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Síntesis.

Parte I | Ancient and Medieval. |

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3. Buddhist philosophical systems — Clarence H. Hamilton
4. Chinese philosophy (confucianism. Taoism Legalism) H.G. Creel
5. Ancient Jewish philosophy — Samuel S. Cohon.

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Parte II a | Modern and Recent. | — 24 + (3 Dir.)
                                     72

14 x 9
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Pensamiento Antiguo =

Existen dos tendencias principales, en la especulación de los pueblos anteriores al Xtianismo

a) Tendencia mística = intuitiva : imágenes y símbolos — poética - algo
a superar la imagen y buscar un significado a lo real. - "dialéctica"

b) Tendencia "discursiva" : medidora experimental — tratar de explicar y comprender los mecanismos de las cosas — práctico, científico = "analítica"
"comparativa"; experimental. = práctico, científico = "analítica"

Las dos no se presentan totalmente separadas — se interfieren en una zona común que une las dos

Ej:

(a) pura especulación

"mezcla" de ciencia + especulación.

(b) pura ciencia empírica

y da origen a un pensamiento que abarca tanto la reflexión, sobre la experiencia, que la proyección intuitiva —

Ambas "corrientes" se desarrollan entre dos extremos :

El hombre se proyecta en el mundo
El mundo da significado al hombre

= ambos extremos { son problemáticos
plantean · interrogantes.

el hombre ⟷ # ⟶ el mundo

Los dos extremos son inseparables y conducen hacia la Unidad
- La Unidad que abarca hombre y mundo a la "TOTALIDAD" = El Todo pertenece a la mente y no
es una realidad delimitada — solo se puede captar con claridad en cuanto ser - mental aunque
su contenido se considera real.

CHAPTER SIX

THE BEGINNINGS OF GREEK PHILOSOPHY.

GORDON H. CLARK

IN CONTRAST with the Eastern modes of thought, the beginnings of Greek philosophy were rather strictly scientific. It was astronomical phenomena and cosmological speculation that first attracted attention: witness the reason for selecting 585 B.C. as the beginning of this new era.

The Milesians and Heraclitus

Long before the time of Thales—a citizen of Miletus, in the district of Ionia, on the west coast of Asia Minor—Chaldaean astrologers had listed data on the positions of stars and planets. As Thales studied these tables he thought he discerned a pattern or regularity in the occurrences of eclipses, and he ventured to predict a solar eclipse that occurred May 28, 585 B.C. Some scholars disparage this as merely a lucky empirical guess; but if it was the discovery of an astronomical regularity or natural law, Thales may be credited with distinguishing Greek philosophy and science from the aimless observations and disjointed information of the Eastern wise men. When a law is formulated, man's wonder at the phenomena is supposed to be satisfied, and nature is said to be explained and understood. Thales is also credited with the discovery of several theorems of geometry and with diplomatic, engineering, and economic exploits. If there is a difference between science and philosophy, it is that the regularities of a science are relatively restricted, whereas the more general principles, called philosophic, apply to wider areas. Thales' more general speculations concerned the constitution of the universe. What is the world made of? Are there

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many elements or is there but one? And if one, what is it? These questions dominated the entire Pre-Socratic period; they are still live issues today; and if Thales' answer seems crude to twentieth century sophisticates, his motivation and procedure may prove as profound as any contemporary inspiration.

As a matter of fact, Thales taught that all things are made of water, and we may imagine reasons that might have convinced him. One no doubt would be that water is known as a liquid, a solid, and a gas; and these various forms seem to suggest that water is capable of all the transformations a universal substratum must undergo if it is to produce the objects of our world. Since, too, a general theory must attempt to explain biological phenomena as well as physics and astronomy, another reason for selecting water might have been its indispensability to life. And a little ingenuity can invent other considerations. But Anaximander (610-545?), Thales' successor, in addition to specific contributions to science, saw a difficulty in Thales' general cosmology. If water were the basic substance, he thought, fire could never come into existence, for there is an essential antagonism between their peculiar qualities. For the same reason, if the substratum were fire, the existence of water could not be explained. Therefore Anaximander assumed a Boundless that was not peculiarly wet or dry, cold or hot, but rather indeterminately both wet and dry, cold and hot. Thus the matter of the universe was Boundless, not merely because it extended throughout infinite space, but also and mainly because it was not bounded, limited, or defined by any quality. This original substance produces the world and its contents by a swirling motion that separates the four qualities out of the chaotic mass. This swirl also explains the revolution of the stars and planets.

The third member of the Milesian school, Anaximenes (c. 590-525), could not be persuaded to look for the universal substratum beyond the range of experience. He therefore selected air. Air is not only more necessary to life than is water, but also it seems to solve a troublesome astronomical enigma. If with Thales the planet earth is supported on water, one naturally wonders what the water rests on. To say that the earth is situated in the middle of the universe and therefore has no reason to move in any direction, as Anaximander taught, smacks of speculative magic. Air on the other hand does not fall when unsupported and may therefore be thought

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capable of supporting the earth and the planets. Anaximenes also described more particularly the process by which the substratum changed into other things with their different qualities. Condensation, as when air from a tire blows on the palm of the hand, causes cold; and rarefaction, as when one breathes gently against the palm, produces warmth. Thus, the generation of qualities is explained by an explicitly mechanical process.

The selection of water or air may be a curious ancient matter of unimportance; the dim recognition of mechanical law and the advances in astronomy are substantial contributions to the early history of science; but beyond this the Milesian world-view presupposed some basic principles of philosophic generality that are pertinent in any age. There is, obviously, the assumption that the universe is made of one stuff. Fifth century Greece or nineteenth century America may have held to ninety-four elements, but the Milesians and the twentieth century look upon gold, iron, lead, and so on, as transformations of an original, homogeneous substance. In the next place, this substance has no cause, origin, or beginning. It always was and always will be. And, third, the changes and transformations of this substance, the growth and dissolution of plants and planets, occur spontaneously. There is no cause of motion before, behind, or above the original substance. Nature itself is the principle of motion and life. The details of Milesian science have been outmoded a long time, but naturalism is a philosophy with contemporary advocates.

Heraclitus (530-470), since he lived in Ephesus, was not literally a Milesian; but his views were in fundamental harmony with the preceding three. The difference lay in his emphasis on the importance of change. "One cannot step into the same river twice, nor touch mortal substance twice in the same state, but by quickness and speed of change it disperses and again comes together, draws near and withdraws. . . . Into the same rivers we step and we do not step; we are and we are not." When in any place the change is even and regular, as in a stream without a ripple, the appearance is one of stability; but thoughtful consideration will conclude that all things flow, and that permanence is an illusion.

Thus emphasizing the speed, the continuity, and the universality of change, it was natural for Heraclitus to select fire as his single and original element because fire is the quickest and most mobile of all

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substances. The fire undergoes transformations in measure and in rhythm to produce the things of the world and the course of their history. Every day and every summer the proportion of light, warmth, and combustion increases; every night and every winter the proportion is reversed. And there seems to have been also a cosmic periodicity in which cosmos follows cosmos in eternal succession.

Since each thing and each person has only his own brief day, lyric poets may have lamented the perishing flower of youth and voiced a pessimistic desire for permanence; Anaximander, too, may have suggested the injustice of the antagonism among qualities; but Heraclitus thought that strife was natural and that life is a struggle. "War is the father of all, the King of all; some he set forth as gods, some as men; some he made slaves, some free. . . . To God all things are fair and right and good, but men suppose some things wrong and others right." This attitude is possible because the original and everlasting fire is God who rules the world by wisdom. A pawn may lament its being sacrificed in a gambit; but the player is producing a noble game. Thus the world is governed by a Logos, a Reason, a Law, and this is the fire itself. This pantheism, as it may be called, is essentially one with the Milesian hylozoism: if all is to be explained by one substance, this substance must account for life and mind as well as for rocks and stars. But can anything visible and tangible provide a satisfactory explanation?

The Pythagoreans and Parmenides

It was on the eastern extremities of ancient Greece that philosophy began. The next development was located in the extreme west—southern Italy. And in outlook also, the two schools were equally far apart. The earlier philosophy, with slight exceptions in Heraclitus, was mainly physical and non-religious; Pythagoreanism, placing less confidence in tangible water and fire, was a religious and mathematical school.

The religion, however, was not Homeric. The Olympian deities may have had some dramatic majesty, but their scandalous conduct provided no moral incentive. The ancient heroes may have been grand in epic poetry, but the dismal prospect of Hades, to which everyone, good, bad, and indifferent, was doomed, produced less and less enthusiasm. The ritual, largely social and civil rather than

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personal and vital, became increasingly perfunctory and slowly lost its hold on the people. In competition, mystery religions, promising to their initiates a happy, personal communion with the gods both now and hereafter, and later threatening punishments to the immoral, were active in the fifth century and influenced the Pythagoreans. Homeric thought, appalled at the hopelessness of death, celebrated the glories of life and action; but the Pythagoreans were able to reverse the theme and, emphasizing the immortality of the soul, to teach that the body is a tomb. Purification from evil, freedom from incarceration in the body, recovery of the soul's pure divinity, is to be accomplished partly by rites and practices that today would be dismissed under the disparaging epithet of taboos, and partly by moral and political activity in accord with aristocratic principles; but mainly salvation is to be attained through knowledge. Thus religion becomes the motivation of philosophy.

Under this general outlook, the more immediate, one might say the more scientific explanation of the cosmos is not to be sought in water or fire. In Anaximander and in Heraclitus there had been dim gropings after a principle of equity or measure. There was a periodicity, a law, a mathematical proportion. The Pythagoreans, standing in awe of their own success in geometry, and noting that the most perfect musical chords are expressible in the simplest fractions, and also believing that the distances between the planets correspond to the musical scale, quickly came to the conclusion that not water but number is the key to the universe. The number series originates from the one, perhaps in conjunction with two or the indefinite dyad. All numbers are either odd or even; certain numbers are prime, perfect, square, oblong, or triangular. A theorem was discovered relating prime and perfect numbers. The common categories of thought are listed in a table of opposites under the distinction between odd and even. For example, under odd are found right, male, rest, and good; under even are left, female, motion, and evil. Numerical analogy was still further extended with the result that justice, the square deal, is the number four, and marriage is the number five because it is the combination of the first even and the first odd number.

Another western school, the Eleatic, also in southern Italy, was dominated by Parmenides (515-440). It occurred to him that no matter how keen an observer's eyes were, no matter how much

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water and fire he saw, if he talked nonsense, his theory could not be true. Truth must be tested not by the senses, but by reason and logic. Whatever cannot be thought, whatever is self-contradictory and inconceivable, cannot be. The previous philosophers had all asserted the inconceivable and impossible; in one way or another they all had said that what is not, is.

The assertion that fire is water or that water is fire, is patently false. Water simply is not fire. It is not a question of physics; it is pure logic. Water means one thing and fire means something else. They are not equivalent concepts, and it is always false to say that one thing is a different thing, or that it is something that it is not. There seems to be one predicate, however, that is attributable to water, and to fire as well. Could not Thales have said that water is existent? The answer is negative for the same reason. The concept of existent is not the equivalent of the concept of water, and to speak the truth one must say water is not existent. Well, at least water is water. Here the two concepts are identical. But once again the answer is negative because the *is* indicates existence, and since water is nonexistent, it is false to say that water is, regardless of the concept used as predicate. Only what is, is. Being alone exists. The logic of the argument depends on defining the verb *to-be* as meaning equivalence and existence.

It follows that there is only one Being. In fact, the aim of reducing the cosmos to one substance is common to all the preceding philosophers. Parmenides merely draws out the logical implications. There is only one Being, homogeneous, indivisible, unchangeable, eternal, and solid. If, indeed, Being is not one, but on the contrary there are several Beings, they must differ among themselves. The point or points of difference must be with respect to Being or with respect to nonbeing. But how could they differ with respect to Being, since they are alike in being Being? Can likes differ in respect to their likes? And yet the differences should exist in some respect. Yet they cannot exist by reason of nonbeing, for nonbeing is not, and would not permit of differences' existing. It follows therefore that what people call many things are not different, but the same. Being therefore is not many, but one.

Indivisibility and homogeneity are consequences of the non-existence of difference. Similarly it is unchangeable, for there is nothing for it to change into. It is eternal, for it cannot have come

from something else because something else, other than Being, is nonbeing, and nonbeing does not exist for Being to come from. Nor could it have come from the same thing, for the same thing is Being itself, which already exists and does not have to come. Origin therefore is inconceivable. *Ex nihilo nihil fit.*

Since empty space is pure nothingness and cannot exist, Being must be solid, perfected on every side like a well-rounded sphere. A homogeneous body, without differences, could not be greater in one place and less in another. It is equal throughout, and only the spherical shape satisfies these requirements.

Pluralism = y la unidad —

Thus Parmenides brought to its logical conclusion the original theme of Thales that the world can be explained in terms of a single physical substratum. But however logical Parmenides' arguments were, many of his contemporaries were not so willing to trust reason and repudiate sense. If corporeal monism implies the solid immobility of Being, there must, they thought, be something wrong with corporeal monism. Since the world is obviously physical, visible, tangible, or corporeal, the trouble must have been concealed under the idea of monism. The world cannot be one stuff. By this line of reasoning there arose the school of Pluralists. It will be seen that the history of philosophy is not a haphazard development. Pluralism did not arise in a vacuum, but rather it was inevitable among men who had inherited this particular tradition. And the development of pluralism is not haphazard, either. If the world is not one, but many, there are just three possibilities. Each must be tried in succession. The world may be composed of beings that present a finite number of original qualitative differences; or there may be an infinite number of qualitative differences; or, third, the world may be composed of beings, numerically infinite, which are qualitatively identical. If pluralism fails, it will not be until after the three forms have been elaborated and examined.

Empedocles of Sicily (495-435), studying Parmenides' arguments, was convinced that qualitative differences could not originate from one stuff. Therefore he posited four original differences. Like the nineteenth century chemists he held that the world was composed of a finite number of elements. Instead of ninety-some, he thought four would do: earth, air, fire, and water. As an artist with

a few basic pigments can produce all the colors of a great painting, so four elements can account for the amazing variety seen in the world. What ordinary people call origin is merely the mixing, or chemical combination, of the elements. A particular example is given in a passage that seems to analyze bone into two parts water, four parts fire, and two of earth, or in modern formula, $W_2 F_4 E_2$. This type of "explanation" was later criticized incisively by Plato in his dialogue *Theaetetus*. Empedocles went to considerable length in describing the formation of the solar system, the origin of life on this planet, and being particularly interested in medicine he studied the details of biology and the processes of sensation.

While chemical combinations might come and go, each element in itself remained fixed and unchangeable. They were in effect pluralistic miniatures of the Parmenidean Being. But the more the characteristics of Parmenidean Being were applied to them, the more another difficulty emerged. If they were fixed and stable, how could motion be explained? Clearly something other than immutable atoms must be sought. Somewhat as Newton in modern times spoke of attraction and repulsion, so Empedocles explained motion by assuming the principles of Love and Hate. Love combines the elements into things and Hate explains their dissolution. But if Love and Hate are not the fifth and sixth elements, what are they? Apparently Empedocles was embarrassed. The earlier hylozoism had not seemed to need any additional moving principle because matter itself is alive or spontaneous; but when Empedocles was forced to reject this philosophy, he was in fact straining after the distinction between the animate and the inanimate. And it is not surprising that this first attempt lacked precision.

Anaxagoras (500-428), the first philosopher to visit and to be banished from Athens, thought that four qualitatively different types of element were not enough and that two moving principles were too many. Four elements are not enough because origin is inconceivable; and if the world is to contain an infinite variety, the infinite variety must have always existed. The world cannot produce novelty, for this would mean that an existent (quality) had arisen from a nonexistent (quality). Mechanical rearrangements of these qualities bring some of them to our attention at one time and others at another time.

Since every combination involves the separation of elements

from other groups, one moving principle is sufficient. This principle is Mind or Intelligence. Anaxagoras sharply distinguishes it from the infinite elements, and later Socrates hoped that this Mind could be taken for a God who directed the world wisely for the Good. But Anaxagoras had not exploited his idea, and, to Socrates' chagrin, gave only mechanical explanations of the world process.

Mechanism rather than teleology was the dominating inspiration in pluralism, and Democritus (460-360) gave it a systematic exposition that in principle cannot be improved upon.

Atoms and void are the terms in which the world is to be explained. The void is necessary for the atoms to exist in and move in; accordingly this nothingness, called empty space, is—regardless of the scandal to Parmenides. The atoms, on the other hand, are not empty but full. They are continuous, indestructible, simple, unchangeable, particles of matter that differ infinitely in size and shape. They do not differ qualitatively because strictly they have no qualities. Weight or specific gravity as well as color, temperature, taste, and so on can be attributed only to combinations of atoms and not to any atom individually. The atoms are real or natural; the qualities exist only by convention, that is, in relation to percipients. Some attempt was made to describe the different mechanical patterns that produced the various qualities.

To form a world the atoms must move. What causes an atom to move? Love? Hate? Mind? No, Democritus' answer is that an atom moves because another atom hit it. And this atom was in motion because a previous atom had started it in this direction. Therefore there is no need of a moving principle in a mechanistic system. Aristotle later objected that while this explains the particular speed and direction of every motion, it does not explain motion. Democritus thought it was not necessary to explain motion in general if every particular motion was accounted for. Because the several motions are produced by mechanical collisions, it follows that all events occur by necessity. There is no purpose in the universe, no providence, no teleology. The regularity of astronomy and the apparent design in biology are not evidences of any directing Mind; they are merely one chance arrangement that occurs during an infinite time in which all possible arrangements must be realized.

Zeno

To avoid the motionless acosmism that Parmenides had inferred from the principle of corporeal monism, the pluralists asserted that Being is many and that nonexistent (empty) space exists. Did they thus save the appearances? Had they succeeded in justifying motion? Zeno (490-420), the faithful and brilliant disciple of Parmenides, tried to show that they had not.

To demonstrate the absurdity of motion, Zeno tells a story. An Eleatic tortoise challenges Achilles, the track star of antiquity, to a race, on condition that he, the tortoise, be given a head-start. At the crack of the pistol they're off. But when Achilles reaches the point from which the tortoise started, the tortoise is no longer there. In the meantime he had gone ahead a short distance. Then when Achilles reaches the point at which the tortoise was when Achilles was at the point from which the tortoise started, the tortoise is no longer there. In the meantime he had gone ahead a short distance. And so on. Every time Achilles arrives at the point at which the tortoise was, the tortoise is no longer there. Since this happens every time, at no time does Achilles overtake his philosophic rival.

Is this absurd? Does it contradict our senses? But which are we to trust, sensation or reason? Then someone objects that since Achilles runs one hundred times as fast as any philosopher, he will overtake his slow friend in exactly so many seconds. This is not just sensation, it is mathematics.

However—suppose Achilles or an atom is to traverse a distance of so many yards or a time of so many seconds. Before he can reach the end, he must pass the halfway point; or can one conceive him somehow to escape this necessity? And before he arrives at the halfway point, he must pass the quarter mark. And before he runs a quarter of the distance, he must complete an eighth. And so on. It follows, therefore, that before he can even start to run, he must exhaust this series. Unfortunately, this series is inexhaustible. Consequently Achilles cannot start. Motion is impossible.

Another illustration also will show that motion is inconceivable. Rest, the absence of motion, can be described as that condition in which the extremities of a body are coincident with two fixed points in space. Take an arrow at any moment of its supposed flight. Its extreme points are coincident with two given points of space—since

it is in space. Therefore, at every instant of its "flight" it is at rest. Motion is inconceivable.

Space, too, is an absurd conception. Democritus thought that there had to be space for an atom to exist *in*. But if existence requires something for the existing object to exist *in*, and if space exists, then space must exist *in* something—a superspace. And the superspace must exist in a supersuperspace. And so on until it is seen that one should never have begun. The first "space" was absurd.

Furthermore, the assumption that there are many atoms is also absurd. If Being were many, it would have to be both infinitely small and infinitely large. It would have to be infinitely small because every plurality is a collection of unities. A unity is indivisible, and therefore can have no magnitude. A sum of zero magnitudes is zero. And thus a world constructed of unitary atoms would have neither length, breadth, nor thickness. But if the atoms exist, they must have magnitude. To have magnitude, however, the south pole of each atom would have to be separated from the north pole by a finite extent. This third part in turn would have to be separated from the north and south poles by other extended parts. And so on. This requires an infinite number of extended parts, with the result that each atom would be infinitely extended.

The Greek thinkers, faced with this refutation of atomism, could choose one of three possibilities. They could agree that Being alone exists and that Being is one. A few did so, and for them philosophy had accomplished its task. It had found the truth. Or it might be argued that the pluralists had made a different mistake. They had seen the culmination of corporeal monism, rejected the monism and kept the materialism. Someone might now try to reject the materialism and keep the monism. But such a person, so hardy as to suggest that reality is spiritual and not material, would have to be a genius as great as Plato. There is a much easier choice that can be made. The great minds of early Greece with all their scientific acumen, so it may be concluded, have failed to find any truth. The reason for their failure is simply that there is no truth to be found. Knowledge is impossible. This conclusion is a welcome relief after such arduous philosophizing; and, besides, it offers great opportunities to ambitious young men. Thus there arose in Greece the movement known as Sophism.

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CHAPTER SEVEN

EARLY GREEK MORALISTS

PAUL R. HELSEL

THE ETHICAL conceptions of the Greek moralists germinated in the views of earlier thinkers while the conditions of their own time brought these ideas to maturity. For a century and a half philosophic reflection had been preoccupied with the origin of the material world but underneath the surface a different current of thinking was going on which in time was destined to come to light. This situation is understandable if one adopts an evolutionary point of view for thought as illustrated by Lewis Mumford where he says "that the person is an emergent from society, in much the same fashion that the human species is an emergent from the animal world." [1] W. G. Greene implies this development where he claims that "the whole trend of Greek thought is from an external toward an internal conception of life" [2] and Werner Jaeger reenforces this claim by the observation that "other nations made gods, kings, spirits: the Greeks alone made men." [3]

One should not suppose that philosophic speculation created the moral problem as a historical event. On the contrary, the moral situation is as old as man. Prior to the rise of philosophic reflection morals existed in a natural state and their expression in literature was in some such form as myth, poetry or legal procedure. A line from Homer (*fl.* 850 B.C., or earlier) illustrates practical morality at this early stage: "through blindness of their own hearts, [men] have sorrows beyond that which is ordained," [4] or this from Hesiod (*fl.* 8th century B.C.) "long and steep is the path that leads to her [virtue] . . . ; but when a man has reached the top then she is easy to reach, though it was hard before." [5] After struggling with the problem of moral evil, Theognis (565-490 B.C.) concluded

that, "by teaching never shalt thou make the bad man good," [6] and Simonides (556-467 B.C.) meditating upon the Athenian dead at Plataea reflected that "if to die nobly is the greatest part of virtue, on us of all men Fortune has bestowed this lot." [7] Finally, the morality of nature as opposed to the standards that men erect was highlighted by Antigone where Sophocles (495-406 B.C.) described her as subordinating the laws of man to a higher authority: "Justice enacted not these human laws." [8]

Also the reflective movement converged at nuclear conceptions which implemented the historical shift from cosmological considerations over to the anthropic-moralistic issues, thereby facilitating the philosophic handling of the ethical problem. Pythagoras (582-507 B.C.) put forth the idea that the principle of individuation was a balanced equilibrium that ordered the universe, imparted health to the body and the quality of goodness to the soul. In the opinion of Parmenides (*fl.* 475 B.C.) his predecessors had never faced the problem of change, so he demanded how the existent non-exists and the non-existent exists? In Parmenides' own answer to this query the principle of logical consistency first came to the fore. Inasmuch as he considered that the alternatives of his quandary involved a contradiction, he felt that the selection of either one would necessitate the rejection of the other. This loyalty of Parmenides to the principle of logical consistency made a contribution to later reasoning that should be ranked along with the consequences of the alternative which he chose. In his denial of change Parmenides severed the universe into exclusive portions and subsequent thinkers have labored ever since to connect it together again. Parmenides sorted things into two classes, one of thought objects out of reach of the senses and liable to the charge of mental creations; the other of the tangible and demonstrable objects of man's senses. Parmenides thus awakened reflection to the persistent fact that the world is relative. To the principle of consistency he added a second one, that of identity in the sense of uniting thought and being.

Another nuclear conception that prepared the way for the shift to the moral issue, was put forward by Heracleitus (*fl.* 500 B.C.) who believed that the universe was a concourse of ceaseless change, everything flows. This idea of change may be imagined to imply a pulverized universe of discrete entities succeeding one another.

When the notion is carried over into human society the collective idea may be likewise broken down into individual units each with its own natural and self-justifiable idiosyncrasies. At the same time Heracleitus understood that it was impossible to derive knowledge from external change. Therefore he sought the principle of explanation within himself.

