrative

[1] Obviously, the ordinary man would comment: 'I don't need any postulate to know this'. But it must be remembered that for Russell it is *logically* possible that the similarity of experiences should be causally independent, and that in pure empiricism there is nothing which makes it objectively more probable that the similar experiences have a common causal origin than that they do not.

[2] Cf. *My Philosophical Development*, pp. 200f.

inference. If, for example, an animal has a habit of such a kind that in the presence of an instance of *A* it behaves in a manner in which, before acquiring the habit, it behaved in the presence of an instance of *B*, it can be said to have 'inferred' and to 'believe' that every instance of *A* is usually followed by an instance of *B*. This is, of course, an anthropomorphic way of speaking. The animal does not consciously make inferences. None the less there is such a thing as animal inference. It is a feature of the process of adaptation to environment, and there is continuity between it and inference in man. That is to say, our 'knowledge' of the principles or postulates of non-demonstrative inference 'exists at first solely in the form of a propensity to inferences of the kind that they justify'.[1] Man, unlike the animal, is capable of reflecting on examples of these inferences, of making the postulates explicit and of using logical technique to improve their foundations. But the relatively *a priori* character[2] of the principles is explicable in terms of a propensity to make inferences in accordance with them, a propensity which is continuous with that manifested in animal inference.

Now, we have seen that Russell set out to discover a theoretical justification of scientific inference. But though he justifies scientific inference in terms of certain postulates, the postulates themselves are then explained through a biological-psychological account of their origin. And this account, which goes back ultimately to the process of adaptation to environment, appears to be quite compatible with the theory of what Nietzsche called biologically useful fictions. In other words, it is arguable that Russell does not in fact fulfil his programme of providing a theoretical justification of non-demonstrative inference, not at least if to justify this inference theoretically means to supply premisses which warrant the assertion that it is theoretically valid.

It may appear, therefore, that in the long run we are thrown back on a pragmatic justification, on an appeal to the fact that the postulates work, that 'their verifiable consequences are such as experience will confirm'.[3] Indeed, Russell explicitly says that the

[1] *Human Knowledge*, p. 526

[2] The postulates are *a priori* in the sense of being logically antecedent to the inferences made in accordance with them; but they exist first of all in the form of an empirical propensity and are recognized as postulates only through an examination of examples of non-demonstrative inferences. They are not absolutely *a priori* eternal truths.

[3] *Human Knowledge*, p. 527.

postulates 'are justified by the fact that they are implied in inferences which we all accept as valid, and that, although they cannot be proved in any formal sense, the whole system of science and everyday knowledge, out of which they have been distilled, is, within limits, self-confirmatory'.[1] The fact that the postulates or principles lead to results which are in conformity with experience 'does not logically suffice to make the principles even probable'.[2] At the same time the whole system of science, of probable knowledge, which rests on the postulates, is self-confirmatory, self-justifying in a pragmatic sense. Hence Russell can say that while he does not accept the idealist coherence theory of truth, there is, in an important sense, a valid coherence theory of probability.[3]

In this case we may be inclined to ask why Russell does not accept from the start the position of those who claim that scientific inference is sufficiently justified by its results, by the fact that it leads to verifiable predictions. But Russell would presumably answer that to content oneself with this position from the start is equivalent to suppressing a real problem, to shutting one's eyes to it. Consideration of the problem leads to a recognition of the indemonstrable postulates of scientific inference, and thus to a recognition of the limitations and inadequacy of pure empiricism as a theory of knowledge. Recognition of these facts is a real intellectual gain; and it cannot be obtained if the attempt to discover a theoretical justification of non-demonstrative inference is prohibited from the outset.

The comment might be made, of course, that though this attitude is reasonable enough when considered within the framework of Russell's general empiricist analysis of the world, the fact remains that while explicitly recognizing the limitations of pure empiricism as a theory of knowledge he does not really go beyond it. His biological explanation of the origin of a propensity to make inferences in accordance with certain implicit postulates or expectations can be seen as a continuation and development of Hume's doctrine of natural beliefs. But to go beyond empiricism, in the sense of substituting for it a genuinely non-empiricist theory of knowledge, would obviously have demanded a much more radical revision of his opinions than Russell was prepared either to undertake or to recognize as justified.

2. We have noted Russell's statement that after the First World

[1] *My Philosophical Development*, p. 204. [2] *Human Knowledge*, p. 526.
[3] Cf. *My Philosophical Development*, p. 204.