Finally, the events of the fifth century B.C. transformed the basic characteristics of civilization in a manner similar to what is going on in our own day. In the first half of the century the two most powerful nations of the civilized world, Greece in the west and Persia in the east, engaged in a crucial conflict from which neither one ever recovered. Nicholas P. Vlachos draws the analogy. He says that "the Hellenic World War had its counterpart in our own World War." [9] As a consequence of the Hellenic world conflict traditional sanctions became suspect and in their stead new theories of society, government, philosophy and religion were advanced. Some ideas were re-thought while others that had been growing now ripened because of the favorable condition of the times. In the days of the old aristocracy noble blood and the deeds of heroes had furnished the moral bases of the state and society and had been regarded as characteristics of the highest virtue. But after the defeat of the Persians and the incoming of the liberal democracy of the Periclean age new privileges were extended throughout a larger portion of society. Many of the old bars were let down, particularly those of the law courts, so that inherited and legal lines of demarcation were swept away. Replacing the earlier characteristics of birth and noble deeds as goals of mortal striving, service to the state now depended upon intellectual attainment. This change set up a different kind of requirement, one that replaced the uncontrollable course of natural inheritance and valiant deeds by the demands for mental effort.

The Sophists spearheaded this movement. In fact, they embodied the rising emphasis that was now coming into prominence upon the new conception of man in whatever form—mind, intellect, reason. For the first time and during the age of Pericles, Anaxagoras from across the Aegean introduced philosophy into Athens. But according to Anaxagoras mind served only a limited purpose; it was a principle of philosophic or scientific interpretation. However, the times were ripe for the Sophists to break the narrow

limits of the speculative idea of man and to liberate it for practical service throughout society generally. The one who did this more than anyone else was Protagoras (481-411 B.C.), the founder of the Sophist movement. Little is known of his life or writings but his famous dictum has been preserved: "Man is the measure of all things, of things that are, that they are, of things that are not, that they are not." [10] This statement released such a weight of natural authority which up to this time had been neglected, that notwithstanding its limitations something which the dictum denotes carries over into our own day.

The Sophists instigated a rift among the views of Greek thinkers. The distinction is understandable when it is studied in the light of practical experience. Early Greek conceptions of the development of man contained the two familiar aspects: nature and nurture. Thucydides (471-400 B.C.) had understood that foresight and wisdom were natural endowments and he thought that it was futile for instruction to offer acquired characteristics as substitutes for innate qualities. [11] Hesiod, on the other hand, emphasized the human capacities that were subject to training. [12] When the people become confused, if one should come forth on whose tongue Zeus has poured sweet dew and from whose lips flow gracious words and should settle the cause with true judgments, that one would be a prince. The Sophists took up what Hesiod had emphasized and concentrated their efforts upon the training of those traits that were susceptible of education. But in the estimation of the Sophists education should be practical, not an end in itself; they linked it up with the fortunes of the state and deliberately undertook the task of teaching political virtue, an attempt that was to meet with stubborn opposition. The Sophists defined their profession as an art, a term which misleads us today. As their method developed we would define it as a skill or technique. But in his best moments Protagoras apparently hoped to include more than mere skill in the conception of his own task. He seemed concerned with promoting a basic culture which although called political, yet it resembles more our idea of statecraft or statesmanship. Protagoras is represented by Plato as making this distinction where Protagoras explains to Socrates that "the other Sophists are in the habit of insulting their pupils; who, when they have just escaped from the arts, are taken and driven back into them by their teachers. . . . ; but if he [Hippocrates]

comes to me, he will learn to order his own house in the best manner, and he will be able to speak and act for the best in the affairs of the state." [13] It would seem then that the distinction between the original intention of Protagoras and the practise of his later followers illustrates the historical transformation that often accompanies movements of this kind. When a founder of a movement passes and his influence wanes then the structure of the movement comes to light and the disciples emulate its weaknesses which at first were concealed by the dominance of the leader.

Inasmuch as Periclean democracy guaranteed "equal justice to all alike in their private disputes," [14] and as the citizens were supposed to represent themselves personally at the courts of law, opportunity was thus created for trained assistance. This assistance supplied the occasion of service where the individual Sophists might tie into the practical needs of Greek society. One might suppose, too, that their expectations of success would set their goals to be achieved. This practical situation, then, dictated in advance the kind of preparatory training that should be selected for the work at hand. Naturally the training should be organized about rhetoric and the determination "to speak well"; these would vie for first place with all other factors, even with the justice of the issue on trial. This performance "suited the Greek passion for form so well that it actually ruined the nation by overgrowing everything else like a creeping plant." [15] The sophistic profession, on the other hand, heightened the general consciousness as to the importance of the forms and means of expression. The Sophists created the need for the study of grammar, rhetoric and dialectic. Treatises on syntax, theories of meaning, examination of letters and syllables, grouping of words, the principles of argumentation, defending and attacking both sides of an argument and the beginning of logic are representatives of the intellectual discoveries and achievements of the sophistic movement which have supplied much of the structure of Western learning and culture.

But the sophistic movement was so constituted as to contain something of a direct ratio between its method of achieving success and the disclosure of its faults. It attempted success by the skillful manipulation of the form and means of expression. Often those who practised this technique went to unjustifiable lengths to win their point. An oft-cited instance of this excess is the litigation be-

tween Protagoras and Euathlus where the practical intention of Euathlus appears to have been the termination of the suit in a logical impasse and thereby to win a verdict that would dissolve him of further responsibility.[16] But such success is won at the cost of principles which are basic to social welfare and brought to light ideas of earlier thinkers which the Sophists now organized into a new social outlook that at an earlier time was little suspected.

It has been explained how Protagoras had introduced the principle that everything is relative; that the senses may testify to one situation while thought may dictate another. It would follow, then, that the world of affairs is different from what it appears to be because knowledge involves relationships. Moreover, upon the adoption of an assumption as a starting point of the thought procedure, logical consistency necessitates that one shall follow through the connected steps of its consequences with unflinching loyalty. In addition to this loyalty Parmenides had identified thought and being but later the sensationalistic theory of knowledge had united perception and thought. Therefore the substitution of perception for thought in the formula of identification seemed both possible and natural with the resulting doctrine embraced by the Sophists that perception and being are one. Again Heracleitus had implied a pulverized existence, a notion that when divorced from the rest of Heracleitean thought accommodated itself to the idea of self-ruled social units, each according to the Sophists having the privilege of exercising its own unique traits and characteristics without let or hindrance. Now when such ideas are refashioned, when they are set in a changed social milieu and are welcomed by practical conditions, when being released from their earlier meanings and universalized throughout society generally, and when they are actuated by unrestrained, human drives determined upon success at the cost of making morals as well as knowledge relative, then a sophistic condition obtains against which men of another view feel that they must speak out.

Possibly there was no more outspoken and stronger opponent of the Sophists than Socrates (467-399 B.C.). However long society had practised the distinction between nature and nurture or convention, Archelaus (*fl.* 450 B.C.) had first at Athens put the difference in formal expression and thereby had made it current in the thought of the time.[17] Plato (427-347 B.C.) used the distinction

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as a means of new classification.[18] Whereas the Sophists in the realm of convention sought affluence by the cultivation of the human capacities educable along the lines of rhetoric, logic and social practises, the first concern of Socrates and Plato was for nature. An instance of the method that they used generally occurs in the conception of the origin of the state. Plato put it in the form of a question: "for we cannot suppose that States are made of 'oak and rock' and not out of the human natures which are in them, and which in a figure turn the scale and draw other things after them?"[19] Aristotle (384-322 B.C.) also observed the same principle of distinction in his reference to language: "the limitation 'by convention' was introduced because nothing is by nature a noun or name."[20]

The schism between the Sophists and their opponents, notably Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, was uncompromising; it resulted from two different world views. The deeper thinkers conceived of the universe, including man, as one interconnected whole with interlocking relations all grounded in and derived from an underlying nature, physical, living, human, social, philosophic and religious. The Sophists, on the other hand, neglecting nature as the starting point of investigation, grounded everything in convention. Two outstanding characters of Plato's Dialogues illustrate this view. From Thrasymachus' insistent contention that justice is the interest of the stronger, by matching method with method Socrates forced Thrasymachus to drop back into "gentleness" and by mute inference Thrasymachus permitted Socrates to speak for them both in the conclusion, "I know nothing at all." [21] The second character is Callicles who held that it is man's nature to do injustice and reap the rewards while to suffer injustice is both a disgrace and an evil. Therefore, "if there were a man of sufficient force, he would . . . break through . . . all this, . . , and the light of natural justice would shine through." [22] Finally, the crowning charge that Socrates makes against the Sophists is what Erdmann calls "the sophistic formula": [23] they "made the worse appear the better cause," [24] all because, as Plato explains, they are "bent upon giving them [citizens] pleasure, forgetting the public good in the thought of their own interests." [25] Aristotle even denies the Sophists a place among the philosophers due to their failure to grasp the true nature of things: "sophistic is Wisdom which exists only in semblance . . . is what appears to be philosophy but is not." [26]

Socrates was born among the Sophists, he was educated by the Sophists, he used the method of the Sophists, but Socrates was not a sophist. This statement contains the kernel of Socratic morality. Not concerned with physical nature Socrates nevertheless headed the movement that wished to investigate the nature of human behavior and the narration of his attempt in this respect will be an explanation of the Socratic method and the Socratic principle.

The Socratic method was made up of two parts: the negative and the positive. The negative aspect is more newsworthy because of its dramatic setting; without the negative part of Socrates' work it is possible that he might have remained unknown like many of his fellow-citizens. It was upon this activity that he established his reputation, arrayed his enemies against him and at the last inspired the charges of the indictment upon which he was tried with the resulting verdict of ostracism or death.

The negative aspect of the Socratic method is basic to any thoroughgoing investigation. The dictum, "know thyself," was already ancient in Socrates' day but denoted little more than a pious epigram in comparison with the searching application it received at his hands. In Greek history no one before him had been so relentless in exploring the realm of the self for the purpose of peering into its being. Naturally the preparatory work consisted of the uncovering and rejecting of the accumulations of time, heredity, habits and opinions. In other cultures certain men were devoted to a similar task. Hebrew-Jewish prophets purged themselves in Midian, in the Temple, along the Chebar, in the wilderness and in Arabia to expel the useless accumulations which they had collected and to prepare themselves for their creative work. In English culture Francis Bacon bemoaned the fact that mankind was wedded to the idols of the cave, the tribe, the market-place and the theater. If men would desert these idols then they could acquire new outlooks. Finally, Descartes by the *Cogito ergo sum* insight swept from his mind the useless paraphernalia of French culture that had hindered this intellectual quest.

It appears, then, that Socrates hit upon a universal principle. Before the mind is capable of acquiring new truth, false accumulations of tradition, prejudice, career and ignorance must all be faced and expelled by denial and confession. Irrespective of the employment to which they subjected it, Jesus and Socrates adopted the

same method. What Jesus denoted by repentance and Socrates by the negative aspect of his method, for both a change of mind was meant. If by the conversation with Socrates, Thrasymachus had actually willed a change of mind equal to the change of his conduct from conceit over to mute silence when for both of them Socrates confessed their ignorance as to the nature of justice, such a change of mind would have been recorded as a conversion both by Jesus [27] and by Socrates.[28]

After one by a confession of ignorance has purged his nature of inherited prejudice, traditional illusions and blinding presuppositions, preparation has then been made for the positive aspect of the Socratic method. Inasmuch as the kind of knowledge in which he was interested excluded factual accumulations of what now passes for scientific knowledge and involved morals and religion, Socrates held that the acquiring of knowledge was a cooperative enterprise. The Socratic method made no provision for mass classroom procedure where an instructor is compelled to act as if knowledge is conveyable in a single direction. The Socratic method was informal and conversational. However skillful Socrates may have been as a conversationalist, he never supposed that he was in possession of a body of knowledge that he wished to transmit to the listener. Whatever theory of knowledge prompted it, his continual effort was to elicit truth by the pooling of ideas, a creative result which slavish mind could never accomplish.

Socrates' reliance upon this method was grounded in what is called the Socratic principle: the validity of the moral self-consciousness. It was this principle that differentiated Socrates from the Sophists and kept him from being a sophist. The sophistic dictum, "man is the measure of all things," located the source of all things in man. In regard to the distinction between nature and convention, the Sophists stood firmly on the side of convention, which, however beneficial, has its ultimate source in man. This view cuts the vital cord of nature and theoretically opens the door for the entrance of all kinds of unnatural aberrations. Socrates was the first one to work at this distinction and headed the movement that attempted to discover human nature, a curiosity that caused him to pry into all kinds of moral and religious questions.

Moreover, in undertaking the investigation Socrates believed in a criterion upon which he could rely. This criterion was an inner

monitor, or voice which came to him when he was yet a child and to whose checks he was loyal throughout his entire life. It was as if life could be compared to a game of athletics like basket-ball. The rules are outlined in advance of the game and as long as the activity of the players falls within them the game proceeds. But when the activity of the players falls outside the rules, the playing ceases. Now Socrates believed that he lived in a world that had rules or laws. These laws had been prescribed by an infinite intelligence and were ordered for the ongoing of life. When the activity of living fell outside the prescribed laws a cosmic impasse forbade the "game" to go forward. But different from the experience of players in an athletic contest, Socrates held that prior to the incorrect act "a kind of voice . . . always forbids . . . me to do anything which I am going to do." [29] By heeding the checks and changing to a course of life that did not encounter a warning Socrates concluded that he could live a life in harmony with what nature intended.

NOTES

1. Lewis Mumford, *The Condition of Man,* p. 61.
2. W. G. Greene, *Moira,* p. 9.
3. Werner Jaeger, *Paideia,* I, xxiii.
4. Homer, *Odyssey,* I, 33.
5. Hesiod, *Works and Days,* 290.
6. Theognis, *Elegiac Poems,* I, 437.
7. Simonides, "Epithets" (*Greek Ethical Thought,* Hilda D. Oakley, editor, p. 17).
8. Sophocles, *Antigone,* 451.
9. Nicholas P. Vlachos, *Hellas and Hellenism,* p. 126.
10. Kathleen Freeman, *The Pre-Socratic Philosophers,* p. 348.
11. *Thucydides,* I, 138.
12. Hesiod, *Theogony,* 81 ff.
13. Plato, *Protagoras,* 318E.
14. *Thucydides,* II, 37.
15. Werner Jaeger, *op. cit.,* I, 313.
16. *Diogenes Laertius,* IX, 56.
17. *Ibid.,* II, 16. *Cf.* Ernest Barker: "It was he [Archelaus] who first drew the famous distinction between *physis* and *nomos* in the world of human affairs." *Greek Political Theory,* p. 53. Also, J. Burnet declares that "in the great controversy about Law and Nature he [Protagoras] is decidedly on the side of the former." *Greek Philosophy, Pt. I,* 114.

18. Plato, *Gorgias* 482E, *et al.*
19. Plato, *Republic* 544D.
20. Aristotle, *De Interpretatione* 16a27.
21. Plato, *Republic* 354B; *cf.* also 336B ff.
22. Plato, *Gorgias* 484; *cf.* also 482E ff.
23. Johann Eduard Erdmann, *A History of Philosophy* I, 70.
24. Plato, *Apology* 18C, *logon* is often translated reason; *cf.* also Aristotle, *Rhetorica* 1402a23 and John Milton, *Paradise Lost,* II, 113.
25. Plato, *Gorgias* 502E.
26. Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1004b19, 26.
27. *Matthew* 18:3, *et al.*
28. Plato, *Republic* 533D.
29. Plato, *Apology* 31D.

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CHAPTER EIGHT

PLATONISM

JAMES H. DUNHAM

THE PHILOSOPHY of Plato, sometimes called Platonism, is the first attempt of Western thought to organize a critique of pure reason as the instrument for obtaining scientific knowledge. Before his day reflection had devoted its efforts to a study of the facts of nature as presented to ordinary observation. The men of Miletus agreed that causality was the problem demanding immediate attention. What was the first and all-embracing cause? They answered the question in various ways, either by pointing to the primordial elements, earth, air, fire or water, or by constructing in mind an indeterminate substance which contained the properties of the several elements but without specific form. But cause implies effect, and between the two, change or motion must intervene. Hence a new analysis was made by Heraclitus (*c.* 545-475 B.C.). Nothing, he said, remains the same, everything is in flux; opposites clash, hot and cold, large and small, swift and slow, good and bad, and an attunement of conflicting tendencies must be effected. This is done by assuming a *logos,* a law of change regnant in the entire world. Meantime in Italy a new doctrine was taught. A permanent substance exists, says Parmenides (*b.* 539? B.C.), which cannot be moved, divided or dissolved, nor can it abide unfinished. If motion is a phenomenon in nature, it is confined within her own limits; if individuals appear, they are factors in the majestic whole. The One is dominant and the Many are phases of the whole, which is the antithesis of the Ionian postulate.

It was clear to the discerning mind that the major concepts of human thinking, one and many, same and different, like and unlike, must undergo rigid examination by a method which will reveal

their basic meaning and the exact relations between them. The sponsor of the method was none other than Socrates (*c.* 470-399 B.C.), the son of Sophroniscus, a teacher of repute in the capital city, a man of acute intelligence and of unimpeachable integrity. His personal interests, by his own testimony and by the tradition of the Academy, lay outside the area of physical research. He confined his studies to the formulation of the logical definition, with its application to moral and political problems. He was the first disputant to distinguish sharply between universal and particular judgments. He brought every argument, says Xenophon (430- post 355 B.C.), back to the underlying principles. Yet he was careful to test every conclusion by reference to appropriate examples. Aristotle (384-322 B.C.) insists that Socrates would allow no definitional concept to stand apart from its own object, as his successor did, and thereby established the new logic on a thoroughly inductive basis.

With such a precedent as this before him Plato (428-348 B.C.), the disciple, took up the task of perfecting the method, in order to make it the standard guide for the settlement of every question whether in the physical sciences or the broad field of moral jurisprudence. Every object, he teaches, has two constitutional aspects, its matter and its form. Matter being limitless, as he says in the *Philebus,* is capable of being divided into a multiple of units each exhibiting the same form. Form, in its turn, expresses the integral meaning of the object, and a given form retains the same content wherever it is recorded. But despite the distinction between them, form and matter belong to the same individual. Nevertheless, because of his strong emphasis on the importance of the idea or form, Plato seems, at times, to wrest it from its residence in the object and install it in a new field of existence. He does this, Aristotle complains, by framing a hypothetical series, the first term concrete, the second abstract. Thus, Socrates is a concrete individual, a man, when we first study him; then he becomes an abstract object, the essential principle of manhood (*Met.* 1040a9). How can he be both? The issue is fundamental and must be met. Are Plato's ideas concrete individuals, separated (a dangerous word, says Natorp) from their objects in the real world and therefore existing by themselves? Or, are they conceptualized properties of their objects and therefore inseparable from them? Sometimes Plato speaks of them as "supersensibles"; but by that term he means precisely what we mean when

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we say that concepts cannot be seen, heard or felt, nor can they be represented by the idioms of physics. Ideas, he holds, are the instruments used to identify an object or relation or as we now say, *event.* Prof. J. A. Stewart puts it succinctly: "Ideas are ways of thinking"; they are, therefore, "in us not in the external world." Aristotle, to all intents and purposes, expresses the same opinion when he writes, "I call the essence of an object a *substance* without corporeality"; and again, "Ideas cannot be substances in the primary sense since they qualify an object. At the same time if ideas are not universals but individuals standing apart from their objects, they cannot be known; for science deals only with universal or abstract terms" (*Met.* 1032b15; 1003a7). We may sum up the discussion as follows: ideas belong to objects but can only be comprehended by the methods of logical analysis. That this is Plato's teaching will appear with convincing force when we study the Divided Line in the Sixth Book of the *Republic.*

The Deduction of the Universal Ideas

Ideas and their primordial images are part and parcel of the cognitive process; that is to say, they belong to the natural habits of thought. In order to reach their final form ideas must pass through what Nettleship calls the four stages of intelligence, corresponding to the four sections of Plato's Line. Two of these are products of the imagination, namely, sense-perception and belief, and the remaining two, of the faculty of reflection, namely, judgment and the principle of reason. The first registers the direct contact between the mind and objects in the external world by means of an image or "likeness" (*eikon*). This may appear as the shadow of a projected body, with its contour and size; again as a figure mirrored in a pool of water or on a polished plate, its lines, angles and colors being clearly defined. In certain cases the image may emphasize a particular quality, *e.g.,* whiteness, enabling us to detect its principal features. The *Theaetetus* dialogue is the expert's laboratory for the analysis of such rudimentary experiences. It is made plain at once that we must go beyond the first section of the Line, if we are to obtain the notion of a "steady" image. Perception by itself can never produce knowledge; the contention of Protagoras was false and misleading. For consider the following facts:—we must have a second supporting sensum, if we are to know what *white* as a simple sensation involves.

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But the next percept emerging from what seems to be the same situation may yield an altogether different result, either because there is a change in the situation or a change in the attitude of the percipient. We can only conclude that accuracy in perception comes through a long and arduous process of education (*Th.* 184-6).

The problem of perception is much more difficult when we are obliged to decide whether certain facts in nature can actually be perceived. Can we, for instance, form a distinct image of either motion or power? Both appear to confront our organic senses with the same appeal that individual bodies make. But Plato shows with inconfutible evidence in the *Theaetetus* (181, sq.) that motion itself cannot be perceived but only bodies in motion, and in the *Sophist* (247) that power is not a substance, a real thing, but the ubiquitous attribute of substance, hence capable of becoming a predicate in the judgment—"real things have their distinguishing marks, chiefest of which is dynamical power."

The second step in the pursuit of knowledge is the identification of an image as having a fixed content to be accepted as its true and only meaning. The image has now a "greater degree of truth" because we are surer of its relation to the external object. This brief statement of the matter in the *Republic* (510A) comes into clearer light in the *Theaetetus,* when he examines the mental function, memory, which makes knowledge possible. We have here the first historical analysis of the principle of association which has its consummation in the *Treatise of Human Nature* by David Hume. The process of forming a concept is extremely complex and full of insidious perils. The mind, says Plato, is like a wax tablet receiving impressions from many widely separated sources (*Th.* 194,5). Hence, error easily tracks its pathway. The percept may not be distinct in form or well-defined in substance. It may become entangled with unrelated or confused materials. It may have been communicated to a mind not trained to assimilate its particular kind of sensation. But granted the presence of an unclouded mind, in the Cartesian sense, every new image of equivalent content will be automatically referred to the original image, and together they will constitute an enduring notion. This Plato calls its *eidos*, that which has been, so to say, officially seen. Still at this early stage it is only a belief, as contrasted with ascertained knowledge, and it may be *wrong*. Later when he has placed it in a psychological judgment,

he thinks it may have a greater chance, though not a guaranteed certainty, of being right. For such judgments, which are not yet controlled by logic's laws, are subject to two natural tendencies, either to make a judgment about something which does not exist, or to mistake one existing thing for another. The only escape from such a tragedy is obedience to the system to be outlined in the third section of the Line.

At this point, then, we turn from sense to reflection, from routine memory to the *noetic* faculty of mind. This does not imply that we break all ties with sensible experience, as Aristotle had charged. Every universal idea, concrete or abstract, every form of predication, has some surviving feature of the original sense-datum. The problem now is, how shall we determine the meaning which the mature idea is to carry? The method he adopts is Grecian. Its name highlights all modern scientific inquiry, but the mode of approach is different. Hypothesis, to us, signifies a tentative formula set up to account for the operation of certain forces in nature in ways not yet known. Controlled experiment and the readjustment of physical conditions are usually involved. If the formula fails, it is discarded and another substituted. For the Greek, however, the hypothesis was a primordial judgment accepted as true, often called "prior knowledge," although no logical proof can be adduced. Thus, given the properties of a triangle, we can through the use of parallelism as the middle term, arrive at the conclusion that its interior angles are equal to two right angles.

The method requires us to develop two points, the nature of the given judgment and the manner in which its implications can be unfolded. It is assumed at the outset that every judgment, when valid, is the union of related and complementary ideas; that is, they must be logically negotiable. Plato said the subject must "participate" in the predicate; we say the predicate is implied in the subject. Aristotle listed a group of fundamental ideas which he called categories. Plato distinguished predicates that dealt with existence, and those that denoted value, the former represented by the physical sciences, the latter by ethics and aesthetics. We confine our attention just now to the former. In general, Plato and Aristotle agree that every real thing must have attributes, but existence itself cannot be an attribute. The attribute tells us what the object is, it puts it into the class to which it belongs. Thus the star is a heavenly body emit-

ting rays of light from its distant orb, pursuing its course in a steady geometrical curve, and maintaining a fixed relation to neighboring bodies and to the constant earth. The idea of star is embodied in this definition, and conversely when the terms of this definition are satisfied, we call the body a star. However, when the terms are not fulfilled, as in the sun or planet or meteor, the body cannot be classified as a star. This is the essence of the Socratic method, the genus, a heavenly luminary, the differentia, the properties that belong to the star. In short, the logical definition becomes the basis of all scientific analysis, where ideas have a fixed and unchanging connotation. That is the reason why the Greeks when they wished to formulate a scientific law, determined upon the class to which the situation conformed, and then wrote out the definition of the class as the sum and substance of the law.

But the logical predicate does something more than preserve the identity of the idea; it shows how from the specific idea a great company of cognate ideas may be developed. The instruments used here are the antitheticals—same and different, like and unlike, motion and rest in physics, equal and unequal in mathematics. The purpose of these categories is to clear away all materials that do not lend themselves to a better understanding of the subject under consideration. Thus the contrasting concepts motion and rest made an enormous appeal to scientist and layman alike, in an age when the position of the earth in the system of nature was a question of heated debate. For the majority of observers the earth was the symbol of complete quiescence, while the heavenly bodies were in uninterrupted movement. Some hinted, however, that the earth might be in motion, and Plato lets Timaeus say that "the earth, our nurse, goes to and fro in its path round the axis which stretches right through the universe" (*Tim.* 40). In our day when the relativity of motion has become almost a fixed dogma in physics, and absolute rest an inconceivable formula, we might dispense with that type of logical predication. But we cannot exclude the more abstract categories, like and unlike, same and different. If it be asked, whence comes the authority attaching to such predicates, the answer is found in the *Theaetetus* (186): "they are things which the mind itself undertakes to judge for us, when it reflects upon them and compares them with one another." Beyond that it would seem Plato does not care to go. If anthropology had been even a rudimentary

science in his day, he might have extended his investigations further; but even if he had possessed the cultural data we have now assembled, it is quite possible that his conclusion would not have been changed.