War his thoughts turned to the theory of knowledge and to the relevant parts of psychology and linguistics. It is appropriate, therefore, to say something about the last-mentioned theme, Russell's theory of language. Reference has already been made, however, to the theory of the relation between language and fact as expounded in the 1918 lectures on logical atomism. And we can confine ourselves here mainly to Russell's ideas as set out in *An Inquiry into Meaning and Truth* and as repeated or modified in *Human Knowledge*.[1]

(i) Philosophers, Russell remarks, have been chiefly interested in language as a means of making statements and conveying information. But 'what is the purpose of language to a sergeant-major?'[2] The purpose of commands is obviously to influence the behaviour of others rather than to state facts or convey information. Besides, the sergeant-major's language is also sometimes directed to expressing emotive attitudes. Language, in other words, has a variety of functions.

Though, however, Russell recognizes the complex and flexible character of language, he himself is chiefly interested, like the philosophers to whom he vaguely refers, in descriptive language. This is indeed only to be expected. For Russell regards philosophy as an attempt to understand the world. And his attention is thus naturally centred on language as an instrument in fulfilling this task.[3] This is indeed one reason for his marked lack of sympathy with any tendency to treat language as though it were an autonomous, self-sufficient entity, which can be profitably studied by the philosopher without reference to its relation to non-linguistic fact.[4]

Reference has already been made to Russell's idea of a hierarchy of languages, an idea which is connected with the theory of types. In *An Inquiry into Meaning and Truth* he assumes this idea and maintains that though the hierarchy extends indefinitely upwards, it cannot extend indefinitely downwards. In other words, there

[1] Some discussion of language can also be found in *The Analysis of Mind* and *The Outline of Philosophy*.
[2] *Human Knowledge*, p. 71.
[3] Russell refuses to commit himself to the general statement that there can be no thought without language. But in his opinion complicated, elaborate thought at any rate requires language.
[4] Russell's well-known reference to the type of linguistic analysis which 'is, at best, a slight help to lexicographers, and, at worst, an idle tea-table amusement' (*My Philosophical Development*, p. 217), is obviously polemical and constitutes an exaggeration if considered as a description of 'Oxford philosophy' as a whole; but at the same time it illustrates, by way of contrast, the direction of his own interest, namely in language as an instrument in understanding the world.

must be a basic or lowest-type language. And Russell proceeds to discuss one possible form of such a language, though he does not claim that it is the only possible form.

The basic or primary language suggested by Russell is an object-language, consisting, that is to say, of object-words. A word of this type can be defined in two ways. Logically, it is a word which has meaning in isolation. Hence the class of object-words would not include terms such as 'or'. Psychologically, an object-word is one the use of which can be learned without its being necessary to have previously learned the uses or meanings of other words. That is to say, it is a word the meaning of which can be learned by ostensive definition, as when one says to a child 'pig', while pointing to an example of this kind of animal.

It does not follow, however, that an object-language of this kind would be confined to nouns. For it would admit verbs such as 'run' and 'hit' and adjectives such as 'red' and 'hard'. And, according to Russell, 'theoretically, given sufficient capacity, we could express in the object-language every non-linguistic occurrence',[1] though this would admittedly involve translating complicated sentences into a kind of 'pidgin'.

Now, meaningful statements expressed in this primary language would *be* either true or false. But we should not be able to *say*, within the limits of the primary language, that any statement expressed in it was true or false. For these logical terms would not be available. It would be necessary to use a second-order language for this purpose. Actual language, of course, includes both object-words and logical words. But the artificial isolation of a possible object-language serves to illustrate the idea of a hierarchy of languages and shows how we can cope with any difficulty arising out of the contention that nothing can be said within a given language *about* this language.[2]

(ii) Truth and falsity obviously presuppose meaning. We could not properly say of a meaningless statement that it was either true or false. For there would be nothing to which these terms could apply. But it does not follow that every meaningful utterance is either true or false. 'Right turn!' and 'Are you feeling better?' are meaningful utterances, but we would not say of either that it is true or false. The range of meaning is thus wider than the

[1] *An Inquiry into Meaning and Truth*, p. 77. This work will be referred to henceforth as *Inquiry*.