It remains to examine the second phase of the hypothetical method—how truths latent in the original judgment can be unfolded. The classical report is made in the *Sophist,* and Plato gives the name *division* to its particular form. We start with a recognized genus, *e.g.,* animal, and then cite the differential properties belonging to its several members. Plato proposes to handle the supreme issue in philosophy in the same manner. He asks, what properties can be alleged to be the dominant attributes in the fundamental substance. At first the battle is between the gods and the giants, the Formists and the Materialists, the Italians, Pythagoras (*fl.* 532 B.C.) and Parmenides, on the one side, and the Ionians, Anaximander (611-*c.* 547 B.C.) and Heraclitus on the other. The latter insist that substance is composed of corporeal things, things that you can crunch and crumble in your hands. But Plato objects: substance is not sheer inert stuff; it is matter crowned with motion; it is force, energy, dynamic action. It has the essence of soul, and is found in human beings, where its power is expressed in intelligence, goodness, justice, *real things* because they display irresistible energy.

The opposing camp, the Formists, contend only with ideas; they say that action and reaction in the human body, the coming and going of sensory images, all belong to the sphere of becoming, which has no enduring quality. Then Plato speaks again: are we to infer that change, life, soul, understanding have no place in the realm of reality? Must the soul of man stand apart in "solemn aloofness, devoid of intelligence"? In point of fact, are the two sets of combatants, Materialists and Formists, the only claimants to the definition of substance? No; there is a third member of the supreme genus: substance includes both change and stability, "all that is changeless and all that this is in process of changing." That synthesis is the master concept and frames the only incontrovertible theory of substance. The method of division has passed into the stately order of the Dialectic (*Soph.* 246-53).

There is also another species of division which answers one of the age-long problems of philosophy. Here the members are two, a positive term and its contradictory. The former is again divided in the

same manner, and the process goes on until the indivisible is reached. Thus, substance is organic and inorganic; organic is sensible and insensible, and the division proceeds until the individual, Man, appears. It is this method which teaches us the meaning of non-being. Non-being is no longer a term in ontology, as with Parmenides, it is a term in logic. The negative judgment is often more inclusive than the affirmative. For inorganic substance embraces astronomy, physics, chemistry, and the allied sciences, a vast electorate from which to choose the desired member (*Soph.* 255-58).

The Idea of the Good

The third section of the Line has uncovered the following cardinal items: (1) that every object has its own specific idea which is the law governing its activity; (2) that every idea is related to other ideas by fixed and coördinate predicates, ultimately expressed in mathematical symbols, the true language of science (*Philebus*, 25, 26); and (3) that no breach or hiatus can occur in substance since every negation is only another form of significant determination. For most scientific operators the inquiry ends at this point, but not for Plato. For him, as for Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), the shores of truth are girt by a wide and stormy ocean, the "natural home of illusion." He had traveled three-fourths of his Line, mastering problems that had mocked the skill of a myriad of earnest scholars. He felt sure that the human mind had yet another faculty, *nous*, the pure reason, which was concerned neither with concrete images nor the "bloodless categories," as Bradley (1846-1924) called them, and he intended to push on until he apprehended it, the "first principle of the whole." This idea he defined as the Good. Here no formal method was needed, only direct intuition, and then the instant penetration into subordinate truths as a matter of course (*Rep.* 511B). For as the eye can discover no object except by the light of the sun, so the mind can comprehend none of the elements of knowledge without the interpreting support of the Good.

What is the Good? In every mature language it is the property, single or manifold, apart from which no object in nature or mind can be what it is. In his study of the human eye, its structure and function, Plato first expounded its physical purpose, namely, sight, and then proceeded to itemize the extraordinary facts that sight

makes possible—the invention of numbers, the development of the concept of time, and the appreciation of the nature of the whole. Thus the *eidos* of an object—what it means, is exactly equivalent to its primary purpose—what it can do. In fine, the good of an object is its overshadowing purpose, the second point in every definition. But this is not all; the good can explain the nature and character of the human percipient who is called upon to assess the value of the object before him. Plato examines this question at length in the *Philebus* dialogue. What is the Good, the *summum bonum*, for man, for society, indeed, for the entire constituted cosmos? Aristippus (*c.* 435-356 B.C.) said, pleasure, agreeable feeling; Socrates retorted, ordered knowledge eventuating in superior wisdom. Restricting our thought for the moment to the experiences of the citizen in the state, the good must satisfy the needs of his physical constitution and fulfill the highest aspirations of his moral nature. Can the play of emotion even when long sustained or some brilliant achievement in the conquest of truth, can either of these by itself promote the end in view which is nothing less than the making of a rounded life? The complete good must contain certain ingredients which Plato recites in detail: the harmony of our native interests—to see, to know, to cultivate the affections, to associate ourselves with the movements of the visible world, to find our true place in the community of the social group; then to join to harmony the grace of symmetry, where variations of temper are subject to rational control, all excesses being forbidden: and finally, to see to it that the good embodies the truths that have been won by analysis and experience, and so far as possible, installed as the accepted statutes of government. (*Phil.* 65-67).

The Metaphysical Aspects of the Good

It is obvious from the foregoing argument that a world in which reason rules is the only kind which Plato conceives as possible. But how can we apply the term *reason* to a physically organized universe? In the *Phaedo* Plato makes Socrates chide Anaxagoras (*c.* 464-428 B.C.) for saying that reason is the cause of motion, when motion is the sign of the activity of matter, and nothing else. Later, in the *Timaeus* he allows the Theban physicist to construct a world through the Demiurge by copying the timeless ideas as "patterns," and then endowing it with a comprehensive and authori-

tative soul. Some scholars, Burnet amongst them, find here the key to Plato's religious system:—God is distinct from the universe, presides at its creation and engraves upon it the characters of his own intelligence. But the dialogue hints more than once that the whole argument is problematical and does not reach a satisfactory conclusion (48B). There is nothing in this dialogue or any other (before the *Laws*) to show that Plato did not believe matter to be uncreated and eternal. Certainly, this was the tradition in the Academy; for Xenocrates (396-314 B.C.), his nephew and successor as head of the Academy, says explicitly that Plato did not teach the creation of the world "in time" (a phrase used for convenience of exposition) but was concerned solely with the study of its phenomena in due and proper order, "things logically first, and then things scientifically allied with them."

But there is another definition of reason which the philosopher cordially endorsed—the world can be understood by men of trained intelligence. This implies that the good exists in total nature and we can analyze it in the same way that we analyze the good in man. The world is presented as an individual, the Supreme Unity, whose *matter* (in the technical sense) is the complex of all substances, together with the motions appertaining to them, and whose *form* is the order and harmony of the whole. The structural concepts are three, time, space and cause. Time is the "enduring essence" of the world; it cannot be confined to days, months and years, its natural divisions, but is "the moving image everlasting." Time is a continuum, it has no beginning and it will have no end. It is the central index of the harmony of motion. Scarcely less significant is space which establishes the internal relations of the cosmos, and denotes continuity, expansion, and the unified whole. Plato lets Timaeus call it the "receptacle of all becoming," which appears to mean that the "planes" of individual bodies would have no "home," were they not connected by the unseen but coercive factor of space. Hence space guarantees the *order* of nature and forbids us to accept the theory of void which would destroy the symmetry of the system.

The third property is that of Cause, as important to Greek as to modern science. Two types are distinguished, the material and the efficient on the physical side, the formal and final on the mental. Take an analogy. The statue of Athena in the Parthenon has marble and the chisel of the artist as its physical causes, the charm of the

goddess and the sense of beauty as immaterial causes. But it will not escape our attention that a double aspect attends every causal process, (1) what originates the action, *aitia*, and (2) what certifies to its operation, *ananke*, necessity. Still we must be extremely careful not to identify the Greek notion of cause with the concept of mechanical law employed by modern science. For Plato allows Timaeus to introduce the idea of a "wandering cause," which has troubled commentators more than it should. If it did not refer to the peculiar orbits of the planets, it might be due to the thesis accepted by all Greek observers, that the purpose of the whole always dictates the actions of its parts. Or, did Plato cast an eye to the far future and discern the strange "jumps" of the electrons and Heisenberg's principle of indeterminacy?

It follows from these reflections that the "divine philosophy" had an intimate connection with the concepts of the natural sciences. The adjective *divine* (*theion*) is the synonym for the extraordinary, chiefest, most distinguished, an appropriate term for Plato to use, when he examined the operations of the visible universe. Here are his words: "the philosopher who holds converse with divine and universal ideas, does by such experience become part of the divine and universal order, so far as his nature permits" (*Rep.* 500B). Thus the idea of the Good is a logical instrument sharp enough to cut away the rubbish which commentators who follow Aristotle have allowed to gather about Plato's religious theory. It suggests, too, that the commonplaces of the *Laws* should not supplant the seasoned arguments developed at the zenith of his power. The idea of the good is the symbol of the perfect whole, whether in the rounded character of man or in the seamless periphery of the cosmos. Parmenides, we said, conceived of a single substance defined by negative terms. Pythagoras postulated an original One out of which sprang an interminable series of abstract numbers. Plato interpreted the world with the skill of an expert aesthetician as well as with the ingenuity of a practised physicist. Its orderly processes, its harmonious movements, its infinite parts contributing to the solidarity of the whole, all testified to its teleological structure, a purpose that defines the specific function of every segment down to the most minute grain of sand.

But if the good is the symbol of the perfect whole, it is also the guarantor of the indiscerptible unity of substance. The Greeks of the

Periclean age reveled in the conceit that being and one are the same, a fancy confirmed by the *Parmenides* dialogue with logical precision. There was need in Plato's day of establishing this unity with all the authority that philosophy could summon. For the pluralists were at work with as much energy as in the days of Empedocles (*c.* 490-430 B.C.) and Democritus (*b.* 470 or 460 B.C.). They broke substance into pieces and left no place for a substantive whole. Then Plato, having erected the Good as the loftiest principle in logic, converted it into the solidifying property of nature. The good is the essence of reality; in fact, it exceeds even the essential property in dignity and power (*Rep.* 509B). Take another analogy. The picture on the wall is a composite whole, with its figures, colors, lights and shades, gathered about the radiant center; but it is also a federal unity endowed with a common meaning and penetrated by an infallible intuition of beauty. The world which our philosopher viewed possessed a unity which could be nothing short of that reality which men call divine.

The destiny of man is inevitably bound up with the fortunes of the universe. For Plato the world had no beginning and could have no end. Can the same be said of its integral units? In particular, is there any foundation for the Hellenic belief that the soul of man will survive when the body perishes? The subject is debated in the *Phaedo* dialogue but no decision is reached. Even when the idea of immortality is supported by strong public sentiment, it is accepted only with a kind of "reluctant confidence" (107B). In the light of so much uncertainty as to its destiny, two theories as to its nature have grown up. The first holds that there are two distinct substances, body and soul, united for a few years in a single personality, and enjoying all the rights of self-expression. When the body dies, the soul proceeds to its appointed goal.

The other theory is more complex. Man is an individual having matter and form as every other object in nature. Plato raises the question whether desire and emotion are separate faculties or merely modes of the same type of behavior, which is the way the body functions (*Rep.* 439, *sq.*). But whether the same or different, one point is certain, both are distinguished from the "logistic" faculty, reason, the sole expression of the form, and are wholly subject to its decisions. How? By force of ideas, hardened into judgments. The meaning of manhood does not lie in desire or emotion but in the

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capacity to think out the proper way of acting. Reason belongs to man, the person, and cannot be separated from him. It does not come into his mind "from out-of-doors," as Hardie translates Aristotle's phrase. It is the universal aspect of man's behavior, the *good* of his nature. Socrates, a man of superlative intelligence, drinks the hemlock, and as an observable figure disappears, but the quintessence of his ideas, his soul, persists through untold ages. Immortality inheres in ideas, and in ideas only. This is the implication of the Divided Line reaching its climax in the idea of the Good which is now established as the Genus of Reason operating in the intellect of man and in every other form of excellence in the real world.

NOTES

The Dialogues of Plato referred to in the text and their abbreviations:— *The Republic* (*Rep.*), *Phaedo* (*Phaed.*), *Timaeus* (*Tim.*), *Theaetetus* (*Th.*), *Parmenides* (*Parm.*), *Sophist* (*Soph.*), *Philebus* (*Phil.*).

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CHAPTER NINE

ARISTOTELIANISM

HENRY VEATCH

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ARISTOTLE (384-322 B.C.) in the present day enjoys the dubious distinction of being a classic: nearly everyone respects his name, and almost no one reads what he wrote. True, Aristotle's writing is crabbed and difficult, so that if one were casually to take up an Aristotelian text, one would probably put it down again none-the-wiser: one simply would not know what the man was talking about.

Nor is this the only disability from which the unhappy Aristotle currently suffers. For it is the settled and almost unanimous opinion of latter-day intellectuals that even if one were to read Aristotle and were to understand him, one would still be none-the-wiser. For what is there of importance in Aristotle any longer? True, what he said may have been important for the ancient Greeks in their day and for some medieval monks in theirs, but it certainly is of no particular importance for us in ours.

In consequence, Aristotle tends to be consigned to a fate which, for a philosopher, is almost worse than that of not being read at all. That is the fate of being read only as a line or as a paragraph or, perhaps in Aristotle's more celebrated case, as a chapter in what is now fashionably known as the "history of ideas."

But is it possible ever to understand a philosopher thus? To be sure, as historians or anthropologists or perhaps even as Freudian psychologists we may gain a kind of understanding of a philosopher merely by looking at him in a museum case. But we can hardly come to understand him as a philosopher in this way. For philosophy, or at least Aristotelian philosophy, professes to be science, in the sense that it offers a descriptive and explanatory account of the nature

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of things and of reality. But scientific knowledge insists on being judged as contemporary, for it will only talk about things as they are and are now. Consequently, if we are ever to understand Aristotle as a philosopher, we must necessarily think of him as talking about reality, and about reality as it is and as it now appears to us to be. But this is only another way of saying that even in order to understand Aristotle as a figure in the past, we must needs try to see him in the present.

And yet no sooner do we attempt to see Aristotelianism in the present than we seem to become hopelessly entangled in anachronisms. Thus for one thing in the present, almost everyone considers that the only way to get any real positive knowledge of the world round about us is through the so-called natural sciences. And as for philosophy, its function would seem to be at best a merely critical one, and at worst a merely logical one. That is to say, so far from providing any knowledge of the observable phenomena of the world, philosophy is thought to be concerned with no more than determining the epistemological conditions of our experience of phenomena, or perhaps with no more than the logico-linguistic apparatus for talking about such phenomena.

But clearly, any such perspective is utterly alien to Aristotle. That there was no such thing as modern science in Aristotle's day goes without saying. Instead, for him philosophy was science, and science philosophy. Hence to understand Aristotelian philosophy is to understand it as a scientific description of the real world. But this would seem to be simply impossible any longer.

Accordingly, if what Aristotle had to say does not seem to make much sense if we try to fit into the current critical or positivistic frame of reference, perhaps we would do better to treat Aristotelianism as if it were simply "metaphysics." And this is what we do do by and large now-a-days.

And yet such a treatment of Aristotle is scarcely calculated to do him much justice either. For by "metaphysics" people have generally come to understand both a certain type of method and a certain type of subject matter. As for the method, it is supposed to involve some such thing as *a priori* synthesis and construction, in contrast to the more humdrum empirical description characteristic of the natural sciences. And as for the subject matter of metaphysics, this is supposed, almost by definition, to be made up of entities lying

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quite beyond the reach of observation and experience, all else being considered to be within the province of the natural sciences.

Now to convince ourselves that Aristotle was hardly a metaphysician in this sense, we have only to recall Aristotle's determined and unremitting criticism of Platonism. Thus as regards knowledge, Aristotle sharply rejected the Platonic doctrine of *anamnesis*—a rejection which means, translated into modern terminology, that Aristotle recognized no knowledge as being *a priori,* or prior to sensory experience and independent of all reference to such experience.

Likewise, as regards the notion that the proper objects of metaphysics transcend the world of sense, there is a certain sense in which this might be said to be true of Aristotelianism. And yet in the usual sense in which this is understood today, it simply is not true of Aristotelianism at all.

Instead, most of the basic Aristotelian notions—form, matter, substance, the soul, the four causes, being, potency, act, etc.—are to be understood primarily in the context of the changing world of nature which we observe round about us. Indeed, once again one might say that the principal thrust of Aristotle's criticism of the so-called Platonic theory of Ideas is that the latter errs in the direction of being too "metaphysical," in the modern sense: it dislocates the proper and primary objects of philosophy, transporting them from the real world of change with which our senses acquaint us, and placing them in a supposedly other-world of Ideas.

No, rather than being "metaphysical," Aristotle would consider that the first (though, to be sure, not the only) function of philosophy is to provide a straightforward description of the observable, changing world in which the human being finds himself. Indeed, historically, one might say that Aristotle thought of himself as confronting an unhappy and, in his eyes, an unnecessary dilemma, which all previous Greek philosophy had fallen afoul of—the dilemma of change *vs.* intelligibility. For it appeared to Aristotle as if his philosophical predecessors had either held fast to the changing sensible reality of the natural world, only to fail to make such changing being intelligible through adequate causal description, or they held fast to principles of intelligibility, only to squint at or to lose from sight altogether the concrete changes of nature.

Accordingly, to meet this dilemma and to exhibit the intelli-

gibility of changing being, Aristotle insists upon the recognition of at least two basic principles in all change—form and matter.

Thus, form as the principle of determinateness in things is also the source of their intelligibility. In other words, it is in virtue of a thing's form that that thing is what it is and does what it does. At the same time, a thing's form is certainly not all that it is. On the contrary, as is clear simply from experience, the green leaf is not merely green; it is also able to become red. Or an atom of oxygen is not just the form or nature of oxygen as such; it also has the potentiality for being combined with hydrogen to form water.

In this sense, then, one may say that things in the natural world, in addition to being what they are in virtue of their forms, are also able to become other and different from what they are in virtue of their matter. For by matter is meant the source or principle of potentiality in things, and specifically of potentiality with respect to new and different forms. Hence change is to be understood as the process of actualizing any such potentiality for a new form.

Moreover, given these hylomorphic principles, a causal explanation of change becomes possible. Thus if one wants to know the causes of any given change, one must recognize the matter as a cause in the sense that it underlies the whole change and actually receives the new form. Likewise, the form is a cause in the sense that it provides the new determination; it is in virtue of it, the form, that the changed thing is actually different from what it was. At the same time, that the thing should become different, that its matter should actually receive the new form or determination, requires an agent or efficient cause. For that the marble should become a statue is explained neither just by the marble, nor just by the statue, but by the activity of the sculptor. Moreover, that an agent should act in a certain determinate way and give rise to a certain determinate effect means simply that that agent is ordered to that effect as to an end; and that its efficient activity comes to an end and terminates in that effect. Thus the activity of the sculptor, *qua* sculptor, culminates in the completed statue, and not in the process of photosynthesis, or in a legal transaction, or in the geological phenomenon of faulting.

Nor is it hard to see what would happen to the whole enterprise of rendering change intelligible, if one were to try to dispense with either the formal or the material principle.

Thus if one were to let the forms go, intelligibility would go as well. For if there are no forms, nothing will have any determinate characteristics. And if things are neither this nor that, there will be no determinate efficient causes acting in determinate ways to produce determinate effects. In short, without formal causes, there will be no efficient or final causes either; and the world of nature will be reduced to a mere Heraclitean flux, utterly opaque to intelligence and understanding.

On the other hand, if one tries to dispense with the material principle, then some sort of Parmenideanism would seem to become the order of the day. For forms as such are incapable of change. Greenness, for example, just as such can never either be or become other than itself. But then if there is no matter in which new and different forms may be received or actualized, and if forms themselves never change, then change itself must be declared an illusion. And if change is thus shuffled off, the efficient and final causes no longer have any function to perform and disappear altogether. Instead, the whole burden of explanation comes to be carried simply by the formal cause, and the resulting type of explanation turns out to be essentially mathematical.

Or as an alternative, one might try to play the hopeless game of sacrificing the material cause, retaining the formal cause, and yet at the same time trying to save the appearances of change. But the consequence is inevitably the replacement of change by something quite different, *viz.*, succession. For if matter as the principle of potentiality be excluded, and if it be impossible for any form as such ever to change or become different from what it is, the only way to save the appearances, so far as change is concerned, is to suppose that one form ceases to be and another form succeeds it, simply *ex nihilo*.

Unfortunately, however, such a succession of atomic formal occurrences quite defies intelligibility. For the formal cause in such a case can do no more than explain the properties of a form, but not its occurrence. And as for the other causes, they simply are not available for explanation. For an efficient cause cannot act in a determinate way without something to act upon. And without matter there is nothing that it could act upon, since only matter is susceptible of being changed by an agent. Indeed, in desperation, or perhaps in ignorance, thinkers have sometimes tried to identify the

agent merely with the preceding event or occurrence—"a cause is that which precedes its effect in time"—, as if an agent could act without anything to act upon, or could produce an effect after it had itself ceased to exist.

In short, the main Aristotelian thesis in regard to the physical world is clear: unless we recognize in things both a formal and a material principle, we cannot possibly make the fact of change intelligible.

And yet this is not the whole story so far as Aristotelianism is concerned. For it must never be forgotten that in explaining change, Aristotle thinks of himself as explaining changing *being*. That is to say, it is not just an intelligible pattern or order of events that Aristotle is trying to discover in experience; instead, he is trying to understand how change can *be*, or, if you will, how that which is or has being can change.

Accordingly, "after the *Physics*," Aristotle's editors placed the *Metaphysics* which undertakes the study of being just as such, or *qua* being. Moreover, no sooner does one thus turn to an examination simply of the being of things, or what it means for them to be, or in what senses we say of them that they are, than it immediately becomes apparent that being is said in many senses. For instance, our common human experience would certainly indicate that such things as quantities, qualities, actions, passions, relations, *are*. But in just what sense are they? Again, from experience we recognize that they are in a very different sense from substances. For a quality can only exist as the quality of something. Likewise, the quantity, "six inches long," obviously cannot exist just as such: there must always be something that is six inches long. But not so substances: a man, for instance, or an atom or a tree, does not have to be *of* anything, in the same way as a quality must needs be the quality of something.

Moreover, besides this difference between being in itself and being in another, Aristotelian metaphysics also recognizes the difference between being able to be and actually being. Also in the case of any being it is obvious that it is what is: it has a "what" or an essence through which it is intelligible. In consequence, we may regard any being as a "what" that is either in itself or in another, either actually or potentially.

But now regarding these basic distinctions of Aristotelian physics and metaphysics—form and matter, the four causes, substance and

accident, act and potency, being and essence—we may ask: Are these mere "metaphysical" distinctions in the modern sense of the word? It would hardly seem so. For Aristotle would certainly think of all these distinctions as arising out of the world of experience and as ever having a locus in the world of experience. Indeed, it is directly *in* the observable changing things of nature that we actually *find* these distinctions between matter and form, substance and accident, etc.

True, the analogical character of many of these basic notions is such that they can be made to transcend the mere being of the natural world and so be used in the description of any being whatever—for example, of the unmoved mover of the *Physics,* of the active intellect of the *De Anima,* or of the divine, self-thinking thought of the *Metaphysics.* But still, on an Aristotelian basis there is no possible way of ever reaching or knowing about such beings outside the world of nature, save in so far as they are causally connected with things in the natural world. And the metaphysical concepts and principles that we employ in order to understand and describe such transcendent beings arise only by abstraction from what we experience and are freed only in virtue of their analogous character from exclusive application to what we thus experience.

And yet even so, the thesis of Aristotelian empiricism may seem simply fantastic to modern readers. For by what possible empirical test or means of verification can one determine the truth or falsity of statements about substance, or about act and potency, or about formal and material causes, etc?

However, all such criticisms quite obviously proceed from a very different understanding of empiricism from the Aristotelian. And specifically, the difference would seem to center around the notion of the function of reason or intelligence in an empirical philosophy. Thus accustomed as we are to the perspective of modern positivism, we quite naturally think of "experience" as involving sense data on the one hand and reason on the other; and the rôle of reason is thought to be one of ordering or arranging these data in such ways as will enable us to talk about them and make predictions about them.

But in Aristotelian empiricism the rôle of reason is quite different. True, Aristotle is just as insistent as anyone that human knowledge can only be based on the data of sense. Nor would he,

like Socrates in the *Meno,* attribute to sense only the stimulus to knowledge, while suggesting that the reality which we actually come to know must lie outside the sense world altogether. No, for Aristotle that which we ultimately come to know and understand through intelligence is the very same thing that was originally presented to us in sensation. And yet, while it is only in sense experience that we come to know the *real,* it is only through our rational faculties that we come to *know* the real, in the sense of understanding it and knowing it for what it is. Hence for Aristotelianism the rational faculties do not have a mere ordering function with respect to sense data, but rather an actual descriptive function with respect to real things.