[2] Reference has already been made to the special case of Wittgenstein's contention in the *Tractatus*.

range of logical truth and falsity.[1] And in the *Inquiry* Russell tells us that indicative sentences 'alone are true or false',[2] though subsequently we are told that 'truth and falsehood, in so far as they are public, are attributes of sentences, either in the indicative or in the subjective or conditional'.[3]

Hitherto we have attributed 'meaning' both to object-words and to sentences. But Russell tends, though without uniform consistency, to restrict the term 'meaning' to object-words and to speak of sentences as having 'significance'. And we can say that 'although meanings must be derived from experience, significance need not'.[4] That is to say, we can understand the significance of a sentence which refers to something which we have never experienced, provided that we know the meanings of the words and that the sentence observes the rules of syntax.

Meaning, when attributed to object-words, signifies reference. And it is said to be fundamental. For it is through the meanings of object-words, learned by experience, that 'language is connected with non-linguistic occurrences in the way that makes it capable of expressing empirical truth or falsehood'.[5] But whereas we might expect a purely logical definition of meaning in this sense, Russell introduces psychological considerations based on what he believes to be the way in which a child, for example, comes to acquire the habit of using certain words correctly. Thus we are told that a word is said to mean an object 'if the sensible presence of the object causes the utterance of the word, and the hearing of the word has effects analogous, in certain respects, to the sensible presence of the object'.[6]

This methodological, though not dogmatic, behaviourism can be found also in, for instance, Russell's account of imperatives. An uttered imperative 'expresses' something in the speaker, a desire coupled with an idea of the intended effect, while it 'means' the external effect intended and commanded. And the heard imperative is understood 'when it causes a certain kind of bodily movement, or an impulse towards such a movement'.[7]

Imperative sentences, however, though significant, are not said to be true or false. So let us consider indicative sentences, which are said to indicate fact. Russell also calls them assertions, maintaining that 'an assertion has two sides, subjective and

[1] This follows in any case from Russell's view of object-words as meaningful in isolation. 'Hard' by itself, for example, is neither true nor false.

[2] *Inquiry*, p. 30. [3] *Human Knowledge*, p. 127. [4] *Inquiry*, p. 193.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 29. [6] *Human Knowledge*, p. 85. [7] *Ibid.*, p. 86.

objective'.[1] Subjectively, an assertion expresses a state of the person who makes the assertion, a state which can be called a belief.[2] Objectively, the assertion is related to something which makes it true or false. An assertion is false if it intends to indicate a fact but fails to do so, true if it succeeds. But true and false assertions are equally meaningful. Hence the significance of an assertion cannot be equated with actual indication of a fact, but lies rather in what the assertion expresses, namely a certain belief or, more accurately, the object of this belief, what is believed. And a heard assertion is said to be significant, from a psychological point of view, if it can cause belief, disbelief or doubt in the hearer.

Russell's insistence on studying language in the context of human life is doubtless largely responsible for his introducing a number of perhaps somewhat confusing psychological considerations. But the main issue can be simplified in this way. The significance of a sentence is that which is common to a sentence in one language and its translation into another language. For example, 'I am hungry' and 'J'ai faim' have a common element which constitutes the significance of the sentence. This common element is the 'proposition'. We cannot ask, therefore, if a proposition is significant. For it *is* the significance. But in the case of indicative sentences at any rate we can properly ask whether the proposition is true or false. Significance is thus independent of truth.

Now, we have noted Russell's insistence that, given certain conditions, we can understand the significance of an assertion which refers to something which we have not personally experienced. It can now be added that he does not wish to tie down the significance of assertions or statements even to the experienceable. And this naturally leads him to adopt a critical attitude towards the logical positivist criterion of meaning. True, in some respects he regards logical positivism with a benevolent eye, chiefly perhaps because of its interpretation of logic and pure mathematics and its serious concern with empirical science. But though he agrees with the positivists in rejecting the idea of 'ineffable knowledge',[3] he has consistently refused to accept the criterion of

[1] *Inquiry*, p. 171.

[2] Russell uses the term 'belief' in such a wide sense that even animals can be said to have beliefs. Cf. *Inquiry*, p. 171 and *Human Knowledge*, p. 329. But we are here concerned with language, and so with human beings.

[3] 'Ineffable knowledge' is not identical with knowledge of what goes beyond our experience.

meaning, according to which the meaning of a factual proposition is identical with the mode of its verification.

In general, Russell argues, the logical positivist criterion of meaning implies two things. First, what cannot be verified or falsified is meaningless. Secondly, two propositions verified by the same occurrences have the same meaning or significance. 'I reject both.'[1] In regard to the first point, the propositions which are most nearly certain, namely judgments of perception, cannot be verified, 'since it is they that constitute the verification of all other empirical propositions that can be in any degree known. If Schlick were right, we should be committed to an endless regress.'[2] In regard to the second point, the hypothesis that the stars exist continuously and the hypothesis that they exist only when I see them are identical in their testable consequences. But they do not have the same significance. Of course, the principle of verifiability can be modified and interpreted as claiming that a factual statement is meaningful if we can imagine sensible experiences which would verify it, if it were true. But Russell comments that in his opinion this is a sufficient but not a necessary criterion of significance.[3]

(iii) In 1906–9 Russell wrote four essays dealing with the subject of truth, especially in relation to pragmatism, which were reprinted in *Philosophical Essays*. At a later date he took up the subject again, the results of this second phase of reflection being embodied in the *Inquiry*. The topic is also treated in *Human Knowledge*. And in *My Philosophical Development* Russell devotes the fifteenth chapter to a review of the course of his investigations.

A certain looseness in the use of terminology is characteristic of Russell. Thus in different places we are told that truth and falsity are predicated of indicative sentences, of sentences in the indicative or in the subjunctive or conditional, of assertions, of propositions and of beliefs. But it does not follow, of course, that all these ways of speaking are mutually incompatible. The significance of a sentence is a proposition; but propositions, according to Russell, express states of belief. Hence we can say that 'it is in fact primarily beliefs that are true or false; sentences only become so through the fact that they can express beliefs'.[4] In any case the main lines of Russell's theory of truth are clear enough.

In the first place Russell rejects the idealist interpretation of

[1] *Human Knowledge*, p. 465.

[2] Cf. *Inquiry*, pp. 175 and 309.

[3] *Inquiry*, p. 308.

[4] *Human Knowledge*, p. 129.

truth as coherence. In an early article he argued that if every particular true judgment, when isolated from the total system of truth, is only partially true, and if what would normally be called false judgments are partially true and have their place in the complete system of truth, it follows that the statement 'Bishop Stubbs was hanged for murder' is not completely false but forms part of the whole truth.[1] But this is incredible. And, in general, the coherence theory simply blurs the distinction between truth and falsehood.

In the second place Russell rejects the pragmatist theory of truth. When he paraphrased William James's statement that the true is only the expedient in our way of thinking as 'a truth is anything which it pays to believe', he was accused of gross misinterpretation. Russell retorted, however, that James's explanation of the real meaning of the statement was even sillier than what he, Russell, had taken the statement to mean. Russell did indeed owe a number of important ideas to James; but he had no sympathy with the American philosopher's account of truth.

In the third place Russell protests against any confusion between truth and knowledge. Obviously, if I can properly be said to know that something is the case, the statement which expresses my knowledge is true. But it by no means follows that a true proposition must be known to be true. Indeed, Russell is prepared to admit the possibility of propositions which are true, though we cannot know them to be true. And if it is objected that this admission is tantamount to an abandonment of pure empiricism, he replies that 'pure empiricism is believed by no one'.[2]

We are left, therefore, with the correspondence theory of truth, according to which 'when a sentence or belief is "true", it is so in virtue of some relation to one or more facts'.[3] These facts are called by Russell 'verifiers'. To know what an assertion or statements means, I must, of course, have some idea of the state of affairs which would make it true. But I need not know that it is true. For the relation between statement and verifier or verifiers is an objective one, independent of my knowledge of it. Indeed, in Russell's opinion I need not be able to mention any particular instance of a verifier in order to know that a statement is meaningful and that it is thus either true or false. And this thesis enables him to maintain that a statement such as 'there are facts which I

[1] Cf. *Philosophical Essays*, p. 156. [2] *Inquiry*, p. 305.
[3] *My Philosophical Development*, p. 189. Cf. *Human Knowledge*, pp. 164–5.

cannot imagine' is meaningful and either true or false. In Russell's view at any rate I could not mention any particular instance of a fact which cannot be imagined. At the same time I can conceive 'general circumstances'[1] which would verify the belief that there are facts which I cannot imagine. And this is sufficient to render the statement intelligible and capable of being true or false. Whether it *is* true or false, however, depends on a relation which is independent of my knowledge of it. In popular language the statement either corresponds or does not correspond with the facts. And the relation which actually obtains is unaffected by my knowing or not knowing it.