And having said this much, we must also say more. For it now becomes apparent that the distinction between Aristotelian empiricism and the more modern forms of empiricism goes far beyond a mere difference of opinion as to the respective rôles of sense and reason in empirical knowledge. Rather the real point of difference would seem to be that Aristotelian empiricism is not just an empiricism but also a realism. For Aristotle would consider that it was the task of knowledge to understand things as being and in their very being. But this means that things necessarily present themselves in experience as being either in themselves or as accidents of a substance, and as being what they are and having their own natures and essences, and as being able to change, in addition to being what they actually are, etc. Indeed, such are simply some of the senses in which things may be said to be and can only be understood as being.

On the other hand, in the critical perspective of modern positivism, and even to a certain extent of modern natural science itself, it is not the being of things that one is concerned with trying to understand. Instead, knowledge and understanding are thought to involve simply the discovery in sense data, or perhaps even the projection upon sense data, of certain intelligible types or patterns of order. However, merely to devise a pattern or order for events does not as such explain how such events can *be*. In consequence, the modern positivist tends to rule out all questions as to the being of things as irrelevant or even meaningless, and his resultant philosophical performance becomes a venture in empiricism minus realism.

Moreover, it is precisely the context of realism that provides the key to an understanding of Aristotelian logic, particularly in its contrast with modern mathematical logic. For Aristotelian logic is a thoroughly realistic, or, as the Scholastics would say, an "intentional" logic. What it proposes to investigate are the tools or instruments of knowledge—concepts, propositions, syllogisms, etc. And these tools are thought to be such that their whole being consists simply in their being adapted to the disclosure of being. Indeed, so completely are these logical entities given over to the intention or representation of what is or is real, that there can be no proper understanding of them in themselves without some understanding of what it is that they are fitted to represent—*viz.*, being. In this sense, then, Aristotelian logic necessarily presupposes metaphysics (as that which makes the peculiar nature of logical entities intelligible), just as in another sense, of course, metaphysics presupposes logic (as the *organon* or instrument of all knowledge, including the knowledge of being *qua* being). Thus, for example, concepts are thought of as instruments for getting at the "what" or essences of things. Propositions, in turn, are the means whereby we can grasp essences as they really *are* in things. And finally the syllogism, with its middle term, is but a device for disclosing the *causes* for things being, and being as they are.

In contrast, mathematical logic, so far from being concerned with instruments and devices for the intention of being, would rather seem concerned simply with exhibiting possible types of relation and ordered structure. Nor would it seem to make much difference whether one conceives of such relational patterns as being themselves real, or as being creatures of *a priori* analytic judgments, or as being mere logico-linguistic conventions; in any case, when such relational types or "logical molds" are put to use for purposes of acquiring scientific knowledge, they turn out to have only an ordering function with respect to sense data or events, and not an intentional function with respect to being.

Nor is such a consequence surprising from the Aristotelian point of view, so long as logic submits to the attraction of mathematics and tends to become simply a mathematical logic. For according to Aristotle, mathematics is to be contrasted with both physics (*i.e.* the philosophy of nature) and metaphysics, in that it considers its objects in abstraction from their being or existence. And further,

since these objects of mathematical investigation are not themselves intentions, like logical entities, but rather are only possible objects of such logical intention, it is little wonder that a so-called mathematical logic should hardly be appropriate for the representation and intention of the real, or even for representation and intention at all.

Finally, in passing from a consideration of the Aristotelian theoretical sciences, such as physics and metaphysics and even, in its own way, logic, to a consideration of the Aristotelian practical sciences of ethics and politics, we venture to suggest that even in this sphere the guiding principle for a right understanding of Aristotle is that same philosophical realism which we have made the central theme of our whole discussion.

And yet our thesis might seem at least initially much less plausible in this case. For while in the theoretical sciences the objective of the scientist is simply to see and describe the real, in the practical sciences the objective would seem to be, not to know the real as it is, but rather to make or do that which still has no being, but which merely might be or ought to be. Thus it is often said that ethics, for example, is concerned only with what ought to be, and not with what is. And from this it is often concluded that the proper subject matter of ethics is the ideal and not the real, and that the proper method of ethics could hardly, therefore, be one of empirical observation and description.

But such a conclusion would be thoroughly misleading if applied to Aristotelian ethics. For in an Aristotelian context, just as potentiality pervades the whole natural world, so also it is present in human nature. And this fact makes quite intelligible how a given human being might well be able to become more than he actually is, or how the very capacities of his nature might not have been brought to perfection or fully realized. Nor does it thus become intelligible merely how such a discrepancy between potency and actuality in the case of human beings can be; it also becomes intelligible how from an observation of human beings, one can come to recognize what the full perfection of human nature involves, as well as the extent to which given individuals either succeed or fail to attain such perfection.

And yet for all that, it might be objected that a practical science, even in Aristotle's eyes, is concerned with doing and making; and

what is done or made by human design could hardly be said to come about by nature. Instead, by its very definition it would seem to be something artificial.

However, Aristotle would undoubtedly want to make a distinction here. For while it is true that both the productions of human art and the perfecting of human nature require the intelligent, purposive agency of human beings, and hence do not result merely from the ordinary processes of nature, still there is a difference between the two cases. For art involves a making, and ethics involves a doing. And the difference between them is that the process of making anything results in a thing made which is other than its human artificer, and which as such is quite literally an artefact; on the other hand, the deeds and actions of a man result not in any extrinsic and independently existing artefact, but rather in the perfection of the man himself, *i.e.*, in the natural perfection of a natural being. In other words, whereas the end or goal of human life is achieved not just by the processes of nature, but rather as a result of human purpose and planning, still the end which is thus achieved is none other than that demanded by human nature itself.

In short, in matters ethical quite as much as in matters physical and metaphysical, the basic thrust of Aristotelianism as a philosophy is unmistakable. For it is ever the observed changes of the world of nature (and among them the behavior and actions that are within the control of human nature) which Aristotle takes as his primary data and which he seeks to make intelligible, and intelligible in their very being. Such, indeed, is the uncompromising realism that distinguishes Aristotelianism alike from the Heracliteanism and Parmenideanism of the ancient world, as well as from the critical positivism and the "metaphysics" of today.

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CHAPTER TEN

HELLENISTIC AND ROMAN SCHOOLS OF PHILOSOPHY

GORDON H. CLARK

SO GREAT was the genius of Plato and Aristotle that the Hellenistic age which followed them seems by contrast to be one of decadence. The impression is heightened by the political misfortunes of the Greek states, first weakened by the Peloponnesian war, next subjugated and united in the brief career of Alexander, and then abandoned to a century of miserable decay until Rome moved in.

The philosophy of the time, however, was not so dismal as the general picture. Even the disadvantage of a comparison with Aristotle does not obscure the originality and vigor of Epicurus (340-270 B.C.), Zeno (334-264 B.C.) and Chrysippus (277-206 B.C.); and when one remembers that only fragments, and no complete volumes of philosophy remain as witnesses of two centuries, it may be suspected that the intellectual life of the early Hellenistic age was far from dormant.

If the Presocratic period had a dominant interest in science, and if Plato and Aristotle gave their best efforts to epistemology, the later age may be said to be characterized by its attention to ethics. The rapidly darkening political scene and the loss of the optimistic faith in the Homeric deities pressed home the problem of personal living. How should a man conduct himself in this vale of tears—or if not of tears, at least of events beyond his control? What would the Wise Man do?

Two schools of Socratic inspiration, the Cynics and the Cyrenaics, were forerunners of the more important movements. The Cyrenaic motif is that nothing but the inward feelings of pleasure

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and pain are true or important. Pleasure is good and pain is evil. Convention and prejudice lead people to praise wealth or virtue, but nature teaches that only the feeling of the moment should be considered. The Cynics also repudiated the conventions of society for a life according to nature, but to them this meant a disregard of luxury and pleasure, an independence from wealth and possessions, and an acceptance of a sort of hobo-asceticism. The well-known stories about Diogenes of Sinope (413-327 B.C.) are illustrative. Although the members of these two schools may have had some elements of epistemological and cosmological theory, the intellectual foundations of their ways of life were too weak for permanence, and the main thrust of their recommendations had to receive a more stable basis at the hands of the Epicureans and Stoics.

The Epicureans

Zeno founded Stoicism and Epicurus launched his school at approximately the same time, 300 B.C.; both schools continued active for five centuries and faded from view under the brilliance of Neoplatonism. Since the Epicureans, instructed with catechetical fidelity, did not deviate from their master's doctrine, while the various Stoic writers show considerable variation, development, and originality, it is convenient to discuss Epicureanism first.

In common with Stoicism, Epicurus' main problem was to secure independence of the vicissitudes of time and to live contentedly in a disordered society. The scholar's devotion to speculative truth, unless with Spinoza's geometrical ethics it led to blessedness, was a disappointing ideal. We have but one life to live: we must make the best of it. To promote happiness, therefore, is the sole aim of philosophy.

Happiness, unlike Aristotle's meaning of the term, consists in pleasure; but unlike the thoughtless Cyrenaics also, pleasure is not defined as momentary sensual stimulation, but rather as the absence of pain. To be sure, the pleasures of licentiousness are not bad: "No pleasure is a bad thing in itself, but the means which produce some pleasures bring with them disturbances many times greater than the pleasures." "If the things that produce the pleasures of profligates could dispel the fears of the mind about the phenomena of the sky and death and its pains, and also teach the limits of desires and of pains, we should never have cause to blame them."

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The happy life, therefore, is not one of physical pleasure only but also and more so of a tranquil mind.

Since these things are true and their opposites are false, the Epicureans had to construct the outlines of an epistemology, here omitted. And for similar reasons their ethical theory could not dispense with physics and the other traditional divisions of philosophy. To avoid frustration, one must understand the limits that the universe sets. This does not mean that every detail of physics is important. The exact motions of the sun and the planets and whether the moon is self-luminous or shines with a borrowed light are obscure matters that do not affect our pleasure. What is needed is a general cosmology that will banish superstitious fears.

According to Epicurus and his faithful expositor Lucretius (94-55 B.C.), the chief cause of human misery is religion. Because of religion men have committed impious deeds of sacrifice; because of ignorance they fear death; and because of superstition they fear divine punishments after death. To live in contentment, therefore, it is necessary to accept as one's first and basic principle the proposition that "nothing is ever begotten out of nothing by divine power." To implement this principle Lucretius describes a world that has resulted, not from any purpose, but from the collisions of atoms in empty space. He goes to some length in giving a materialistic explanation of mind, of soul, of sensation, and the phenomena of life. With this theory he aims to show how groundless is the fear of death and divine punishment. Since sensation, feeling, pleasure, and pain pertain to living bodies, and since the life or soul is itself a collection of atoms, the event of death is merely the dispersion of the atoms. The collection that had been the self no longer exists and can therefore no longer feel. "Accustom thyself to believe that death is nothing to us . . . A right understanding that death is nothing to us makes the mortality of life enjoyable, not by adding to life an illimitable time, but by taking away the yearning after immortality. . . . Foolish, therefore, is the man who says he fears death, not because it will pain him when it comes, but because it pains him in the prospect. Whatsoever causes no annoyance when it is present, causes only a groundless pain in the expectation. Death, therefore, the most awful of all evils, is nothing to us, seeing that, when we are, death is not come, and, when death is come, we are not."

Not the cause perhaps of so much actual misery as religion, but theoretically as evil is the theory of naturalistic necessitarianism, destiny, or fate. The legends of the gods offer some faint hope that we may prosper if we observe the rituals, but necessity or fate, deaf to all entreaties, destroys moral responsibility, makes praise and blame meaningless, and leaves nothing under our control. One might at first think that the Epicureans with their materialistic, atomistic, ateleological physics would defend rather than repudiate mechanical necessity. But strange to say they took human freedom as a fact to which physics must be made to conform. Man is free; man is composed of atoms; therefore atoms are free. A great deal of the time they move because of the force and direction of colliding bodies; but sometimes they move spontaneously, for no cause at all. If this were not so, not only would human freedom be impossible, the world itself would be impossible. At first all the atoms were falling straight down in the infinite void; since there was neither medium nor friction, they fell at one speed and could not collide; to produce a world one or more atoms had to swerve from the straight course; and the resulting collision and vortices eventually produced this world of things and free men. Accordingly "we must remember that the future is neither wholly ours nor wholly not ours, so that neither must we count upon it as quite certain to come nor despair of it as quite certain not to come."

Of lesser importance but of wider popularity are the detailed practical maxims that Epicurus gave for everyday life. Some of them are pointed denials of Stoic teaching. Hatred, envy, and contempt are evil and irrational motives. The wise man will not fall in love, nor will he marry and raise a family unless special circumstance make it prudent to do so. He will feel gratitude towards friends and show it by word and deed. He will not take part in politics, become a mendicant, or commit suicide, though not all of these sins are equal. Illness, and even torture, will not destroy the happiness of the wise man, for "continuous pain does not last long in the flesh; on the contrary, pain, if extreme, is present a very short time, and even that degree of pain which barely outweighs pleasure in the flesh does not last for many days together. Illnesses of long duration even permit of an excess of pleasure over pain in the flesh." And tranquillity of mind is more important than pleasure or pain in the flesh.

The Stoics

After Zeno had founded Stoicism, Cleanthes presided over the school (264-232 B.C.), and then Chrysippus in a term of twenty-six years (232-206 B.C.) reorganized the movement, systematized its doctrine, and greatly increased its influence. Two men of the middle period should be mentioned for establishing Stoicism in Rome: Panaetius of Rhodes (180-110? B.C.), and Posidonius (130-50? B.C.). Roman Stoicism is chiefly exemplified in Seneca (4 B.C.-A.D. 65), Epictetus (50-130), and the emperor Marcus Aurelius (121-180).

That the Stoic temper differs radically from the Epicurean, giving rise to the English connotations of those adjectives, may be seen first in some of the detailed advice for everyday living. For example, the Stoic wise man will take part in politics (in fact, Stoicism both directly and indirectly contributed to Roman law); he will marry and raise a family; he will not groan under torture, and in general he will suppress emotion as irrational, neither showing pity nor as a magistrate relaxing the penalties fixed by law; and, since one falsehood is just as false as any other, it follows that all sins are equally great, and all men who are not perfectly wise are arrant knaves. However, if life grows too burdensome, he may commit suicide.

The Epicurean withdrawal from political and domestic obligations in favor of an easygoing avoidance of trouble and the Stoic acceptance of social responsibility both spring from the common search for happiness. But the search led the two schools in opposite directions partly because the Stoics had the more vivid, realistic, and even pessimistic view of the evils of life. Most men are vicious fools. Only a few, and these in their old age, attain wisdom. These wise men have all the virtues; the others have none at all, for there are no degrees in virtue: one who drowns in a foot of water is just as dead as if he had drowned in a hundred. Since wisdom and foolishness, virtue and vice, happiness and misery are mutually exclusive and incompatible, there can be no gradual progress in morality. A man becomes wise instantaneously by a total transformation of his character. The history of the school shows a tendency to tone down the rigor of some of these particularities, but in all its course Stoicism remained more rigorous than any of its rivals.

The good life, the life of a wise man, is a life according to nature. Not everything in nature is according to nature; there are Cynics, Epicureans, and the feebleminded. These diverge from type. The nature to follow is the universal nature, rational nature, human nature, for reason in man is essentially the same as reason in the universe.

To desire the moon is irrational. Frustration, the disappointment of desire, can be avoided by governing desire. "Require not things to happen as you wish, but wish them to happen as they do." "Some things are under our control, while others are not under our control. Under our control are thinking, choice, desire, aversion, and, in a word, everything that is our own doing; not under our control are our body, our property, reputation, office, and, in a word, everything that is not our own doing." Since our bodies are not under our control, pleasure is not a good and pain is not an evil. There is the famous story about Epictetus, the slave. As his master was torturing his leg, he said with great composure, "You will certainly break my leg." When the bone broke, he continued in the same tone of voice, "Did I not tell you that you would break it?" The good life, therefore, does not consist of externalities, but it is an inward state, a strength of will, and self-control. As Marcus Aurelius says, "Everything is opinion, and opinion is in your power. Suppress your opinion when you wish, and like a ship that rounds the cape, you will find calm, everything still, and a waveless bay."

Inasmuch as the Stoics interpret their slogan "a life according to nature" to mean "a life according to reason," thus using reason to connect human nature with universal nature, they might be expected to take a less pessimistic view of the extent of human depravity. And in fact they are optimists. For them the universe is rational in all its details.

"All things intertwine one with another, and the bond is sacred, . . for the cosmos, composed of all things, is one, and there is one God who pervades all things. . . ." "Universal nature initiated the formation of the cosmos. Since that time, either every event occurs as a consequence, or else [an impossibility] even the most important matters, on which the universal spirit bestows its particular attention, are irrational."

The seeming inconsistency arises from assuming that a world perfect and rational in its entirety cannot contain factors which,

viewed in themselves and apart from the whole, are evil. No doubt most men are knaves, but it is as irrational to make a beautiful world without vice as it is to paint a great picture without dark colors. This pessimistic view of mankind is therefore consistent with a universal optimism, just as the more superficial optimism of the Epicureans has the pessimistic background of a purposeless materialism.

The Stoics, too, were materialists, for nothing is real that does not occupy space. It is interesting to note that Plato in the *Sophist* had argued: materialism is false because virtues exist. The Stoics reply: virtues exist, therefore they are bodies. Materialists they professed to be, but their physics was neither atomistic nor ateleological. Under the inspiration of Heraclitus, they composed their universe of an eternal, intelligent fire. This fire, reason, or God permeates everything, so that—and this follows also from the fact that virtue is a body—two bodies occupy the same place at the same time in a "complete mixture." With this go theories of space, of growth, and logical theories of expression and meaning that ill accord with materialism; and it may be surmised that their attempts to account for the nonmaterial factors of the universe prepared for their eclipse in the later light of Neoplatonic spiritualism.

However that may be, God or Reason permeates and controls every thing and every event. The world and its history are governed by Fate. Logic as well as physics supports this position. Every proposition, *e.g.*, Scipio will capture Numantia, is either true or false. If it is true, the event must happen; and if it is false, it cannot possibly happen. Opponents of determinism argue that if everything is fated, there is no use in exerting oneself, for the event will happen anyway. The Stoics, insistent on moral exertion, reply that Scipio will not take Numantia *any way,* but in one way only; for it is true not merely that he will take Numantia but that he will take it by marching his army against its walls and laying down a siege.

The opponents, now forced to admit that exertion may be predetermined, continue by asserting that determinism is incompatible with responsibility. If a man can do only what is fated and has no free choice, he can neither be praised nor blamed, and the concepts of good and evil become meaningless. The answer to this objection may be found in the Stoics' strong insistence on the power of voli-

tion. Volition may not be "free," but volition exists and some things are in our power. Perhaps it is fated that I shall irrationally desire the moon. Then I must choose to desire it, and I am evil. Or it may be fated that I shall desire wisdom. I choose it then, and I am virtuous. These things are in my power or choice in a way that a thunderstorm or a broken leg is not in my power. They are, therefore, to be referred to their proximate cause: my will, or, me. Thus determinism does not make good and evil meaningless, nor does it destroy responsibility. What it does is to reject the freedom of irrationality and to base responsibility on volition.

Skeptics and Academy

Both the Epicureans and Stoics were dogmatists; that is, they believed that truth could be had and that they had it. During this Hellenistic age there was also a group of skeptics: men who knew they had found no truth and who were certain that there was none to be found. Some of the more important names are Pyrrho (365-275 B.C.), Arcesilaus (315-240 B.C.), Carneades (219-129 B.C.), Aenesidemus (between 80 B.C. and A.D. 130), and Sextus Empiricus (*c.* 200 A.D.).

Although Pyrrho was a contemporary of Epicurus and Zeno, it was a century and more later, when the epistemology of these two schools had been well examined, that Skepticism became more prominent. Plato, in opposition to the skepticism which the Sophists deduced from Presocratic science, had founded the possibility of knowledge on an intellectual intuition of supersensible Ideas. Aristotle also, even though he gave a fundamental rôle to sensation, had his abstract Forms and Active Intellect. In reaction the Epicureans and Stoics based all knowledge on sensory images. In particular, the Stoics, admitting that it is often possible to confuse real images with fancies, or accurate images with inadequate distortions, asserted that there is one type of image, the "comprehensive representation," that forces our assent to it and about which we cannot be mistaken. This is the criterion of truth.

The skeptics of this age with some help from the earlier Sophists riddled this theory, and modern skeptics have found little to add to their arguments.

There exists no criterion of truth, they maintained, either in sense or reason, for if the alleged criterion is a special type of

image, it would have to assure us that it was this type and at the same time inform us of the nature of its object. But no specific differences can be discerned among images. Images in dreams are as real to us while we are dreaming as sense images are when we are awake, and, since we can dream we are pinching ourselves to see whether we are awake, it is impossible to know whether we are dreaming now or not. Then, too, we see Castor and think we see Pollux, which shows both that the same thing (Castor) can produce two images (at one time of Castor, at another of Pollux), and also that two things (the twins) can produce the same image. There is, therefore, no criterion in sense, and if reason is based on sensation, no criterion can be found in reason either.

There are other arguments. Animals have organs that differ from men's, and they sense differently. Why then should we assume that our senses better reveal nature than those of a dog or a fish? Even among men there are notably different reactions to the same object; and for that matter the senses of any individual contradict one another. Further, we see objects as they appear to us and in a particular surrounding; no object is ever isolated; with the result that every object is known only in and by its relations, and nothing is ever known as it really is in itself.

And, finally, all science is based on hypotheses. To prove an hypothesis, one must have recourse to another, and so on to infinity. Or, to escape an infinite regress, one may go around in a circle. Or, to escape the circle, one may make an initial assumption—an elaborate form of begging the question. Truth, therefore, is impossible.

But there is a difficulty. The Epicureans and Stoics had pursued logic and physics as means to the good life. Now, if nothing is true, is it not just as good to sift arsenic on one's cake as powdered sugar? There is the amusing story of the skeptic who taught that "it makes no difference." One day he jumped back quickly to avoid a collision with a four horse chariot. His disciples chided him because of his inconsistency—he should not have jumped back because it made no difference. "On the contrary," he replied; "I jumped back because it made no difference."

In words a skeptic may profess suspension of judgment, but the ordinary activity of living, or of committing suicide for that matter, shows that a judgment has in fact been made. Accordingly

the skeptics advised conformity to convention—why be an iconoclast if it is not true that idolatry is wrong? Or, they went a little further and posited "the reasonable," or "the probable" as a practical criterion. Carneades is credited with escaping the difficulty with a thoroughgoing skeptical solution. Men act for no reason at all; it is not a question of truth and knowledge; action springs from natural urges and does not require an opinion. On the other hand Carneades is also said to have advised "the preferable." It then becomes a problem to pass from what is doubtful, uncertain, or even untrue, to what is preferable or probable.

It was on this point that St. Augustine later centered his famous argument for truth. If it is possible to arrive at a probability or at an approximation to truth, there must be true knowledge of the principles of probability and a true judgment by which to determine approximation.

The New Dogmatism

The despite in which the Epicureans were popularly held and the eclectic deterioration of the Stoics contributed to the prominence if not the dominance of skepticism just before the beginning of our era. But the heart of man, not to mention the mind of man, cannot be satisfied with negativism, suspension of judgment, and indifference to life. Dogmatism, therefore, was bound to revive.

The first of these dogmatic stirrings was Neopythagoreanism. During Plato's life-time the original school disintegrated, though the Orphic cults in Italy seemed to have retained some memory of earlier days. By 100 B.C., however, there was an active revival, setting in motion some three centuries of writing and teaching. The names of most of the writers are unknown (P. Nigidius Figulus was a friend of Cicero, and Sotion lived in the reign of Augustus), and none of them is philosophically eminent. Nor is the theory of the school thoroughly unified. The individual authors wander in different directions and incorporate into the general Platonic background various elements from the Stoics and the Peripatetics.

The unit and the dyad, identified as form and matter, were their basic principles, but some taught that the unit was the moving cause and God, while others, anticipating Plotinus, placed the One above all motion. Although they paid serious attention to mathe-

matics, their interest centered in a mystical and metamathematical symbolism that cannot be much more than a curiosity today. But they seem to have made one innovation which adds coherence to Platonism, and which, independently thought out by Philo Judaeus (30 B.C.-45 A.D.) and accepted by Plotinus (204-270), made the Platonic philosophy seem favorable to Christianity. In the *Timaeus* Plato himself posited three eternal and independent principles: the Ideas, the Demiurge, and Space. This arrangement makes the Demiurge, *i.e.*, the maker of the universe or God, inferior to and bound by the Ideas. A Hebrew or Christian monotheist could not accept such a view, and within paganism the urge to some form of monism was too strong to find it comfortable. The Neopythagoreans, though the historical evidence is not too clear, seem to have been the first to derive their Numbers from God. Thus the Ideas become the thoughts of God, the contents of the Divine Mind, and so philosophic unity is combined with divine supremacy.

Plutarch, (50-120 A.D.) also, though not a Neopythagorean, contributed to the revival of Platonism. He was not a philosopher of the first class, but he was an extremely well educated and representative man of his time. His literary production was voluminous, and he suffers from the injustice of achieving popularity by his *Lives* rather than by his philosophical, religious, and moral discourses.