The theory of truth as correspondence with fact does not apply, of course, to the analytic propositions of logic and pure mathematics. For in their case truth 'follows from the form of the sentence'.[2] But in its application to empirical statements or assertions the theory can be said to represent a common sense position. The ordinary man would certainly argue that an empirical factual statement is made true or false by its relation to a fact or facts.[3] Difficulty arises only when we try to give a precise and adequate account of the idea of correspondence in this context. What precisely is meant by it? Russell is conscious of this difficulty. But he tells us that 'every belief which is not merely an impulse to action is in the nature of a picture, combined with a yes-feeling or a no-feeling; in the case of a yes-feeling it is "true" if there is a fact having to the picture the kind of similarity that a prototype has to an image; in the case of a no-feeling it is "true" if there is no such fact. A belief which is not true is called "false". This is a definition of "truth" and "falsehood".'[4]

In the opinion of the present writer the introduction of terms such as 'yes-feeling' and 'no-feeling' into a definition of truth is hardly felicitous. This point apart, however, it is clear that correspondence is conceived by Russell according to the analogy of pictorial representation. But though we may perhaps speak of true and false pictures, that which is strictly speaking true or

[1] *Human Knowledge*, p. 169. Some further specification of these 'general circumstances' seems to be required.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 128.
[3] It is not necessary that the facts should be extra-linguistic. For we can, of course, make statements about *words*, which are made true or false by their relation to linguistic facts. Obviously, this would not apply, for example, to stipulative definitions. But these would in any case be excluded by Russell's custom of predicating truth or falsity of *beliefs*. For a mere declaration that one intends to use a given word in a certain sense cannot be described as a belief.
[4] *Human Knowledge*, p. 170.

false is not the picture but the statement that it does or does not correspond with an object or set of objects. So presumably the relation of correspondence which makes a statement true must be, as in Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*, a structural correspondence between the proposition and the fact or facts which count as its verifier or verifiers. Russell notes, however, that the relation is by no means always simple or of one invariable type.

3. It scarcely needs saying that no amount of inspection of a belief, as Russell puts it, or of an empirical statement will tell us whether it is true or false. To ascertain this we have to consider the factual evidence. But Russell has claimed that in some other sense or senses we can infer something about the world from the properties of language. Moreover, this is not a claim which he has put forward only once or in passing. For example, in *The Principles of Mathematics* he remarked that though grammatical distinctions cannot legitimately be assumed without more ado to indicate genuine philosophical distinctions, 'the study of grammar, in my opinion, is capable of throwing far more light on philosophical questions than is commonly supposed by philosophers'.[1] Again, even in *An Outline of Philosophy*, where he went as far as he could in a behaviourist interpretation of language, he suggested that 'quite important metaphysical conclusions, of a more or less sceptical kind',[2] can be derived from reflection on the relation between language and things. At a later date, in the *Inquiry*, he explicitly associated himself with those philosophers who 'infer properties of the world from properties of language'[3] and asserted his belief that 'partly by means of the study of syntax, we can arrive at considerable knowledge concerning the structure of the world'.[4] Moreover, in *My Philosophical Development* he quotes the paragraph in which this last assertion occurs with the endorsement 'I have nothing to add to what I said there'.[5]

Russell obviously does not mean that we can infer, without more ado, properties of the world from grammatical forms as they exist in ordinary language. If we could do this, we could infer the substance-accident metaphysics from the subject-predicate form of sentence, whereas we have seen that Russell eliminates the concept of substance by reductive analysis.[6] Nor does Russell mean that from the fact that a term can be eliminated, in the sense that sentences in which this term occurs can be translated into

[1] P. 42. [2] P. 275. [3] P. 341. [4] P. 347. [5] P. 173.