In opposition to the Neopythagoreans, who took Plato's account of the formation of the world to be a pedagogical device expressing in temporal terms what is really a logical relationship, Plutarch interpreted Plato to mean that the world had a first moment. To this end he exegetes the *Timaeus* in detail. A great deal of his motivation comes from the problem of evil, and he selects certain Platonic passages for emphasis. Since God is good, Plato is right in saying that he cannot be the cause of everything. To explain evil it is necessary to assume an independent, evil principle. In the *Politicus* the great catastrophe that occurs when God lets go the rudder of the universe cannot have been caused by a neutral matter (though Plato seems to say so); and in the *Laws* there is a definite allusion to an evil world-soul. This type of dualism, Plutarch notes, is the more plausible because all philosophers, however much they praised monism, were forced to concede a plurality of principles.

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As the goodness and transcendence of God are accentuated, Plutarch finds it necessary to supply mediators to preserve God from defiling contact with a wicked world. By this device he could support the popular religion of his day and point the way to a happy, a blessed life. Man is composed of body, soul, and reason. When death frees the soul from the body, the soul together with the reason journeys to the moon, there to function as a mediator-demon. But as reason is superior to the soul, there occurs in the moon a second death by which reason is freed, and, leaving the soul in the moon, it returns to its source and home, the sun.

With Plutarch this chapter must close. Peripateticism, the school that Aristotle founded, in this age was of minor importance. Other material is more literary and cultural than strictly philosophical. There are also the curious religious tractates of Hermes Trismegistus (written by different authors at different times, *circa* 150 A.D.), but these depend in part on Christian as well as mystical sources. The next part of the main story therefore is the Alexandrian philosophy.

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CHAPTER ELEVEN

ALEXANDRIAN PHILOSOPHY

EUGEN KULLMANN

NEOPLATONIC philosophy will be considered in the following as an attempt to give the sum of Greek thought at the turning point of the epochs. This attitude toward a synthesis not only originates from the general trend of Hellenism, but it is also in conformity with the course of Greek philosophy itself. To understand the meaning of the Neoplatonic Way requires the background whence this philosophy emerges, transmitting a great many issues to the ages to come.

Three complexes of thought intertwined have helped in moulding the Neoplatonic system: Unity as in the selfsame source; Unity as in tensed participation; Unity as in a continuous movement. Neoplatonism as a form of thinking is an ever possible adventure of the mind to reduce the apparent differences, without eliminating them, into a Unity, with which they are gradually connected: *Ex Uno Plura.*

A. Thematic Background

I. Unity as in the Selfsame Source

Confidence in Being as ever abiding in spite of the surging appearances is the characteristic attitude of the Pre-Socratics. Being is the All encompassing One. There is nothing beyond it, nothing whereinto Being could change. It is not limited but by itself. It is infinitely finite. What is experienced as contradictory has its common principle beyond the reach of perceptual experience. Whatever is thus experienced is by a relative negation: this is so and not so. Being simply is. Whatever epithets are ascribed to it are but marks

to signalize it, yet they do not cover Being. In symbols only it may be betokened, or in a symbol of symbols, like the *Apeiron* (Infinite) of Anaximander (6th cent. B.C.) and the *Logos* (the comprising comprehensive sense) of Heracleitus (536-470 B.C.). Even this has been renounced by Parmenides (6th-5th cent. B.C.), leaving the symbols to the attributes of Being; whereas Being is beyond even a symbolic representation.

II. *Unity as in Tensed Participation*

Plato (428-7-348 B.C.) goes farther. Being is not the ultimate. Being is caused by the idea of the Good, he announced not without a feeling of amazement in the *Republic* (509 b): "The Good is not only the author of knowledge to all things known, but of their being and yet the Good is not Being, but far exceeds Being in dignity and power." Being is no more the *arche,* the principal source, but becomes issued by an *arche* which as highest idea is beyond the reach of Being. Strangely enough, Plato attributes being to the ideas, yet the coordinating idea of the Good leaves even Being behind. This makes the dialectic of the ideas and Being, as discussed in a series of antinomies in the dialogue *Parmenides.* The case concerns the primacy either of the Idea or of Being, and Plato hardly arrives at a positive conclusion. These deliberations of the *Parmenides* are frequently commented upon by Plotinus (204-270 A.D.). To overcome the antinomies and, of course, also from out of his "Weltgefühl" Plotinus holds that the One is beyond Being— this would be the Platonic conception—yet also above all Good. The Platonic dialectic between the intelligible and the sensible as being by participation in the former, was one starting point to Plotinus for his own adventure into the *Epekeina* (Beyond), so deeply inherent in man.

III. *Unity as in a Continuous Movement*

A substitution somehow of the idea of the Good seems to be the Aristotelian *Telos* (the Turning End), being already related to the Good by Plato (*Gorgias,* 499 e). The continual motion toward the *Telos* renders the whole a gradation from the lower to the higher, which is the relative *Telos* of its respective lower component and moves in turn toward a yet higher *Telos.* The highest *Telos* as "Pure Form" is not involved in any sort of movement, yet it

moves everything, being lovingly desired by everything (Aristotle *Metaphysics,* 1072 B). Thus the *Telos* being "Thinking of Thinking" (*ib.*) establishes just by being what it is the continuity of motion from the things toward it. For the Neoplatonic concept of a continuous "Shining forth" from the "One" to the "One" through the interconnected spheres this has become of great significance. Moreover, Plotinus' theory of the *Nous* (Mind) fills the Aristotelian *Nous* with the Platonic ideas. The Plotinian terminology is greatly indebted to Aristotle and this has its systematic reason. The same is to be said concerning the Aristotelian manner of *pragmateia* (treating a subject-matter in a gradual approach to its meaning), largely adopted by Plotinus.

B. *Early Neoplatonism*

I. *Neopythagorean Trend*

The great bearing which the teachings of the Pythagoreans (reputed founder, Pythagoras, 6th cent. B.C.) had on Plato is obvious from such Dialogues as *Gorgias, Phaedo* and *Timaeus.* The old Plato, in whom several momentous tendencies toward the Neoplatonic approach can be found, was to a large extent a Pythagorean, who was inclined to transform the theories of ideas and soul into the Pythagorean scheme of numbers. His concept of the *Monos* (Oneness) and "*Dyos*" (Twoness) as positive and negative poles in antithetic tension exerted a great influence on the Neoplatonic outlook and were among the factors gradually elaborating the Neoplatonic Way as one of a Unity over a duality.

II. *The "Alexandrian World-Scheme": Philo*

Philo (20 B.C.-50) sees philosophy centered on *Theologia,* pointing out that what theology wants to account for is "beyond Oneness," thereby unknowable. He raises the problem of how the "Infinite God" could be mediated in the finite. The "ideas" which are *dynameis* (powers) are those mediating agencies related (by Philo) to the Biblical "angels" (messengers). Another mediator is the Biblical *Ruach* (*Pneuma, i.e.,* the breathing spirit in the Septuagint) which is understood to be the All-permeating *Logos* (Heracleitus, *Stoa!*). The *Logos* is the "place" of the ideas. Most distant from God is matter. Due to this distance, especially felt in the

human soul, there is a longing for a "union" with "God-Oneness and -Beyond Oneness" in an *ekstasis,* where the soul would "stand out from herself" and thus thinking would be no more with its division into thinker and thought. The ascent culminates in this *unio mystica,* as depicted by Philo and Plotinus, who probably was familiar with Philo's thought.

III. Plutarch   48-doC: 125

That the distance from the "Oneness" to the many may result in an almost antithetic conception of the universe—owing to ethical implications—we learn from Plutarch (48-125). But he also knows a neutralized third force in between matter. Mediation is ever characteristic of Neoplatonic philosophy. The extreme to the One Good God is the Evil World Soul. Here Plutarch follows a suggestion by the old Plato (*Laws,* 896 e) that the Evil in our soul is due to the Evil World Soul. Whatever is destructive in nature comes from it.

Even as *Theologia* was the consummation of philosophy for Philo so likewise was it for Plutarch. To him "to philosophize together" means "to be human(e) together" and thus to step up from the lower to the most high.

IV. Numenius

A man of the second century, Numenius was considered by some people of the third century to have anticipated to some extent the philosophy of Plotinus. His thinking seems to center on the *Timaeus.* Accordingly, he assumes a trinity in the divine order. The "First God" is the Good and as "Thinking of Thinking" the *arche* of Being. The "demiurgic" Second God is Good by participation in the First, shaping the formless matter eternal after the pre-existent paradeigmatic ideas, as contained in the First and thus the principle of Becoming. His product, the World, is the "Third God," even as Plato at the conclusion of the *Timaeus* had called this "kosmos" "somewhat like a visible God." Momentous is the manifoldness of ideas as already contained in the "First God." How can the principle of the many be already in the One? This was a question which stimulated Plotinus.

C. Plotinian Philosophy

I. Ammonius Saccas

Ammonius, "the sackbearer" (175-242), is traditionally said to have been the inaugurator of Neoplatonism in the stricter sense of a school. Like Socrates he would talk to those who joined him in pondering on Heaven and Earth. He did not write, nor had he been anyone's student. One of his intentions, we are told, was to reconcile Aristotle with Plato: how the material could be combined with the *Eidos* (forming principle) without the latter losing its independent essence. How could this ever have been possible? And, if so, what conclusions should be drawn? This twofold quest in the one proposition outlines our summary of Plotinus. The "How" implies the eternal history of the universe, how the "One" abiding in itself is stepping down. This is the *egressus,* the first half—and as some Plotinian scholars hold "the greater half" of the story. The second then: This being so, what does it mean to me? How can I, a single one, a lonely soul return to my homeland? This is the "Way Up."

II. The Life of Plotinus

The life of Plotinus, as described by his disciple the Tyrian Melekh (his Greek name: Porphyry [233-300]), reflected his philosophy. He would never talk about his family or country; he seemed to be ashamed of being in the body—so Porphyry has recorded. When Amelius, his favorite disciple, once asked him, if he would consent to sit to a painter, he replied so piercingly: "Is it not enough to have to bear the image in which nature has wrapped me, without consenting to perpetuate the image of an image, as if it were worth contemplating?"—As in the "Allegory of the Den" a twilight is hovering on the Plotinian road from light to light.

Plotinus was born at Lykopolis in Upper Egypt about 204. Having gone through the public school of his town, he continued his education in Alexandria, attended lectures on philosophy, but was disappointed by them, until he found, at the age of 28, Ammonius, "the man, I was looking for" (as he later told his disciples). He studied with him for ten years. After the death of Ammonius, Plotinus joined the Emperor Gordianus in his expedition against

Persia. He intended to get more directly familiar with the wisdom of the Iranians and perhaps of the Brahmans, of which he had heard already much talk in Alexandria, the eastern metropolis in those ages. In Mesopotamia the Emperor was assassinated and Plotinus managed to reach Rome in 244. Plato had made his journey to Egypt and three journeys to Sicily while Plotinus turned Eastward only to arrive in the West!

In Rome he met Amelius, who studied with him 24 years, and became a friend of Emperor Gallienus (reign, 253-268) and his wife Salonina. Shy by nature, he was a beloved teacher to his students and a devoted guardian to orphans.

Together with his friends he would read and discuss the classic writings of Greek philosophy and also those of contemporaries, always with special reference to Plato and Aristotle. He would encourage them not to refrain from interrupting his lectures by raising worthwhile objections; then he would show the point in its context with the subject-matter. He meditated while he was lecturing. To philosophize meant to him mutual meditation, but above all a silent conversation of the "Single One" with the "Single One" (*Enneads* VI, 9, 11, 51 ed. by Bréhier). Shortly after the Emperor's death, he left Rome for a country house of one of his students in Campania, where in his younger years he once had planned a model town "Platonopolis," designed after the *Republic*. Gradually his delicate health was failing and he realized the symptoms of final departure. His friend and physician Eustochius was sent for. When he had arrived, the gentle nature of Plotinus was just given to say these words of welcome and farewell: "I was waiting for you, that you might help to bring the Divine in me to the Divine in the All."

His biographer has preserved for us these words of the Plotinian way of life, as he has also arranged the lectures of his master and published them in six books, each containing nine essays, hence *Enneades, i.e.,* "Ninenesses." Plotinus had started writing some of his treatises, when already fifty years old. Being engaged in renewed meditating he never revised them, a fact which is manifest to those who seriously study the difficult *Enneads* in the original. The subject-matter of the first book is mainly ethics, of the second "physics," of the third metaphysics. The fourth book concerns the soul, the fifth the Mind, the sixth the One and its spheres.

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III. The Plotinian Philosophy

a. The Egressus

1) The "One"

You cannot say: The "One" is. Even its "Oneness" is perhaps only accidental (*En.* VI, 8, 11). It is the last unconditioned, whither we arrive questioning backward. It is absolutely simple, a selfsameness of possibility and actuality and yet beyond both. Beyond any possible differentiation, it thinks not, for thinking, even as "Thinking of Thinking" implies a distinction,—thus Plotinus argued against Aristotle (*En.* VI, 7, 37). It is what it is, its own cause. Hence it is free, whereby this unconditional freedom is its absolute necessity. This Freedom-Necessity Plotinus calls in a metaphoric way *Bulesis* (Rational Will, *En.* VI, 8, 21, 14). It wills ever itself. It is, as the Parmenidean "Being," "One, unshakeable, ever perfect." Yet it is beyond its "Oneness." Identical with itself it is at one together, "good" in this absolute sense. All this, Plotinus implies, is metaphoric transference of a *logos* (meaningful word) to an unwordable. His successors stressed this still more emphatically.

2) Nous and Ideas

The "One" "willing itself" is its own revelation. This "will to itself" "ever producing itself" is the *Nous,* "ever productive thinking" of an "ever productive thinking," the latter being the ideas. The "One" with its "consciousness" through the *Nous* in the "mirror" of the ideas is the *Aion* (the "Ever"). The *Nous* in its fullness of the ideas is the eternal logical presence of what successively shines forth and thus constitutes *Chronos* (Time). Eternity and Time do not have different contents but they are what they are in the order of either a static "coexistence" or a dynamic "subexistence." To describe somewhat analogically the "Ever" in its *Eklampsis* (Shining forth) and the *Eidola* (images) thereof (*En.* IV, 5, 7, 61) on the temporal screen, to betoken the oscillations from yonder to here, Plotinus applies and elaborates the "Five Categories" of Plato's *Sophist* (pp. 255 *sqq.*), namely "Essence," "Difference," "Identity," "Motion" and "Rest," adding consequently

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as the sixth category the *Nous,* their supporting principle (*En.* V, 1, 4). This issue of the "categories" as some other topics in Plotinus is not, however, without inconsistencies.

3) *Psyche*

What is the cause of this Temporal? In the intelligible cosmos, *i.e.,* the *nous,* there is not only a distinction between thinking and its object as its explication, but these "ideas" are *paradeigmata* (models) of the sensible things. Their manifoldness has its principle in the intelligible world. Moreover, these ideas are *dynameis* (powers), as Philo taught. Why can the ideas be the moving forces of the sensible world? Because they are besouled, and the Soul is the principle of motion (so conceived from Thales [6th cent. B.C.] on). The ideas have two countenances, one reflected to the *Nous,* the other eternally moving toward the infinitely indefinite void. And the totality of these faces turned downward, the light in its back and night indifferent beneath, is the Universal Soul. Still contained in her ideal home, the Universal Soul shines forth her borrowed light like the moon (*En.* V, 6, 4, 17). Looking back to the pure actuality of the *Nous* she receives the ideas thereof and after this *Eikon* (primordial image) she actuates forming the void matter. Thus the Universal Soul is extending into a twofold direction, in receptive contemplation toward the higher she is *Psyche* in the pregnant sense; as forming power irresistibly moving toward the potentially lower she is *Physis,* productive Soul. From the *Psyche* the Gods emanate; from the *Physis* the daimons. Thus Plotinian theology interpreted popular religion.

The Universal Soul mediates between what is Eternity and what becomes Time (III, 7, 13). Extending herself, she leaves her "shadow" behind (IV, 3, 9, 45 *sqq.*) and this is "Space." There is no absolute Space; space is a function of the Universal Soul. Ever being what it is (*ib.*) the Universal Soul moving on, evolves Time, which is potentially as infinite as the actual march of the Soul.

Each void touched by the Universal Soul is her offspring. There are countless individuations of the Universal Soul, to which all the many are related. Such an effluescence is the individual Soul, her miniature issue, the *psyche* in it turned to the heights, the *physis* in it acting toward matter.

4) *Hulē*

"Matter" (*hulē*) is the last step downward (I, 8, 7). It is ever related to the Universal Soul and thus indirectly to the "One." The "One" would not be, what it is, were matter left alone (II, 9, 3). Matter is receptive, as Plato and Aristotle had assumed. The Soul moving toward the potential matter may impose on it any form the Soul desires. Matter is all-transformable. Thus matter in itself would be a negative infinity. As such, matter is not, since it is ever contacted by the rays of the "good infinity," the "transfinite" "One." Matter in the strict sense is *Asomaton* (bodiless, *En.* III, 6, 7). To state the paradox: Matter is immaterial; it is, strictly speaking, only as an "idea of matter" in the intelligible world, an idea of what cannot be. Here Plotinus continues Parmenides' "Being of the 'Non-Being,'" following the Democritean and Platonic identification of this "Non-Being" with the "Void."

As the remotest from the "One," matter is thus the remotest from the "Good." "Good" is the will to self-limitation. This was the Platonic tradition, especially from the *Philebus.* Matter as formless, indefinite, is so, owing to the "absence of the Good" (II, 4, 16). This is "Evil," not something actual, but "privation" from something (V, 9, 10). As the "One" is *apoion* (without a quality) so matter likewise. The "One," due to its "abundance," is a "peaceful well, never exhausted" (III, 8, 10). (The analogy of "emanation" is somewhat misleading for the Plotinian outlook.) Thus the "One" cannot be defined, being so rich. Matter in turn is "poverty" (V, 9, 10). From "abundance" to "poverty" this is the *egressus.*

Yet simultaneously the mediating powers move upward on the rungs of the cosmic ladder, longing in love for the yonder.

b. *The Regressus*

Whereas the eternal "way down" issues from the "One," the return is the response of a single soul only, who encounters the Universal Soul beaming in herself. It has been by the Universal Soul, that I have entered this sensible world; so by rightly using her part in me, I shall be able "to stand out of it" again. In analogy this possibility may be empathically transferred to all the many. Primarily, it is the most inward situation throughout the spheres, "Flight of the Single One to the Single One."

This thought significantly concludes the *Enneads*. Yet it is the "single One," the "God-Oneness" in me turned back to itself. Not an individual "existential" person, but a "divine part" is brought back to the whole in the intelligible world.

1) *In Action*

The *regressus* is possible indirectly and approximately by the *physis* of the Soul, in action. Immediately, however, it is by the *psyche* of the Soul, in contemplation.

Action is toward the world. Even ethical action hinders from purely contemplating the Divine. Action can at best be only a preparation as *katharsis* (purification), separating from matter's bondage. Plotinus is only conditionally interested in moral actions— whether they are of a positive influence on man in his society. This would concern transitoriness only, whereas the ascent concerns eternity. Only the Soul can be elevated. Her earthly ties cannot enter, from whence they did not actually arise. They have become, touched by the Soul. They decay, when no more ruled by the Soul. For the Soul has built her matter (and not is the Soul received by matter) which becomes only through the Soul's shining.

In connection with ethics, Plotinus deals somewhat sketchily with society and history. Everything is radiated, in the void refracted, and personal action dies out in the twilight. To be a person is a tragic attempt of the Soul to render matter sufficiently strong to respond conformably to her claim. Thus dwelling in the dusk, the Soul nostalgically adventures to fly on the rays toward the light of her Source.

2) *In Contemplation*

The goal of contemplation is to understand the "One." Its relative form is sensation. Since the Soul does not perceive points, but things as configurations, the Soul has the faculty of uniting the manifoldness of a sensible thing. Those sensations are reflected by the individual Soul and this "bending back" (*En.* I, 4, 10) is "consciousness." Even as the external thing as objective being is lit up by the world soul, so, likewise, the sensible thing subjectively is "relit" by the individual soul. To know is to reproduce. Logic is ontological.

In "reflection" the continuity occurs between sensation and

thinking. Thinking is a wandering from the many to the "One" by an intuitive comprehension of the whole ladder of light. Thinking is toward what is in the light—and this is the *kalon* (beauty). Hence there is more than "aesthetic" meaning of "beauty" (*En.* 1, 6) in Plotinus' metaphysics of cognition. Only the "beautiful" soul will visualize "beauty." The artist having perceived an idea in its light, wanting to express it outwardly, must fall short. As the soul is finally to fail in the world here, so, too, the artist will fall short. The "Void" refracts the shining beauty. Only in a "clair-obscure" may beauty be suggested. Accordingly, one could dare to say: The best works of art are those not created externally.

The greatest and highest contemplation is that *theoria* which acts upon what it contemplates (III, 8, 3) toward the transfinite "ONE" Then all things become a *parergon theorias* (an incidental work of contemplation, *En.* III, 8, 8). He who has contemplated the "one" shies from talking about it and reveres it in *euphemia* and in *siope* (due silence, *En.* III, 8, 4, 3). This *theoria* (vision of the Divine) may reach its peak, when "consciousness" is glowing back in the "One" and is burned away in it. This is *ekstasis* (VI, 7, 35). At times Plotinus was granted this anticipation of Eternity— so we are told by Porphyry. The "One" has been devolved into the "One."

D. Proclus [*posterior a S. Agustín!*]

Proclus (410-485), born in Constantinople, was the head of the Athenian Academy which had for 915 years been the living monument for Plato until, in 529, the Emperor Justinian had ordered it closed. Proclus considered himself to be simply a Platonist, as did Plotinus. The subtle architect of what later was called "Neoplatonism," he made this "cyclical *energeia*" (his term), the foundation of his system. He points out (*Elements of Theology,* ed. by Dodds, proposition 35): "Every effect remains within its cause (*Mone,* Remaining), then stands forth from it (*Prohodos,* Standing forth) and finally returns to it (*Epistrophe,* Return)."

This triadic scheme has often been compared with Hegel's triadic dialectic, "thesis, antithesis, synthesis," in which the "Universal Mind" unfolds itself. Neoplatonism is the background of "German Idealism." Mediaeval Philosophy cannot be understood without an appreciation of its Neoplatonic heritage.

Putting One "yonder," Proclus intended to suggest the "wholly otherness" of the "God-Oneness." The words of Berkeley (1685-1753): "Dwindling in sense and growing in expression," match the thought of Proclus. Philosophy becomes analogy, a breathing out into the realm of the awesome from whence it has begun:

"Yonder of Yonder! what else is it rightful to call Thee? . . .
Sole Unknowable Being, since Thou art the cause of all knowing.
All things existing, the speaking and speechless together, proclaim Thee.
All things existing, the knowing and nescient together, adore Thee.
All keen desires, all painful passions are yearnings
Only for Thee. To Thee prayeth the All; to Thee all,
Sensing Thy token within, utter a praise, which is silence. . . ."

(Proclus, *Hymn to God*)

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CHAPTER TWELVE

EARLY CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY

VERGILIUS FERM

THE HISTORIAN knows well that there has been no one Christian philosophy. There have been many called by that name. Even the sacred literature grown up unconsciously around Paul (d. *c.* 62) and others is a plural literature showing various interpretations and reflecting various cultural environments. It is commonplace now to speak of the religion *of* the founder and the religion *about* the founder; those ideas of the Jewish group (with all their varieties); those of the Hellenistic group; views of the Apostolic Fathers; the Alexandrian school; the Christian Gnostics; the ante- and the post-Nicene Fathers; and so on through the complexities of ongoing history.

The Apostolic Fathers and Early Christian Apologists

Beginning with the simple estimates of the Christian way at looking at life on the part of the first followers-of-the-followers, the story grows exceedingly complex as other cultures are met and their philosophies embraced. The writings of the so-called Apostolic Fathers reveal interests mainly in a way of life and less in matters of cosmic speculation: the *Shepherd* of Hermas (*c.* 140), the *Didache* (*c.* 150), Ignatius (early second century) and others. A system of theology was lacking and perhaps not needed. Certainly the founder offered no *system* of ethics nor *system* of philosophy. It may be said that, if he were all that was claimed of him by later generations, he had the wisdom to appreciate the course of human events as one which produces changes of emphases and outlook, thus necessitating various interpretations in line with the prevailing culture. Even the sacred scriptures—from the simple

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reportings of Mark to the more complicated late-first (or early-second) century Gospel—attest to the changing modes of thought which come even in a generation.

In the face of growing syncretisms throughout the Roman empire the so-called Apologists began to sharpen distinctions. They represented, on the whole, non-Jewish Christian converts trained to think in Hellenistic terms. Justin Martyr (100-*c.* 167) began the serious task of accommodation and discrimination: making the religion seem respectable to the Greeks by embracing their current philosophy; and, at the same time, carving out for his own religious thought something that might well be considered distinctive, *i.e.,* the logos as the central principle of revelation in the person of the founder. A philosopher by profession, Justin gave honor to it as the discipline of the understanding of truth. His contacts (he claimed) had been many: with Stoicism, with Peripateticism, with Pythagoreanism, with Platonism, with Judaism. His conclusions came step by step through the philosophies he studied to the top of the ladder to the supreme philosophy of his religion. Christianity was not so much a synthesis as *in itself* the fulfilment of the best found in other philosophies.

Tatian (middle of the second century), another Apologist, famed for his widely used harmony of the gospel writings (*Diatessaron*), declared himself a philosopher and freely criticized Heraclitus, Zeno, Plato and Aristotle. Theophilus (writing about 190), the first to use the concept of God as Trinity in Christian literature (God, Logos and Wisdom), defended the doctrine of free-will, the antiquity of Christian truths (before the time of its historic founder) and criticized Plato and other ancient Greek thinkers.

Other second century Apologists include the writings of Quadratus, Aristides and, later, Melito, Athenagoras, Minucius Felix—all of whom hammered away on the contradictions and defects of current philosophies, their moral and religious weaknesses, and turned to the sacred literature of their own for their authority and faith.

Anti-Gnostic Fathers

Four stalwart names now appear giving a distinctive philosophic note to Christian interpretations. Collectively, these four men (particularly the first two) are sometimes known as the Anti-Gnostic Fathers.[1] They are: Irenaeus and Tertullian in the West; and

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Clement and Origen in the East. The latter two are singled out as illustrious members of the Alexandrian School.

To Irenaeus (b. *c.* 130) may be ascribed the distinction of being the first Christian thinker who gave to the Christian religion a *system* of belief. His principal writing, *Against the Heresies* (*c.* 180), was definitely written against the complexities of Gnostic speculations—a writing widely read. He examined in detail all the heresies he could find and then attacked them as inherently absurd and inconsistent—Gnostic thought (he charged) being full of incompatible elements. Moreover, these heresies do violence to the sacred writings, to Paul and the apostles, to the rule of truth (*regula veritatis*) of the Christians and to the thought of the custodians of truth, the bishops and the church. When Irenaeus attacked Gnosticism he was in many, if not most instances, attacking fellow-Christians; for many Hellenistic Christians had taken over phases of the faith of Gnosticism.

In general, the Gnostics believed that the world has not been created by a good God but rather by a Demiurge, a fallen aeon or spirit. God (or Profundity) is above and beyond description, from whom issues a realm of pleroma filled with (masculine and feminine) aeons or entities. The evil in the world is due not to the ultimate reality but to the dramatic falling away of a cosmic aeon. Redemption from the throes of evil was the main note of Gnostic thought. Revealed knowledge (*gnosis*) through the logos which proceeded out of Profundity offers a way of escape of spirit from the darkness of this physical world. Christian Gnostics tended to interpret the founder of their faith as possessed by a high aeon for the brief period of his ministry. Carpocrates, Basilides and Valentinus (the latter two elaborate speculators) were among the important figures of second century Christian Gnosticism. It was an abhorrent thought to think that this world with all its evil could have issued from a good God; thus the Jewish creator-god was the Demiurge, an altogether inferior being; or, the act of creation was the work of lesser angelic beings.

Latin theology began in West North-Africa separated by mountains and desert from the East and Asiatic North-Africa. Carthage was second only to Rome in the development of a Western type of Christian thought. As such, Carthage was to Western thought what Alexandria was to Eastern. It was in Carthage where Tertullian was born (*c.* 160). A brilliant and vehement thinker, lawyer, rhetorician,

satirist, prolific writer and dialectician, his influence upon early Christian thinking was enormous. He was a heresy-hunter, writing bitter polemics against anyone who disagreed with him and singling out the heresies of Gnosticism and Marcionism.

According to Marcion (100-160?), too many Christians had tied their thinking to traditional Judaism and its sacred literature. The God who creates the world so dramatically depicted in the Old Testament was not the real God but the Demiurge; the religion of law (Judaism) was inferior to the religion of Paul who outgrew his legalistic Pharisaism. A simpler type of scripture should be selected to avoid the old errors. Accordingly, Marcion proposed ten selections from the Pauline letters which would have the place of honor, together with an abridged form of the Lukian gospel together with his own selected writings. These would constitute the canon. Thus Marcionism with its rash anti-semitism plus a selected canon looked toward a revised Christian outlook. From the middle of the second century until its close [2] this school of thought constituted a major threat to the slowly growing self-conscious Catholic Christianity.

It was Marcionism that Tertullian denounced in five volumes of writings and, before that, all forms of heresies. Against them he took his stand upon the scriptures. To argue with authorities, he held, was to deny them. A philosopher is always in quest of something; the believer, on the other hand, has ended his quest even though what he believes may be absurd. It is utter obedience that makes for real virtue if one believes in divine laws. How can one be virtuous and at the same time question what is itself a good? Turning toward Athens is the spirit of the philosopher; surrendering to the authority of Jerusalem is the way of the believer. Thus did a spirit of anti-rationalism enter into Catholic orthodoxy and a rule of faith take the seat of honor. Tertullian, like all the others, could not, however, be consistent with such dogmatism; for all through his life he sought to make a reasonable case for his position and thus, in spite of himself, became a religious philosopher. In the area of philosophy he was poorly trained; moreover, he was always curbed by the nature of his temperament. A legal mind wants things settled. A genuine philosopher sees questions still to be wrestled with.

Tertullian's psychology of the soul is reminiscent of the Stoic doctrine of corporeality. The soul, he said, has form although immaterial: length. breadth and thickness; it permeates and directs

both the mind and the body. Even God is corporeal, possessing a form which thus explains forms of the created world. Like Plato, he believed in (and argued in circularity for) the soul's immortality because of its simplicity and indivisibility. How a soul could be both corporeal and indivisible did not seem to bother him. God, he said, created *ex nihilo;* a creation out of nothing reveals a power greater than a creation out of something already there. The whole drama of the life of man was for him a preparation for a secure post-existence. To the sovereignty of God man must bend completely since man is condemned to torment because of inherited sin and guilt. The way of salvation is fixed by penitential hardships, by diligent observation of the commandments of God, by submission to the ordained sacraments. To attain a place in that "other world" is man's *summum bonum.*

The Alexandrian School

Important for the development of early Christian philosophy was the contemporary school of thought which emanated from Alexandria in North-Africa in the East. Often referred to as the Alexandrian School, this type of Christian thought was eminently speculative and embedded in Greek thinking. Alexandrian thought was not confined to a city but rather reached out far beyond its borders. Leaders of this school were Pantaenus (d. 202), Clement (*c.* 150-*c.* 213) and Origen (d. 254?).

Pantaenus is the earliest of the teachers of the theological school at Alexandria concerning whom there is information. Christian practice developed what is called "catechetical schools" directed to the training of those outside the faith. During the second and third centuries numbers of writings were used as materials for "Christian education." Among them were: parts of the *Didache,* Justin Martyr's *First Apology,* Irenaeus' *Epideixis,* Tertullian's *Lectures for Catechumens,* Hippolytus' *Canonens,* Cyprian's *Testimonia,* Origen's *Contra Celsum* and Lucian Martyr's *Didascalia.* The grand consummation of this type of literature was later reflected in the *Apostolic Constitutions* and in Augustine's *De Catechizandis Rudibus.*

President of this theological college (*c.* 190), following Pantaenus, was the Anti-Gnostic Father Clement, a figure who never fails to attract philosophical minds. Set in the midst of a metropolitan

city, this denominational school could boast of proximity to famous scholars, great libraries, contact with university atmosphere, a cosmopolitan population, a commercial center. Its own supporting organization was democratic, relatively free from ecclesiastical domination. At Alexandria, Greek and Oriental thought met and fused provoking a breadth of interpretation of its faith and a catholicity of outlook upon others.

Clement was the quiet literary scholar: urbane, easy-going, broad-minded, widely read. Three of his major works, the *Protrepticus* (Exhortation), the *Paedagogus* (Instructor) and the *Stromateis* ("Carpet-Bags") are extant. From his writings we are made sure that the New Testament canon was virtually completed in his day.

Quite unashamedly, he sought alliance with the philosophers—certainly to be preferred over the rhetoricians. Philosophy, he said, was to the Greeks what the Jewish law was to the Jews; both philosophy and Jewish law were preparations for the Christian faith. As Tatian before him, Clement affirmed that the Greek philosophers had taken over much from Jewish thought; Plato borrowed from Moses. But gold is gold whether in the hands of borrowers or thieves. Do not be frightened, he said, when you find truth in unsuspected places. There is but one river of truth although many rivulets. Even the Greeks possessed divine truth. Philosophy is to be used as an ally to theology.

With Philo (*c.* 20 B.C.-50 A.D.) and the later Platonists in the background, Clement speculates about God. Far removed from the world, without characteristics and with full transcendence, stands God—was the teaching of Philo. For Clement also God is changeless and timeless, an Absolute, beyond space and description, a pure being—to be apprehended only by pure thought abstracted from the limitations of sense. Thought may move toward God by the analysis of subtraction of characters (*e.g.,* not color, not shape, not extension, not any qualification) to the place where no characterization whatsoever is possible. Man's anthropomorphic images of God misrepresent God. And yet, God is creator and a beneficent providence, first-cause. Creation included time, hence creation did not take place in time. This phase of God's nature comes to light through the logos (a Philonic conception and vaguely in Plato) through which the Absolute enters into the sphere of the relations of creation. It is the

logos that is the creative and guiding power, inspirer of both prophets and philosophers, making manifest what is hidden in the nature of God. The logos is both transcendent and immanent, as divine as God. The Absolute God has been made manifest by the logos as the Son of God and the Son of God was the founder of the Christian faith.

Thus Clement was a Christian Neoplatonist,[3] heavy in emphasis upon the doctrine of the logos; this logos reflected Plato's supreme idea and the Stoic's immanent principle.

Besides the emphasis upon speculative theology tied to Greek philosophy and to Philo, another characteristic shows itself in the Alexandrian school of thought: the ingenuity with which allegorical interpretations developed to accommodate tradition to the changing modes of thought. By means of allegory the Stoics thus could understand ancient Greek writings; by the same means the later Greeks thus made rational their traditional myths; the Jews, notably Philo, so could understand their scriptures; and so Clement and Origen their sacred literature; and, finally and later, Augustine interpreted very conveniently portions of the New Testament literature. Clement employed allegory in the search of esoteric truths believing that the mark of attainment to higher knowledge or *gnosis* came by way of such insight. Deeper meanings are concealed to those who have only literal eyes. Redemption of man thus comes by way of illumination and enlightenment (a Greek doctrine so explicitly taught by Socrates). Men need only to be shown the way to the good life and they will follow after it, for man has the divine image in his rational make-up. No taint of original sin mars this divine nature in man. But the logos is needed for illumination.

Thus, in Clement Christian philosophy was made reasonable for the times, generous in its receptivity to allegedly alien truths, catholic in its appraisal of the multiple paths to divinity and a *rapprochement* between the fields of the theologian and the philosopher. The Christian faith for him was an intellectual adventure for those capable of it. It was not a religion reserved only for the rank and file (whom he called "simple believers"), not to literal fundamentalists whose strait-jacket thinking would prevent the use of reason.

It was Origen (185-251? or 254?), Clement's pupil, who succeeded him at Alexandria, who developed a system of Christian philosophy on a larger scale, more complete than heretofore. A

prodigious student, fiery temper, scholar of tremendous applications, ascetic, voluminous writer, lover of the philosophers, Origen was a controversial churchman in and out of the good graces of office. His commitment to tradition was stronger than that of his teacher. With great patience he gave himself to the task of editing an authoritative text of the Old Testament scriptures, the *Hexapla*, containing the Hebrew with Greek transliteration and four Greek versions. Besides commentaries on certain New Testament gospels and letters he wrote *De Principiis*, a monumental work on systematic theology, *Contra Celsum* and *De Oratione*. Under Clement and Ammonius Saccas (who taught at Alexandria in the first half of the third century, teacher of Plotinus) he learned the Platonic philosophy and he set out to wed the Christian faith to it. His anti-Gnostic thought is seen in the guiding principle of his thinking: nothing is to be believed as unworthy of God. Thus, those Christian Gnostics who would have difficulty believing that the world could have been created by a good God (good Jewish cosmogony) he denounced. And to help him in his cause he allegorized the scriptures. In allegorizing he made famous the three senses of interpretation: 1) the bodily, somatic, or literal; 2) the psychic or moral; and 3) the spiritual or allegorical—highest of all. All of Origen's speculations were grounded in the belief that the scriptures were standard or the basis for all speculation.

Origen's God was less abstract than Clement's although incomprehensible apart from the revelation of the creative divine logos or sophia (wisdom) from God, the latter subordinate [4] to God and yet of the same substance (*homo-ousios*). The Son is eternally generated from God, so also the third hypostasis in the Trinity, the Holy Spirit. The Son is the divine logos joined to a created spirit which in turn was joined to a human soul. It is the Son of God through whom the nature of God is revealed and the way of salvation made open. All beings, archangels (with very fine bodies), angels down through man and to arch-fiends (with very coarse bodies) will ultimately be saved (universalism). The physical world was created *ex nihilo*. Men have, as spirits, pre-existed. Common man can be expected only to follow the pathway of faith (*pistis*); but educated man will rise to knowledge (*gnosis*) or to the level of philosophy. Here he will think through by deductive analysis the truth of the scriptures and tradition and go on through further processes of reasoning to new levels of truth.

Augustine and Augustinianism

The period following the one just considered offers some well-known names in the history of Christian thought. But, on the whole, they are of less interest to our present purposes than the last great name (which we shall presently consider) of the ancient period of Christian philosophy.

The one stalwart figure, Plotinus (205-270), Neoplatonist *par excellence,* belongs to this interval. Plotinus' influence upon Eastern Christian philosophy was immediate and, thanks to Augustine, the sweep of his mystical emphasis became entrenched in Western Christian thought. (A special section in this book is devoted to Neoplatonism.)

Controversies within the Christian church were thick and heavy on technical points of Christology and the nature of God conceived as somehow three-in-one. Nicea saw in 325 the first great ecumenical gathering of the church to settle a major dispute of theology; but it was not settled there because of the divisions of political parties, of alliances and deep differences of outlook not capable of resolution by verbal resolutions. The Trinitarian controversies continued to rage past 381 (the date of the so-called Niceno-Constantinopolitan creed). Even Augustine was called upon to make more or less final pronouncements on the Trinitarian formula, even though after more than a quarter of a century work upon the subject (written in fifteen volumes, *De Trinitate*) he confessed that we cannot understand it too clearly!

Augustine (354-430) is an important figure in the history of early Christian philosophy for many reasons: his personality, his varied background and interests, the multitude of his writings over a period of more than forty years, his public office, and the times. The times must not be overlooked: Augustine witnessed the crumbling of the long dominant Roman empire. In his famous *City of God* he saw in the splendor of the Catholic church the anchor for a crumbling world and the destiny of the saved.

There is no Augustinian "system" for a very simple reason: there is no one Augustine. His personality was a criss-cross of many currents, much like Paul before him, like Luther and George Fox after him. He fits no one mould; he is now this and now that. Schools of thought of different types which followed looked back to him quite

capable of quoting him to their advantage but each taking only the side which suited its purpose. A failure to see this multiple type of personality is to fail to understand original Augustinianism.

This explains why he is sometimes called an eclectic; he had tried to satisfy his mind with one system and then another, retaining the imprint of each. Always a sensitive mind he was open to conversions. His psycho-autobiographical *Confessions*, written later in his life, retells his crisis experiences within his divided self. The cross-currents of his mind made him rich in experience. He was sensuous and spiritual-minded; critical and naive; a mystic and a critical analyst; at times a philosopher free to speculate and again a subject devoutly loyal to his tradition and church; he encouraged speculation and he pointed to a revelation given once-for-all; he employed rational arguments but insisted that faith has priority over reason; evil he viewed as a negation and again as something very positive; the world is for him good and yet it is condemned to wretchedness; he was a pre-scholastic and he was a child of child-like acceptance; he insisted on the necessity of the sacraments and yet he taught a direct communion with the Divine; he sketched a plan of visible church-rule and still taught the invisibility of the universal and real church in so far as it possesses the indwelling spirit; he was conservative and progressive; he put emphasis upon a social order and yet remained an individualist; he observed the events of physical nature and sounded the depths of man's own inner nature.

What came to be called Augustinianism is the selection of those facets of his thought which lent support to the growing orthodoxy. Extreme Augustinians forgot to remember, if they did remember, the heterogeneous character of the man and his thought.

The historian particularly interested in the development of philosophy will naturally pick out certain phases of Augustine's thinking as of special interest. He finds in him some notable discussions pertaining to philosophy.

It may be said that Augustine—and Tertullian and Origen before him—in the sweep of his religious imagination presented a more or less comprehensive philosophy of history which came to be widely adopted but different from the one taught before. He examined the traditional notion that cosmic history moves in cycles by a succession of returning periods. For him this made the cosmos greater than the God who created it. How can the Creator be sub-

ject to such monotonous Fate? Moreover, the meaning of history for him revolved about the history of man's redemption (not a new thought, of course); but it had a beginning in God, a climax in a definite period when God became incarnate in Jesus Christ (a unique event) and an end that is to come in the last Judgment. It is not a repetitive process but an ongoing drama in which the Creator creates free restless beings who are to find their way by the help of Divine grace—although (inconsistently!) the Divine grace for Augustine was irresistible and thus fore-ordains men, some to salvation and some to damnation (double predestination) to the equivalent of the number of those fallen angels, no more and no less.

Again, Augustine's notion of the soul is of interest to the philosopher. Each soul is a unique spiritual entity, now holding to the doctrine of its special creation and now holding to the traducianist view that it is derived from the soul of its parents—the former view becoming the one chosen by Catholic orthodoxy. His "proofs" of the soul's existence anticipates Descartes' *cogito ergo sum:* to doubt the existence of the soul, he said, is to assert it, for to doubt is to think and to think is to exist. Souls are thinking beings.

Again, Augustine held to the doctrine of creation *ex nihilo* at a given moment chosen out of the deliberate free-will act of the Creator. Both the world and time thus had a definite beginning. What God wills to do is, however, inspired by God's knowledge of what is good. (Tertullian had argued that the will of God wills and the good is derived from that will.) God's intellect is thus the primary motive to creation. For Augustine the will is free in the sense of self-determination (without external compulsion) even though only one alternative may present itself.

Again, the problem of theodicy (evil in relation to a good God) looms large in his thought. As a good traditionalist, he looked to the story of the fall of Adam for one of his theories. Man originally possessed a perfectly free-will and a holy inclination to do the right. The *possibility* to do wrong was in Adam but only became actual under a test. When Adam did fail to make the better choice sin originates *ex nihilo,* possibility becomes a permanent actuality. Thus "original sin" enters by way of perversion passed on from Adam to the sons of man (traducianism). The root of evil lies in this inheritance, corrupting not only human nature but nature itself (thus cursed). Helpless is man without Divine grace. On this question

Augustine fought the more moral views of his contemporary Pelagius (d. *c.* 420) whose notion of grace was that of *aid* to do the right and who rejected the doctrine of transmitted original sin. Each man, argued Pelagius, is an Adam to himself, making for his own choices. Pelagians held that a thousand sins did not render the power of the will to do the right less impotent if it chose (an extreme Pelagianism). Another theory crops out in Augustine's thought revealing elements of the teachings of Manichaeism to which cult Augustine gave his one-time allegiance. Manichaeism was a syncretistic religion with mixtures of Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism, Neoplatonism and Christianity.[5] Mani (b. *c.* 215) taught the typical doctrine of Zoroastrianism of the eternal struggle between good and evil; the latter, he thought, became expressed in nature and in the body of man and part of his soul. Man is thus caught in a cosmic battle between principalities good and principalities bad. Procreation of the body is a procreation of more evil; sexual lust is this strong manifestation of evil desiring to perpetuate itself. Original sin thus for Augustine became identified with sexual lust and the volcanic eruption of the powers of darkness. On the other hand, another theory shows Augustine's contact with and high regard for the Neoplatonic view that evil is a lack, not something positive—thus absolving God since it lacks the attributes of existence as such. And still another theory: evil is *permitted* by God for the sake of a larger good—so said Augustine.

The theodicy which came to prevail in the history of Western Christian philosophy is a modification of Augustine's doctrine of the self-determination of the will. Man is thus a sharer in the drama of creation; though man is responsible for evil God creates the good. Created in the image of God, man reflects that image in self-determination. Thus moral decisions are possible and a moral cooperative plan of the created world follows. This, of course, is not purely Augustinian but it was selected out of the complex patterns of his solution. For Augustine, of course, man was made the center of the solution; the problem of dysteleology in physical nature is not solved other than by the tacit view of physical nature as, in the Neoplatonic sense, of less consequence than that of the realm of spirit.

Augustine atoned for this slight upon physical nature by his insistence that God continually sustains it out of His goodness, explaining miracles as well as natural events. The created world is in

evolutionary process but these processes are natural and, at the same time, supernaturally directed.

Like those of his predecessors in the tradition, Augustine remarked little about physical nature—except to speculate on its spherity (uninhabited on the other side), to remark that astronomy offers only idle speculation—all such speculations tending only to divert attention from what ought to be of prime interest: man's concern over the destiny of his soul and the glorification of his Creator.

With Augustine the Platonic tradition became secure as the dominant Christian philosophy for the church. For him Platonism and Catholic Christianity were in essential harmony. Plato, he had confessed, was the Christ of the philosophers.

NOTES

1. The Gospel of John is an earlier Anti-Gnostic writing.

2. By the end of the second century, the main body of the New Testament had been canonized. The rabbis at Jamnia in the second century settled, finally, the canon of the Jewish scriptures.

3. Bigg believed Clement to have been the real founder of Neoplatonism. *Op. cit.* in Bibliography.

4. Origen's doctrine of subordination was later appealed to by the heretical Arians who were unwilling to use the term "homoousios" (a Gnostic term). The term became the hot-spot in the controversy before, at and after the Council of Nicea.

5. See the chapter "Manichaeism" by Irach J. S. Taraporewala in *Forgotten Religions* (New York, 1950), ed. by Vergilius Ferm.

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CHAPTER THIRTEEN

ARABIC AND ISLAMIC PHILOSOPHY

EDWARD J. JURJI

THE MOST crucial event in European history, since the Punic Wars, was the triumph of Moslem arms in the eighth century, a hundred years after the death of Mohammed. Roman antiquity came to a halt and while Europe was only beginning to be Byzantinized, the Middle Ages fell upon her. In a series of military assaults, delivered upon Egypt, Iran, Mesopotamia, North Africa, Spain, and Southern France, Islam shattered the Mediterranean unity which the Germanic invaders had left intact.

Although unable to consolidate the entire Mediterranean world; the Arab conquerors encircled it on the East, South, and West. Only the North lay outside their control. Culture in the vast domains that fell to them became oriented as time passed towards Mecca and Medina, Damascus and Baghdad.

Almost simultaneously, a new Christian civilization—neither Greek nor Latin but Nordic—was struggling to be born. Its chief representatives, Frank, Anglo-Saxon, and German, were, however, blockaded and circumscribed by their geographic isolation from the old centers of culture in the Mediterranean world. But the decadence of the Merovingian monarchy which gave birth to the more truly Germanic Carolingian dynasty was a straw in the wind indicating the coming importance of the North. By A.D. 800, the establishment of Charlemagne gave proof of the new trend in European history and culture. A new Europe would emerge under Teutonic auspices and Christendom, though battered by its Moslem adversary, will reconstruct a new Roman Empire and regain the Greek heritage aided by what the Arab philosophers were able to transmit.

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The intellectual contribution which the Arabic-Islamic civilization made to the new West did not exactly originate in the Arabian Peninsula. Prior to the universalization of the Arab cultural themes —largely due to the participation of Syrian, Jewish, and Iranian converts—the Arab mind had had a narrow horizon. It had not proceeded farther than the odes and oracles of pre-Islamic times. In the path of philosophy hardly anything more than the wisdom lore of Arabia was known. The propounding of maxims and aphorisms, the crystallization of wisdom hammered on the anvil of experience, these were the closest approach made to philosophy.

Within this restricted area, the pre-Islamic Arabians boasted a repository of keen observations of nature centering in the life and fate of man. They had nothing like a systematic philosophy concerned with ultimate reality, the nature of existence, a theory of knowledge, an exploration of the meaning of truth, ethics, and immortality. Confronted by what seemed as the enigmatic and inscrutable will of God, they expressed themselves in terms tantamount to a complete resignation. Within their peculiar categories, however, the Arabians achieved a reputation in the ancient Semitic world, as the Old Testament proves. Thus Agur, son of Jakeh (Prov. 30:1) and Lemuel (Prov. 31:1) are two Arabian kings who like Job— tribesman of the Bene Qedem—were noted for wisdom. The Koran (31:11-12) reproduces the name of the sage Luqman, paragon of wisdom among the ancient Arabs.

This oral tradition of wisdom is not the sub-soil of that later Arab philosophy which radiated from the centers of Islamic culture and exerted a decisive influence upon the medieval thought of Europe. The philosophy which Islamic writings enshrine is traceable to the Greek studies of Syrian Christian scholars who worked at such centers as Edessa, Nisibin, and Jundishapur. Having acquired classical philosophy and science from the Syrians, the thinkers of Islam fashioned them into a new synthesis observing the demands of their own era with its cosmopolitan society wherein diverse Oriental and Occidental traditions mingled together under the banner of the Caliphate. This was an era when Asia Minor was a Christian country with Constantinople as capital and when the Iberian Peninsula together with Sicily were the home of Islamic cultural effervescence. In those times it was hardly accurate to speak of the Moslem East and the Christian West.