[6] According to Russell, if Aristotle had thought and written in Chinese instead of in Greek, he would have evolved a somewhat different philosophy.

sentences of equivalent truth-value in which the term does not occur, we can infer that no entity exists corresponding to the term in question. As has already been noted, the fact that the term 'the golden mountain' can be eliminated does not prove that there is no golden mountain. It may show that we need not postulate such a mountain. But our grounds for thinking that there actually is no such mountain are empirical, not linguistic, grounds. Similarly, if 'similarity' can be eliminated, this does not by itself prove that there is no entity corresponding to 'similarity'. It may show that we cannot legitimately infer such an entity from language; but to show that language does not provide any adequate ground for inferring a subsistent entity 'similarity' is not the same thing as to prove that there is in fact no such entity. When referring to sentences in which the word 'similarity' cannot be replaced by 'similar' or some such word, Russell remarks that 'these latter need not be admitted'.[1] And it seems obvious that he has already decided, and rightly decided, but on grounds which were not purely linguistic, that it would be absurd to postulate an entity named 'similarity'. For this reason he says that if there are sentences in which 'similarity' cannot be replaced by 'similar', sentences of this class 'need not be admitted'.

The question can thus be formulated in this way. Can we infer properties of the world from the indispensable properties of a logically purified and reformed language? And the answer to this question seems to depend very largely on the sense which is given to the term 'infer' in this context. If it is suggested that a logically purified language can serve as an ultimate premiss from which we can deduce properties of the world, the validity of this idea appears to me questionable. For one thing it would have to be shown that no ontological decisions, made on grounds which could not reasonably be described as purely linguistic, had influenced the construction of the logically purified language. In other words, it would have to be shown that assessment of the indispensable features of language had not been influenced and guided by empirically-based convictions about features of extra-linguistic reality.

If, however, the claim that we can infer properties of the world from properties of language simply means that if we find that it is necessary to speak of things in certain ways, there is at least a strong presumption that there is some reason in things themselves

[1] *Inquiry*, p. 347.

for this necessity, the claim seems to be reasonable. Language has developed through the centuries in response to man's experience and needs. And if we find, for example, that we cannot get along without being able to say of two or more things that they are similar or alike, it is probable that some things are indeed of such a kind that they can be appropriately described as similar or alike, and that the world does not consist simply of entirely heterogeneous and unrelated particulars. But in the long run the question whether there actually are things which can appropriately be described in this way, is a question which has to be decided empirically.

It might perhaps be objected that we cannot talk of 'things' at all without implying similarity. For if there are things, they are necessarily similar in being things or beings. This is doubtless true. And in this sense we can infer from language that similarity is a feature of the world. But this does not alter the fact that it is ultimately through experience, and not from language, that we know that there are things. Reflection on language can doubtless serve to sharpen our awareness of features of extra-linguistic reality and to make us notice what we possibly had not noticed before. But that language can serve as an ultimate premiss for inferring properties of the world seems to be highly questionable.

CHAPTER XXI

BERTRAND RUSSELL (3)

Introductory remarks—Russell's earlier moral philosophy and the influence of Moore—Instinct, mind and spirit—The relation of the judgment of value to desire—Social science and power—Russell's attitude towards religion—The nature of philosophy as conceived by Russell—Some brief critical comments.

1. WE have been concerned so far with the more abstract aspects of Russell's philosophy. But we noted that his first book was on *German Social Democracy* (1896). And concomitantly with or in the intervals between his publications on mathematics, logic, the theory of knowledge, the philosophy of science and so on he has produced a spate of books and articles on ethical, social and political topics. At the 1948 International Philosophical Congress at Amsterdam a Communist professor from Prague took it upon himself to refer to Russell as an example of an ivory-tower philosopher. But whatever one's estimate may be of Russell's ideas in this or that field of inquiry and reflection, this particular judgment was patently absurd. For Russell has not only written on matters of practical concern but also actively campaigned in favour of his ideas. His imprisonment towards the close of the First World War has already been mentioned. During the Second World War he found himself in sympathy with the struggle against the Nazis, and after the war, when the Communists were staging take-overs in a number of countries, he vehemently criticized some of the more unpleasant aspects of Communist policy and conduct. In other words, his utterances were for once in tune with the official attitude in his own country. And in 1949 he received the Order of Merit from King George VI.[1] In more recent years he has not only campaigned for the introduction of a system of world-government but also sponsored the movement for nuclear disarmament. In fact he carried his sponsorship to the extent of taking a personal part in the movement of civil disobedience. And as he refused to pay the imposed fine, this activity earned him a week or so in gaol.[2] Thus

[1] I do not mean to imply, of course, that this high honour was not a tribute to Russell's eminence as a philosopher.

[2] The short period was passed in the prison infirmary, it is only fair to add, not in the usual conditions of prison life.