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Throughout the tenth century, the progress of Western culture was surpassed by the more rapid strides of the Islamic peoples. In the thirteenth century, after the crusades and the Mongolian invasion of Western Asia, Europe began to breathe more freely and it attained intellectual equality with the Islamic world. Only with the coming of the Renaissance in the fifteenth century and the geographic expansion attendant upon the discovery of the New World did the Christian West attain that cultural ascendancy which it has ever since retained and enlarged.

Key Figures and Schools

For the origins of Arab philosophy, then, we must turn to the advanced civilization of the Near East which became subject to the political authority of the Arabs in the seventh century. The Hellenization of Western Asia had proceeded since the days of Alexander the Great (356-323 B.C.). Alexandria and Antioch attained fame as the centers of Greek culture. With the spread of Christianity, interest in the classical heritage deepened. In order to comprehend the Bible, ecclesiastical canons and decrees, and the writings of the Church Fathers, the Christians of Syria had to learn the Greek language and literature. They accomplished this in their oldest school founded at Edessa by St. Ephrem (*ca.* 306-373) in A.D. 363 and closed in 489 when a number of its scholars migrated to Sassanid Persia where they established their two celebrated academies at Nisibin and Jundishapur. It was in the schismatic Church of the Nestorians and that of the Jacobites, therefore, that Arab philosophy was rooted.

The seventh-century Moslems were hardly in a position to appreciate the true meaning of Greek logic and philosophy. Their capacity for philosophical discipline and inquiry was improved, however, as converts from Christianity and Judaism began to swell their ranks. By the eighth century, the first Islamic school of philosophy, that of the Qadarites, made its appearance in Syria partly as a reaction against Koranic determinism. Its major concern with the problem of free will became a primary tenet of the rationalist Mutazilite school which came to its own under the early rulers of the Abbasid Caliphate (750-1258) of Baghdad. The dynamic Greco-Syriac ideas were already beginning to register in the theological controversies which stirred the Moslem world.

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The Abbasid Caliph al-Mamun (786-833), himself a sympathizer with the Mutazilite rationalists, instituted in Baghdad the first bona-fide school of higher learning, known as the House of Wisdom. It was the most notable development in the realm of the intellect since the founding of the Alexandrian Museum in the early third century B.C. Here the translation of Greek texts into Arabic was pursued with resolution. The Nestorian physician, Hunayn ibn-Ishaq (Joannitius, 809-873), assisted by his son Ishaq and his nephew Hubaysh, figured as the chief translator. Plato's *Republic,* Aristotle's *Categories, Physics, Magna Moralia,* and *Hermeneutics,* were among the classics rendered. The response which these works evoked in the scientific and philosophical circles was reëchoed in the halls of Islamic theology.

The orthodox Islamic reaction to the philosophical trend in theology was spearheaded in the tenth century by abu-al-Hasan al-Ashari (873-935) of Baghdad. A native of Basra, he had started life as a pupil of the Mutazilite school acquiring the rhetorical skills and scholarly acumen of its disputatious doctors. Then he executed an about-face and declared theological war against his former masters. He evolved a new dialectic (*kalam*) receptive to Greek reason but thoroughly grounded in Koranic thought and primarily poised to strike at the strongholds of heresy. The Mutakallimun (dialecticians) were Islamic speculators who subordinated philosophy to revealed religious truth.

A harmony of faith and reason, religion and philosophy, was the goal of the philosophers. It was attempted by their ranking representatives, the Arab al-Kindi (d. *ca.* 873), the Turk al-Farabi (*ca.* 870-950), and the Persian ibn-Sina (Avicenna, 980-1037). The achievements of these men who lived in the Near East were climaxed in ibn-Rushd (Averroës, 1126-98) whose career belonged to the annals of Spanish Islam. The most subtle minds in Islamic philosophy, these four dedicated themselves to the creation of a colossal syncretism in which Plato and more particularly Aristotle prevail. Beneath the surface of their work was a revolt against orthodoxy.

Although the philosophers of Islam generally coined their phrases in simple style and used the then widespread Arabic idiom, they won neither the confidence of the average intelligent Moslem nor the endorsement of the theologians. Their very name *falasifa* (philosophers) came to denote heresy. Like the billowy current belts that

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traverse the ocean, always preserving their own coloration and direction without ever vanishing in the expansive waters that encompass them, the Moslem philosophers may be said to have passed through Islam without ever becoming fully integrated in its basic thought pattern.

Akin to the philosophers in the antipathy they drew from orthodoxy, were the Brethren of Sincerity, a secret philosophical school of Basra and Baghdad encyclopedists (*ca.* 970). These Brethren deviated from the course of conservative religion in favor of Pythagorean speculation and endeavored to compile the then existing knowledge on a philosophical basis. More effective in the long run, however, were the Sufis (mystics) who in the twelfth century created the beginnings of a vast reorganization is Islamic life corresponding to the monastic orders of medieval Christendom. Although influenced by the Brethren in his early career, al-Ghazzali (Algazel, 1058-1111)—Islam's greatest theologian—turned in his maturity to Sufi mysticism and enunciated in his major works the fundamental affirmation that religious knowledge must inevitably depend upon Revelation.

The Essence of Arab Philosophy

The great authority attached to the Moslem philosophers, especially Avicenna and Averroës, stamped them as the expositors of Aristotle. The Stagirite was not, however, their only master. In al-Kindi's so-called *Theology of Aristotle*, Plotinus (Books IV-VI *of the Enneads*) in Aristotelian disguise contributed to the philosophers' conception of God and His relation to the universe. The pantheism and monism of Plotinus were, of course, a far cry from Aristotle's dualist theism.

Arab speculation was steeped, nonetheless, in practically the entire content of Greek thought: From the Sophists, who gave the first impulse to logical analysis of what was involved in description and definition, to Socrates whose important contribution to knowledge included designating the concept as part of the essence; and from Plato, who objectified the concept by raising it from the world of shadows to that of the particulars, to Aristotle who offered an analysis of thing as well as of thought and was hailed in the medieval and Islamic world as the unrivaled First Teacher.

It must be emphasized, however, that although research in the

field of Arab philosophy seems to suggest that it was a coat of many colors, the stage has not been reached as yet when a full-orbed history of this subject can be written.

The evidence leaves no doubt that the lines were sharply drawn between the Arab philosophers and their orthodox opponents in the controversy concerning the knowledge of God, creation, prophecy, and the immortality of the soul. Although the philosophers affirmed the unity of God, they contended that matter was eternal and thereby seemed to reject His rôle as Creator. They asserted, furthermore, that God's knowledge extends only to the general laws of the cosmos and not to individual things and persons, all of which in the opinion of the orthodox was a repudiation of the omniscience of God and of prophecy. Equally repugnant to the pious was the theory of the intellect whereby the philosophers, in line with Peripatetic precept, taught that the human soul was only a faculty of the intellect capable by virtue and information of union with the active intellect which emanates from God. To admit this was to deny the immortality of the soul, in the view of the believer.

The orthodox Mutakallimun rose to the defense of the Islamic faith. Their apologetic seemed to center in the problem of creation. Against the Aristotelian idea that the universe is fixed and matter eternal, they advanced a theory of particles (atoms) based on Democritus. It upheld the view that the energy of God is in perpetual action, vitalizing the very particles of the created objects which, therefore, live and move and have their being by the constant flow of divine life. Thus bodies come into existence or die through the aggregation or sunderance of the particles. Not only Space, but Time also, was allegedly made up of small individual moments. The creation of the world, once established on these grounds, it was an easy matter for the apologists to confirm the existence of the Creator, the validity of prophecy, and the immortality of the soul.

That the science of Aristotle triumphed over the Democritean theory of particles, espoused by the Mutakallimun, and over the Platonic concepts current in the Moslem world, is not essential to the understanding of Arab philosophy in its world-wide relations. What is of the essence is that since the Arabs introduced Aristotle to Spain in the tenth century, he became for medieval science what Newton's physics is to the modern age. Not within the orbit of Islam, therefore, but in Christian philosophy and theology

must be discovered the transformation wrought by the readmission of Aristotle into the bloodstream of Western science and religion.

Until Arab thinkers rescued Aristotle from obscurity in the West, Augustinian theology had had for its philosophical framework the theory grounded in Plotinus and Plato, namely that the sensed world is not real and that the sensed self is but the symbol of the more ideal and immortal soul beyond. With the entry of Aristotle into the sphere of Christian theology, a new approach to ultimate reality was deemed necessary.

Aristotelian science began from the thesis that the real world is the sensed world. Ideas and concepts which did not originate in sense perception did not constitute part of reality's core. By the chemical constituents of all things—earth, air, fire, and water—was meant the qualified bits of the total manifold of nature. The four qualities of these primary constituents were grouped in two pairs— hot-cold and wet-dry. Hence the doctrine of opposites.

Fundamental to Aristotelian physics was the doctrine of positive forms, perceived, for instance, when cold water is indicated by a cold hand, and the doctrine of forms by privation, as when a cold hand may be described as not hot. Being and becoming do not involve *creatio ex nihilo* but rather the shift in forms, a combination of forms by privation.

Therefore, to be is to possess sensed properties which are actualized in concrete nature as positive forms. Thus, the soul of man was identified with the rational body. When the dissolution of the human body occurred, the soul passed from positive form to the status of form by privation. God was likewise identified with the cosmos as the Unmoved Mover, the Rational Principle, approximately but never completely actualized in matter. Once the logical character of Aristotle's forms was conceded, the eternity of God and the immortality of man followed in neat order.

Peculiarities of Arab Philosophy: Avicenna and Averroës

Aristotle emerged in Arab philosophy as the ideal guide of a movement which drew its authority from his works, whether authentic or apocryphally ascribed to him. From these works arose the problems which exercised medieval philosophy and endowed it with special meaning. Yet the writings of Arab philosophers, the more

carefully they are scrutinized, turn out to be less the works of exegesis and commentary and more—if their objectives and results are recalled—an expression of calm inquiry, a definite step in that philosophical quest which knows no end. With few exceptions, Arab philosophy was guided by the standards of the great Stagirite not in order to discover what he actually taught but rather for the purpose of probing the structure of reality. This was the chief peculiarity of that intellectual development represented above all by Avicenna and Averroës.

Avicenna

Having supplanted al-Kindi, al-Farabi was in turn supplanted by Avicenna (980-1037), the primate of Arab philosophy. Born in Afshana, near Bukhara, and buried in Hamadhan, he was the greatest scientist of Eastern Islam and the Latins knew him before they were acquainted with Averroës. Attracted to Greek philosophy in childhood, Avicenna, who also devoted himself to the Koran, soon mastered Porphyry, Euclid, and Ptolemy, as well as what was available of Plato and Aristotle. Despite the tyranny which he once endured, he was a frequent counsellor of princes and his career was one of comparative ease dominated throughout by a multiplicity of scientific and metaphysical concerns. In addition to his medical *Canon,* which Gerard of Cremona translated into Latin, his *Healing,* planned on encyclopedic lines, contained the logic, metaphysics, physics, and philosophy by which his name became deservedly celebrated.

Although the *Healing* dated to Avicenna's younger days, the main positions which he defended in it were not abandoned in the writings of his more mature years. Moulded by Greek insights, this work had the distinction of reconciling Aristotle and Plotinus in a simple refreshing manner. The central theme, to which everything else seemed subsidiary, was that of being. There lay Avicenna's chief contribution to the making of medieval philosophy.

Like Aristotle, he strove to construct a special science, metaphysics, which would make being as such its main concern. And more worthy a concern could not have been chosen, for among the diverse phenomena of existence, the most compelling single item is always that of existence itself whose secret is the challenge and despair of intelligent men everywhere.

Avicenna interpreted being in the light of empirical psychology and relied on concepts drawn from the Neoplatonic theory of emanation. Classified as vegetable, animal, and rational, the hierarchy of being was apexed by the First Principle, the sovereign and indivisible One who is God. From the First Principle emanated the First Intelligence. The world of ideas loomed as a series of pure intelligences which animated the celestial bodies. The highest body to be thus animated was the sphere of fixed stars. From this emanated a soul which animated the planets of which the Moon was considered the lowest. From the soul and body of the Sphere-Moon sprang the Active Intelligence which gave rise to the human soul and the four elements. An existence of necessity and an existence of possibility, furthermore, dominated the entire realm of being.

This world of being involving a series of intelligibles—upon which the entire structure of ultimate reality and theology was predicated—became part of the Western scholastic tradition. Trends in that direction appeared when Albertus Magnus (*ca.* 1193-1280) and his contemporaries adopted the intelligibles of Avicenna and referred to them as intellects under the general heading of *intentio*.

Averroës

Born in Cordova and buried in Marrakesh, Averroës (1126-1198) for twelve years was judge in his native city, an office once filled by his father and grandfather. Belonging to a famous Hispano-Arab family, his career fitted into the period of the Almohades who from their court at Marrakesh ruled all North Africa to the borders of Egypt, as well as Spain. Like Avicenna, Averroës combined several scientific and philosophical pursuits, including medicine and metaphysics. But in him the philosopher-commentator dwarfed the physician. Among his philosophical works, which were rebuked by the Moslem divines, was the *Incoherence of Incoherence*, a reply to the attack on rationalism which al-Ghazzali had embodied in his *Incoherence of the Philosophers*.

Since Averroës did not know Greek, his commentaries on Aristotle were based on the earlier Baghdad translations. Actually, these commentaries were new metaphysical explorations rather than expositions of Aristotle. With one exception, the so-called commentaries of Aristotle are not extant in the original Arabic but are preserved in Hebrew. From Hebrew, the Latin translations of

Averroës, begun in 1220 by the British-Sicilian Michael Scotus, opened Hellenic philosophy more fully to Western Christendom.

Averroës sought to reconcile Islamic dogma with the results of philosophy. In his defense of the eternity of the world, which precluded *creatio ex nihilo*, he incurred the enmity of Moslem theologians. The thirteenth-century Church was also compelled to proscribe his doctrine. Banished to Lucena, near Cordova, because of this teaching, he had to submit to a painful hearing and to the burning of his books save those on medical, metaphysical, and astronomical subjects. Although his last years were mostly spent in disgrace, he was able, nonetheless, to enunciate his themes with a clarity that made them well-nigh unforgettable in the annals of Western thought.

His doctrine on the eternity of the world did not explain creation as the result of a single act but as a movement which is rendered every instant in an ever-changing cosmos. Though eternal, the world has a Prime Mover who Himself is eternal and who is constantly endowing creation with dynamic. The two forms of eternity are, therefore, to be differentiated since the one is with, the other without, cause. Averroës drew another important distinction between soul and intellect, making the latter the superior kind of soul if only because of its absolute freedom from matter.

It has already been noted that Arab philosophy—culminating in Averroës—was the most impressive body of speculative thought known to the medieval civilization of the Mediterranean basin. Despite the controversy and hostility which his name and works called forth, he was able to orient the minds of his age in a new direction. His underlying purpose had to do with the supreme authority of speculative knowledge based on experience. It bore fruit in the philosophical and rational trends of subsequent centuries.

Within the confines of this philosophical knowledge, he discovered a measure of certitude which informed his epochal reply to al-Ghazzali. The basic conception to which he appealed was that the noble does not exist by virtue of the less noble but vice versa. Consequently, he affirmed that the less noble beings had no value apart from participation in that magnificent harmony wherein the more noble creatively joins. He went on to propose that we live in the beatitude of the spheres which in their turn live by the power of the Supreme Mover. In laying the foundation of his philosophical certitude, Averroës discussed the four causes—matter, form, efficiency,

and action—in relation to the eternity of God. And describing the energy which bestows perfect actuality upon being, he adduced an entelechy which was expanded to embrace within its sweep the cosmic and rational spheres as well as the existential and practical.

Influx Into Western Thought

This Arab philosophy reached the Latin West through diverse channels. Primary among these was the Hebrew channel. What the Jewish writers had derived from their study of Arabic and Islamic philosophy was now transmitted to Christian Europe. When Archdeacon Gundisalvus of Seville was commissioned in the early twelfth century by Raymond, Archbishop of Toledo, to make translations of Avicenna he was assisted by Avendeath (*ca.* 1090-1165), a convert from Judaism. Their translation of Avicenna's *On The Soul*— a commentary on Aristotle's great treatise—exercised considerable influence in the West. Maimonides (1135-1204) formulated the evidence for the existence, unity, and incorporeality of God with the aid of the Aristotelian metaphysics embedded in Avicenna's writings; his attack on the Mutakallimun was freely utilized by Thomas Aquinas (1227-1274). Much of the text of Averroës, as it was known to the medieval schoolmen, came through Hebrew. At Paris especially, the main themes of Arab philosophy on providence, immortality, and creation were found unsatisfactory.

Taking the two foremost Arab thinkers singly, it would seem that the influence of Avicenna in the West passed through three distinct stages: First, there was an epoch of about a hundred years, starting with the initial translations and closing with the strong reaction of Guillaume d'Auvergne, Bishop of Paris, who devoted most of his voluminous writings to the refutation of Averroism. Second, the stage launched with the Pontifical decree of 1231 which permitted the study of Aristotle and implicitly his Arab commentators. This lasted broadly until about 1260 when the scholastic philosopher Albertus Magnus—earliest of the great Dominican philosophers and teacher of St. Thomas Aquinas—made his compilations. Third, the stage which assured Avicenna a well-defined position in the Thomist system of thought. Accorded him by the commentators on Thomas Aquinas, this position of Avicenna gave him a reputation which persists in Western thought till the present.

Citations from the authoritative doctrines of Avicenna on being appeared during the fourteenth century in the commentary on the Book of Wisdom penned by Meister Eckhart (*ca.* 1260-*ca.* 1327), the Dominican contemporary of Dante (1265-1321). Here the distinction between being and essence was brought out in veritably Aristotelian fashion. Thereafter, the influx of Avicenna into Western thought was inextricably linked to the works which gave an exposition of Thomist philosophy. Among these, the brilliant commentary on the Aquinian *De Ente et Essentia* is noteworthy; it was delivered by Cardinal Cajetan (1469-1534) at the Academy of Padua in the school year 1493-1494. Likewise, the Spanish-French theologian John of St. Thomas (family name, John Poinsot, 1589-1644) made frequent references to Avicenna in the lectures, which he gave at Alcala and Madrid in 1630-43, published as recently as 1930 in Turin under the title *Cursus Philosophicus Thomisticus.*

Averroës—the Commentator *par excellence*—had a markedly different career in the West. His interpretation of Aristotle aroused the suspicion of the scholastic theologians. He was understood to mean that man was the union between body and soul, that the soul was the form of body, and that the intellect was another substance in contact and communion with the soul. To Christian thinkers, all this sounded heretical and was utterly inadmissible. Christianity promised man an individual immortality, not the immortality of a substance outside himself. That the Christian and Averroist doctrines were incompatible is shown in the anti-Averroist pronouncements of the Italian Franciscan theologian St. Bonaventura (1221-1274) as well as in those of Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas.

Intent upon saving both the Platonic immortality of the soul and the Aristotelian unity of the human composite, Christian philosophers were naturally drawn to Avicenna. He seemed to offer the elements of a solution. His exposition of the pseudo-Aristotelian *Theology* had the effect of reconciling Plato and the Stagirite in a synthesis which had an appeal to Christian minds. The Christian philosophers recognized in him those elements of Platonism which were already incorporated in their tradition since St. Augustine. Precisely this, together with those Aristotelian concepts which Christians were able to accept, occasioned the influx of Arab philosophy into Western theology. The trend was unmistakable: Avicenna was accepted after an attempt was made to rid him of incongenial

views, and having reduced his principles to agree with St. Augustine, it was possible to admit his interpretations as part of a necessary Aristotelianism.

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CHAPTER FOURTEEN

MEDIAEVAL JEWISH PHILOSOPHY

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I.

IN THE context of mediaeval culture, the chief importance of Jewish philosophy lies in its mediating function between Muslim and Christian thought. Jews played a major rôle as translators who made Arabic writings—often translations or paraphrases of Greek works—available to Latin scholars. But their function was more than formal. Muhammedan, Jewish and Christian thinkers all faced the problem of relating a revealed religion to philosophy; hence the solution found by Jews could affect the thinking of Christians. Thus Maimonides (1135-1204), the greatest Jewish thinker, was able to influence Thomas Aquinas (1225?-1274), the greatest Christian thinker of the Middle Ages.[1]

But mediaeval Jewish philosophy must be viewed in its inner unity as well as in its merely external historical rôle. Here one fact is of crucial importance: philosophy is not an autonomous growth in mediaeval Judaism, but is forced upon it by the Islamic environment mediating the Greek heritage. The very language in which the earlier Jewish thinkers wrote is Arabic, Hebrew being used only after translators had made it a tool fit for philosophic expression. By and large, a pure philosophy never developed in mediaeval Judaism. Until the end of the twelfth century only Isaac Israeli (*ca.* 850-950), the first of mediaeval Jewish philosophers, and Solomon Ibn Gabirol (*ca.* 1020-*ca.* 1050? 1070?) wrote general philosophic works. While in the latter Middle Ages such works became more common—especially in the form of commentaries and subcommentaries on Aristotle—,

the central interest of mediaeval Jewish philosophy remained confined to the task of reconciling Judaism, as a revealed religion, with philosophy, a product of natural reason.

One may thus speak of mediaeval "Jewish" philosophy in a quite specific sense. Greek or British philosophy are "Greek" or "British" in the restricted sense that they may be historically intelligible only within their respective cultures; but their claim to truth is presumably universal, and the evidence they offer universally accessible. Mediaeval Jewish philosophy is "Jewish" rather in the sense in which mediaeval Latin philosophy is "Christian": here universal reason is only one of two sources of truth; the other is extra- (though not necessarily anti-) rational,—a body of revelations available only to the followers of a particular faith.

To the superficial observer it seems obvious that no genuine contribution to philosophy can arise from such a situation. For wherever reason plays its rôle unchecked by revelation, we can expect nothing specifically "Jewish," but simply the Aristotelianism and Neoplatonism characteristic of all mediaeval thought, whether written in Arabic, Hebrew or Latin. And wherever revelation does curtail reason we can expect no philosophy at all, but simply orthodox apologetics with philosophic trimmings. If the superficial observer is right, mediaeval Jewish philosophy has, as such, no contribution to offer the history of philosophy; it offers at best a few philosophic ideas discovered accidentally in a situation hostile to genuine philosophy.

But the truth is that the characteristic contributions of mediaeval Jewish philosophy arise precisely from the situation which constitutes it as a distinctive entity. Philosophy here is not an activity without presuppositions, but "the recognition of the authority of the revelation is the presupposition of all philosophizing." [2] Great liberties may be taken in interpreting its true *content;* but the *fact* of revelation constitutes a commitment prior to all philosophy. It is obvious that this is a condition to be found nowhere in ancient or modern philosophy.

Problems of profound philosophical significance arise from this situation: (i) Prior in its claims to all philosophizing, the revelation (more precisely: the revealed Law) can hardly remain indifferent to the very activity of philosophizing. The philosopher-under-the-Law will be driven toward interpreting his philosophical activity as com-

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manded by the Law. To the ancients philosophy was the ultimate arbiter not only of truth but also of its own value. The value of philosophical activity now tends to be measured by extra-philosophical criteria: the prophet stands above the philosopher. In other words, philosophy requires a theological foundation.

(ii) But theology also requires a philosophical foundation. Reason is inherently unable to prove the *fact* of the revelation,—for if it could the revelation would cease to be supernatural—; but the *possibility* of revelation must be subject to rational proof. For if what is a supernatural fact is rationally impossible, no ground is left for any genuine reconciliation between reason and revelation, and only one alternative remains to the total rejection of either of them: the so-called "double-truth-theory," according to which a doctrine may be at once naturally true and supernaturally false, and vice versa. But this theory is overwhelmingly rejected in mediaeval Jewish philosophy, which shuns a wholly anti-rational position.

(iii) The above two problems, novel to mediaeval thought, arise from the very situation in which mediaeval Jewish philosophy develops. Other problems are less fundamental but no less influential: specific theological doctrines, of Biblical or post-Biblical origin, now become problems for philosophic justification. Some of these doctrines prove to be an inspiration to philosophy outlasting the specific mediaeval setting. The most important of these would appear to be the Biblical doctrine of creation.[3]

Mediaeval Jewish philosophy may be divided into three periods, according to the philosophy from which they draw their chief inspiration: Kalam, Neoplatonism and Aristotelianism. This division is inaccurate in several respects: the three types of thought do not follow each other in strictly temporal order; no thinker follows purely one type of thought, without combining with it elements of another; some thinkers—notably Jehudah Hallevi (*ca.* 1085- shortly after 1141)—do not fit into any of these types. This division is therefore of limited validity, made largely for purposes of convenience.

II.

Kalam is a movement in Islam arising from the need to reconcile certain doctrines of the Koran with the requirements of an enlightened faith. The anthropomorphisms of the Koran were found to be

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incompatible with the concept of divine unity, and its doctrine of predestination with divine justice. Kalam developed into a rational defense of the major doctrines of Islam, such as the existence and unity of God, creation, providence and immortality. The rationalist was subsequently opposed by an anti-rationalist school. The former held that God and His creation were subject to the laws of reason. The latter which denied this used rational argument for dialectical purposes only.[4] In Judaism, Kalam developed only in its rationalist form, its most significant representative being Saadia Ben Joseph (882-942). A religious and communal authority as well as a scholar, Saadia saw his philosophic task in the refutation of the sectarian and skeptic views which had originated between the seventh and ninth centuries.

Saadia sets out by defining the relation between reason and revelation. Much of the doctrinal and moral content of the revelation is also rationally attainable; here the revelation, far from being superfluous, serves a paedagogic purpose. Only the select few can find these truths by purely rational means, and even these only after long labors and many errors. Other parts of the content of the revelation are rationally altogether unattainable: in moral matters, reason can only provide principles but not practical applications; and the ceremonial Law, given to Israel over and above the moral Law, escapes all rational deduction. The fact of the revelation cannot be proved rationally but only historically: the entire people of Israel, standing at Mount Sinai, cannot have been mistaken.

Saadia follows the Kalam-pattern in proving the existence of God from the temporal origin of the world. If the world can be proved to have a beginning in time, the existence of a Creator follows as a matter of course; for something can come into being *ex nihilo* only by reason of supernatural *creatio*. Four proofs are offered for the temporal origin of the world; the last is most interesting: on the assumption of the eternity of time, the occurrence of any actual "now" would involve the impossibility of an infinite time already passed.

This Bible- (or Koran-) inspired starting-point with creation is of far deeper philosophic significance than might appear. Creation is the *absolute* giving of existence—and the world is *per se* radically contingent; reason is *created* reason—and is as such limited to the understanding of the created world: these and other doctrines, here

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implicit, were to be of lasting effect, even beyond the confines of mediaeval philosophy.

Saadia follows Kalam in his treatment of the divine attributes. Life, wisdom and power are real attributes of God, but they do not introduce a real multiplicity into His nature; they appear as many only to our finite viewpoint. He rejects, on the one hand, any real multiplicity in God (partly in polemic against the Christian Trinity), and, on the other, the Neoplatonic radicalism which regards any positive description of God as an illegitimate introduction of multiplicity into His nature.

In his theodicy, Saadia asserts free will and its compatibility with divine omniscience. The world is governed by the law of reward and punishment, and this law extends to life after death. Saadia maintains the substantiality and immortality of the soul—though he does not achieve the notion of pure spirituality—and upholds the doctrine of resurrection.

Saadia thus follows mostly the pattern of thought set by Kalam. But his thought is not free from different admixtures. He rejects the atomism of Kalam in favor of Aristotelian notions, and there are Platonic as well as Aristotelian elements in his psychology.

Kalam was soon superseded by more sophisticated philosophies. But the questions Kalam had first posed—under theological influence—remained of profound and lasting influence, even if its answers were found inadequate.

III.

Neoplatonism interprets reality as a succession of emanations from a God conceived as Absolute Unity. These emanations are related among themselves, and all to God, as is logical consequent to logical ground: the posterior is wholly dependent on the prior, while the prior is wholly independent of the posterior. Increasing dependence means both increase in multiplicity and decrease in value. The One is prior to the realm of intellect because the multiplicity of ideas first appears at that level; but, again, that realm is prior to the realm of sense at which appears the multiplicity of sense-objects. Soul—endowed with self-movement—may be anywhere—enslaved below or soaring high. It may be lost in the multiplicity of sense-objects and passions; liberated from these and elevated to contempla-

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tion of the world of intellect; or even united in ecstasy with the One Itself.

This system commends itself to the mediaeval Jewish philosopher in many points but is suspect in almost as many. Hence it is eagerly embraced but also immediately modified. On Neoplatonic grounds the philosopher can assert the strict unity of God required by monotheism, against what appear to be compromises in Kalam: but in so doing he also removes all positive attributes from God and deprives Him of His personal character; he is forced to regard the Biblical attributes as merely negative in significance, *i.e.*, intended to reveal only the essential unknowability of God. Neoplatonic emanationism appears to support *creatio ex nihilo* in that it makes the world stem completely from God; there is here no prime matter independent of the creative act of God: but what in the Bible is a free act of creation here becomes the necessary metaphysical relation of ground and consequent. Neoplatonism further commends itself for its sharp distinction, both in reality and value, between the spiritual and the sensual; it helps combat materialism and such forms of religious skepticism as may be based on it: but it also implies the superiority of contemplative withdrawal from the world, to the life of moral action in the world. And that is a type of ethics and piety quite alien to traditional Judaism which centers in a revealed Law demanding moral practice in the world.

These tensions are reflected in the writings of mediaeval Jewish Neoplatonists, almost all of whom make some attempt to limit the sphere of validity of their philosophic principles. Isaac Israeli (*ca.* 850-950) sets the course. While accepting the emanationist principle as valid within the cosmic hierarchy, he rejects it as explaining the relationship between the cosmos as a whole and God. God has created the world freely, and the ground of creation is not a logico-metaphysical necessity but the goodness of God. Hence ethics, too, can be given a traditional rather than a Neoplatonic foundation: it is founded in obedience to the will of a God providentially concerned with man, rather than in the desire—of a soul imprisoned in matter —to ascend to mystic union with God. Bahya Ibn Paquda's (11th or 12th century) connections with Neoplatonism are far slighter still. Some traces of it are evident in his concept of God as strict unity, and in his view that the central task of the good life is liberation from the senses. But the God he proves is the Creator-God, and his

proofs are those of Kalam; and the chief motivation of his ethics is not contemplative ascent to the impersonal One, but gratitude to the personal God. A much more radical Neoplatonist is Joseph Ibn Zaddiq (died 1149). He departs far enough from traditional theology to assert, with Neoplatonism, that the individual human souls have their origin in the World-Soul. Nevertheless he, too, seeks to combine free creation with emanation, and even to justify the temporal beginning of the world, a doctrine certainly underivable from Neoplatonic principles.

The great exception is Solomon Ibn Gabirol (known in the Christian Middle Ages as Avicebron, *ca.* 1020-*ca.* 1050? 1070?), celebrated poet and the profoundest of mediaeval Jewish Neoplatonists. His poetry proves abundantly that his traditional religious convictions are genuine; but his *Fountain of Life* does not mention Judaism in a single word; characteristically mediaeval Christians could regard it as the work of a Muslim. Gabirol's problem is strictly metaphysical: the derivation of reality from a First Principle, in terms of multiplicity gradually emanating from unity. Traditional Neoplatonism involves an unexplained transition at that level in the emanation-chain where matter first appears: above it, there are non-material entities of increasing multiplicity in essence; below it, unformed matter accepting increasing degrees of formation. Gabirol's systematic mind finds in this break a serious problem. He solves it by positing matter of a sort—intelligible matter—even at the spiritual levels of reality, thus seeking to understand the whole chain in terms of matter and form.[5] In the structure of reality the higher level, while existing independently, is always undetermined (matter, genus) relative to the level immediately below it which thus requires a new principle of determination (form, specific difference) for its actualization. Gabirol's doctrine unifies the emanation-chain but poses a new problem. Neoplatonism must affirm that from the Absolutely Simple only a simple being can directly emanate; hence the first emanated being is simple in nature, possessing duality only indirectly, in that it is related to both itself and the source of its emanation. But Gabirol is compelled to explain how two principles—matter and form—can emerge directly from the First Principle. To make this metaphysically possible he abandons necessary emanation at the first step in favor of a free divine will which, though simple, is yet able to create more than one entity. Gabirol's doctrine of the divine

will is obscure and difficult; but it would be a mistake to see in it an accommodation to theological teaching: there is no evidence that it arises from any but philosophical exigencies.

IV.

Jehudah Hallevi's (*ca.* 1085-shortly after 1141) position within Judaism is similar to that of al-Ghazzali within Islam: in defence of revealed religion, he criticizes not merely specific philosophic doctrines but philosophy as a whole. In the quarrels of the metaphysicians he sees evidence of the inherent uncertainty of the whole discipline, contrasting it with the historically-documented certainty of the revelation at Mount Sinai. The roots of metaphysical uncertainty lie in human nature: all merely natural striving after God is finite and incomplete. Only where God actively descends to reveal His will can this uncertainty be overcome; but the God of the philosophers dwells above, unmoved. These differences between religion and philosophy are reflected in the attitude toward God assumed by their followers. The philosopher makes God a mere object of contemplation, whereas the follower of Abraham strives for passionate communion with God. The truly good life is not philosophic contemplation but that immediate and super-rational relation with God achieved in its highest form by the prophet. For the ordinary man the good life consists in prayer, good works and the love of God. Jehudah Hallevi lifts the historical covenant between God and Israel above all universal determinations: Israel possesses a super-rational capacity which is actualized by the practice of the divine Law and life in the Holy Land. The rationalist thinkers tend to regard the ceremonial as inferior to the moral Law, ascribing to it a largely paedagogic function in the service of the latter; Jehudah Hallevi sees in its very irrationality proof of its super-rationality.

But the sharpness of Jehudah Hallevi's opposition to both universalism and rationalism is mitigated. There is no difference between Israel and the nations as regards the moral Law, and in the messianic age all differences will disappear. Moreover, he himself uses philosophic arguments for the existence and unity of God, and some Neoplatonic notions. Thus he is not a radical critic of philosophy as such; he merely wishes to point out the limitations of its achievement and value in comparison with the religious life.

V.

From the beginning of the twelfth century Aristotelian gradually supplant Neoplatonic notions. Largely owing to the influence of Muslim philosophers, Aristotelianism now earns the prestige of greater philosophic soundness; but it scarcely fulfills the requirements of personal religion any better than Neoplatonism. Positively characterized as highest Thought, Aristotle's God may seem closer to that of the Bible than the Neoplatonic bare One. But He thinks only Himself; and even if this self-thought is interpreted as involving indirectly all that it produces, it still embraces only form, to the exclusion of matter. As the ultimate formative principle, God does not create matter. But matter is the principle of individuation. Hence at the very best the Aristotelian God can know the species only; and His providence can extend no further. But this makes Aristotelianism compatible with Biblical religion only if it can be fundamentally reconstructed.

Precisely such a reconstruction is attempted by Moses Maimonides (1135-1204), the greatest of mediaeval Jewish thinkers. His *Guide for the Perplexed*—as is indicated even by its name—is not a philosophic system, but a systematic treatment of those problems which must be solved if the principles of philosophy are to be reconciled with the principles of the revealed Law of Judaism.[6]

Maimonides' proofs for the existence of God are those of Aristotle and Avicenna. His concept of God is Neoplatonic, and he states the doctrine of negative attributes in classic form. All qualities attributed to God in truth merely remove contrary imperfections. Even "existence" means only "lack of all non-being," and "unity," "lack of all multiplicity." God is the unknowable cause of the most perfect actions, and we refer to His works, not His nature, when we give Him positive attributes.

Maimonides' crucial departure from "the philosophers," in defence of the foundations of the Law, occurs in his treatment of creation. He grasps this with unsurpassed clarity: given the necessary nexus between God and the world which is asserted by both Aristotle and Neoplatonism, all "arbitrary" divine interference with natural law becomes in principle indefensible. Individual providence and miracles become impossible, above all the crucial miracle of revelation—the very root of the Law itself. Maimonides urges that the

philosopher can prove the validity of natural law only *within* the world; that it is therefore philosophically permissible to hold that God has created the laws of nature as well as nature itself; and that if this is the case His act of creation cannot be understood in terms of these laws. He points out certain insuperable difficulties in the emanation-theory which vanish on the assumption of free creation. But he does not hold that creation can be proved philosophically. On strictly rational grounds, the laws of the cosmos may be regarded as either absolute or the product of free creation.

In such a situation religious interest may decide in favor of the latter view. This view saves the foundations of revealed religion: for if God has freely created the laws of nature He is also free to suspend them temporarily, for the purpose of miracles, providence and, above all, revelation. Revelation is thus rationally possible, and faith may assert its reality without eschewing reason.[7]

Chiefly concerned with saving the principles of revealed Judaism, Maimonides often moves far from it in spirit. Although miracles are in principle possible the most sparing use must be made of them in practice. Hence providence is to be explained in "natural" terms. At the subhuman level providence looks after the species only; in man it can extend beyond that to the individual only by virtue of intellect; for this is what distinguishes man from animal. "Natural" providence for the human individual is the result of closeness to God which may be achieved by intellectual self-perfection. Prophecy, too, is to be explained as naturally as possible. With the Muslim philosophers, Maimonides interprets the human share in all knowledge as the mere achievement of receptivity; actual cognition is due to the pouring down of illumination from a higher cosmic intellect. Prophecy differs from natural philosophic illumination only in degree. Maimonides' ethics, too, is far in spirit from traditional religion. The highest end of man is the contemplation of God, the moral law largely a means to this end, and the ceremonial law largely a means to the moral law,—a mere means to a means. His departure from the spirit of Judaism is perhaps greatest in his doctrine of immortality: only the intellectual part of the human soul can be immortal, and even this is only potentially so; only those who are able to actualize their intellect by the contemplation of God acquire actual immortality.

This anti-traditional tendency in Maimonides is partly due to

his reluctance to resort to supernatural explanations and miracles beyond necessity; such a necessity exists wherever the principles of revealed religion are at stake, and these he guards without hesitation. Thus while conceding the natural explanation of prophecy he yet relates it directly, if negatively, to God's supernatural intercession. In each case, God may supernaturally prevent the occurrence of prophetic illumination; hence wherever a prophecy takes place it is at once subject to natural explanation, and directly related to the divine will. Moreover, the prophecy of Moses does not submit to any natural explanation; it is an absolute miracle. Maimonides also seeks to mitigate the exclusiveness of his doctrine of immortality; he is well aware that according to Judaism a share in the world-to-come is not restricted to an intellectual elite. But his principles make immortality dependent on the acquisition of religious truth; hence he can uphold the traditional conviction only by laying down a minimum of truth—his celebrated thirteen articles of faith—as condition of immortality; whoever lacks the rational capacity to understand their truth must accept them as a dogma.

The most radical of mediaeval Jewish Aristotelians is Levi Ben Gerson (or Gersonides, 1288-1344). Returning under the influence of Averroës to a more genuine version of Aristotelianism, he makes God highest Form, insisting that positive attributes may be ascribed to Him without impairing His unity. To think otherwise is to confuse secondary beings—which possess their attributes derivatively—with God who possesses His attributes *primo et per se*. Gersonides rejects emanationism and is thus forced to admit the existence of uncreated prime matter. But he plays down its importance as the barest potentiality; moreover, he derives all forms from God and interprets the formation of matter as a free and creative, not a necessary, process. Divine knowledge, too, must stop short of matter. God can exert providence over the species only, and over the individual only in so far as it is a member of the species. The individual human being can as such become subject to providence only by acquiring a share in the intelligible world. Gersonides follows philosophical exigencies much more closely and with much less autonomy than Maimonides. For instead of confronting religion and philosophy in their principles he attempts to achieve the reconciliations needed by the minute analysis of specific doctrines.

In the fourteenth century the conviction grows that Aristotelian

philosophy must be opposed in principle if the true character of Judaism is to be preserved. By far the profoundest of the critics of Aristotle is Hasdai Crescas (1340-1410). His critique of Aristotle's *Physics*—which anticipates modern notions of space and infinity—is sweeping and fundamental, not piecemeal or confined to details.[8] The same fundamental opposition to traditional philosophy characterizes the rest of his thought. Like Gersonides he ascribes positive attributes to God, subjecting the doctrine of negative attributes to subtle criticism. But unlike the former he rejects the positive attributes of the Aristotelians. These are product of a false intellectualism. If God is highest Thought, His creative activity cannot be made intelligible as flowing from His nature; He then perforce dwells above unmoved, indifferent to the creation. God is primarily Goodness and Love, not Thought; and His Love is directed on the world, not Himself. Philosophic ethics, too, suffers from a false intellectualism. The highest goal of man is not intellectual self-perfection but the love of God. To make that goal a reality is the deepest purpose of the revealed Law. Far from confined to an intellectual elite, the Law, and with it the highest human goal, is accessible to all who earnestly concern themselves with it. For only few may possess the intellectual capacity for philosophic knowledge; but all have the emotional capacity for the love of God. Immortality does not depend on the intellect; the soul—much more than mere intellect—is essentially immortal. Like Maimonides, Crescas reaffirms Biblical voluntarism against the necessitarianism of the philosophers. But Maimonides is concerned with reconciling philosophically the principles of the Law with those of philosophy, prepared to assimilate in detail a great deal of philosophical intellectualism; Crescas primarily attacks the intellectualist values of the philosophers, concerned with upholding the voluntaristic values of Jewish tradition.

The fifteenth century no longer produces original contributions in the field of Jewish philosophy. Such writers as Joseph Albo (died 1444), while widely read, are more significant for their attempts to systematize the essentials of Jewish belief than for independent philosophic efforts. Mediaeval Jewish philosophy exerts a deep influence on such post-mediaeval philosophers as Spinoza (1632-1677), Moses Mendelssohn (1729-1786) and Solomon Maimon (died 1800). But the discussion of these influences would exceed the bounds of the present survey.

NOTES

1. Cf. J. Guttmann, *Die Scholastik des 13ten Jahrhundert in ihren Beziehungen zum Judentum und zur juedischen Literatur* (Breslau, 1902).

2. Cf. Strauss, *op. cit.* p. 47. This work should be consulted for all problems discussed in this section.

3. For similarities in Islamic and Christian philosophy, *cf.* chs. XIII, XVI, XVII.

4. Further on Kalam, *cf.* ch. XIII.

5. There are traces of a doctrine of intelligible matter in Plotinus and even Aristotle. For a position within Islam similar to Gabirol's, *cf.* E. L. Fackenheim, "The Conception of Substance in the Philosophy of the Brethren of Purity," *Mediaeval Studies*, vol. V (Toronto, 1943), pp. 115 ff.

6. Cf. L. Strauss, "The Literary Character of the Guide of the Perplexed," *Essays on Maimonides*, ed. by S. Baron (New York, 1941), pp. 37 ff.

7. Cf. E. L. Fackenheim, "The Possibility of the Universe in al-Farabi, Ibn Sina and Maimonides," *Proceedings, American Academy for Jewish Research* (1947), pp. 39 ff.

8. Cf. Wolfson, *op. cit.*, an exhaustive treatment of this subject.

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For further bibliographic information see the histories of Guttmann, Husik and Vajda.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

EARLY CHRISTIAN SCHOLASTICISM

RICHARD J. THOMPSON

THE PERIOD which extends from St. Augustine (354-430) to the second introduction of Aristotle into the west is a much abused period in the history of human thought. Since the Renaissance it has been customary to call it the "Dark Ages" and dismiss it from consideration. And there is much that justifies the name. There are long spans of time in which philosophy is but a word in a book, eras in which the most notable feature is the dearth of speculation, and still other periods in which the distinction between philosophy and sophistry seems not to have been made. Yet in these centuries one finds extraordinary philosophic achievements, genuine philosophical insights, and often a very real understanding of what it is to philosophize. It is thus a period of extremes, of magnificent syntheses and puerile sophistries, of learning and ignorance, of light and shadow: it is, in short, a period of human history.

In it one may, even through the dimly lighted intervals which occur, decipher a pattern of thought, a certain regularity which justifies generalization. It may be said that, from Boethius (480-524) on, the intellectual enterprise of the men of this period, like that of St. Augustine before them, was devoted to the effort to make their faith intelligible, provided it be remembered that this faith was, for all of them, a consequence of a Revelation which could never be entirely intelligible in this world. The example of St. Augustine was always before them, both in his effort to develop a synthesis of faith and reason, and in the philosophical vocabulary and conceptual lexicon which he had put at the service of his faith. For the reason which seeks an understanding of the content of faith is not a naked

reason; it is a reason clothed with a philosophical garb which it inherited from a non-Christian and frequently anti-Christian tradition.

Let the reader be warned from the beginning that he shall seek in vain for precise and finely detailed distinctions between the sciences which issue from faith and those which issue from reason. Such precisions come much later and they are the fruit of a diligent and philosophical analysis of the nature of demonstration which the men of this period could not even attempt. It is, therefore, hardly fair to these men to judge their work according to the accepted divisions of philosophy and theology; certainly they were able to draw the line between the things of faith and the things of reason, but they did not attempt to erect autonomous sciences on these diverse bases. They were rather concerned with the unity of their faith and their reason; they would start with faith and, in its light, develop an intellectual construction which was almost a continuation of that faith. With Augustine, they read in Isaiah: "Unless you believe, you shall not understand," and with this text in mind they began their speculations, the conclusions of which are neither purely philosophy nor purely theology, but a blend of the two which has been aptly called a "Christian Wisdom."

That there are genuinely philosophic notions embedded in this wisdom is evident to anyone who reads the thinkers of this period, and it is with these notions that we are primarily concerned. Now these notions did not come exclusively from St. Augustine, nor were they the product of the individual genius of each thinker in the period. For the most part they came from the later Platonists, and it is here that one finds the source of almost all that is philosophical in early Christian Scholasticism. Aristotle was known in only a part of the Organon; Plato was known only through Macrobius (fl. *c.* 400), who wrote a commentary on the *Dream of Scipio,* which forms a chapter of Cicero's *De Republica* and which is, like the commentary, full of echoes of Plato's *Republic,* and through Chalcidius (fl. *c.* 315), who made available a part of the *Timaeus.* But if there were no works of Plato, there were plenty of Platonists: Plotinus (203-269); Porphyry (233-305), student, biographer and editor of Plotinus; Origen (*c.* 184-253); the Greek Fathers; the Pseudo-Dionysius (fl. *c.* 500); and St. Augustine.

Though the men to be considered do not profess a common doctrine, since each philosophizes in a manner and a spirit appropri-

ate to himself, they are all confronted with a common problem. Stated in its simplest terms, which are borrowed from Boethius, it was the problem of joining together, if possible, faith and reason. But, as we have indicated, the reason to which faith would be joined was, inevitably, a reason formed by a neo-Platonic tradition of thinking. We may grant the existence of a multitude of neo-Platonisms, widely varying; yet they all share a common source and possess a number of doctrines in common. A glance at these will throw some light on the intellectual context within which early Christian thinkers worked.

The neo-Platonic conception of the universe begins with the positing of a sovereign Principle, the One or the Good, which is Cause and Source of all else without being itself limited by any definition. From it issues, eternally and necessarily, usually by way of emanation, Intellect or Mind, to which the name Being properly applies, since Being begins only with the order of essence, and Mind is, as it were, the locus of all intelligibles, of all essences. From Mind proceeds the Soul of the World, an eternal principle of human souls and of inferior forms, which is an utterance of the eternal Mind as the Mind is the eternal knowledge of the One. This hierarchic development continues down to the information of matter, through man, who is possessed of a divine principle, his soul, the prisoner of the body, and who reverses the emanative process and returns himself and all things, through knowledge, to the eternal principles, achieving his true nature only in the intelligible order. Thus man must reject the sensible order of things and perfect himself both intellectually and morally by the unique route of asceticism. Hence, metaphysically, the only realities, the only true beings, are the definable essences; epistemologically, the only valid objects of knowledge are the separated forms; psychologically, sensation and the body play an unsatisfactory and even ignoble part in the acquiring of knowledge.

Now such a doctrine has obvious appeals for a Christian. It presents him with a rational scheme in which there is a God as cause and end of the world, a world of unity and order, peopled with beings of unequal degrees of perfection. It justifies his belief in Providence; it corroborates his faith in the immortality of the soul; it strengthens him in his efforts towards sanctification. But it does so only when certain rectifications have been made in it, for it is a

doctrine in which a God necessitated by His goodness does not create freely, in which Ideas are subordinated to God and in which man is much too immediately continued with a God from whom he does not really differ in kind. What use the Christian confronted with this manner of thinking can make of it is the burden of the remainder of this chapter.

Anitius Manlius Severinus Boethius, "the last representative of the ancient philosophy," by one account, "the first of the Scholastics," by others, belongs to the neo-Platonic tradition in a more unusual sense than later men to be considered, for he would attempt the typically Platonic task of reconciling Plato and Aristotle, to the advantage of Plato, who was, it seems, the founder of both the Academic and Peripatetic schools. A somewhat less exacting assignment set for himself was that of transmitting all the works of Plato and Aristotle to the Romans. His untimely death prevented the execution of most of his program, although he did translate Porphyry's *Introduction to the Categories of Aristotle* as well as parts of the Organon, write commentaries on them, write theological treatises, and compose the famous *Consolation of Philosophy* while in prison awaiting death. Boethius' failure to introduce his Christianity within this last work has caused some doubt to be cast upon the genuineness of his faith, but it is not difficult to see this work as that of a Christian who is using his faith negatively to avoid error. By his translation, his commentaries and his original works, Boethius bequeathed to Scholasticism much of its terminology and many of its definitions; in his theological works he set an example of method for the later Middle Ages; in his logical works he transmitted to succeeding philosophers the enduring problem of the universals. Often criticized for his caution in the solution of this problem, Boethius was much bolder than the logician (Porphyry) from whom he had received it, for he made it clear that the Aristotelian answer that he was proposing in his commentary was by no means satisfactory to him, and in both the *De Trinitate* and the *Consolation*, he preferred to consider the universals as pure forms, somewhat on the order of Platonic Ideas. It would seem, too, that the Boethian distinction between *esse* (form) and *id quod est* (essence) is possible only for one who identifies being and intelligibility, who equates unparticipated *esse* with intelligibility in the pure state. Finally, Boethius recognizes in the ineffability, the incomprehensibility, of God a

natural limit set for human reason in its consideration of things divine.

Social and political upheavals followed on the death of Boethius, and it was not until the Carolingian Renaissance that learning began again to be pursued for its own sake. In this revival of learning the most important philosopher, by far, was John Scotus Eriugena (*c.* 810-877), a man whose intellectual daring was to lead to condemnations, in spite of his unflagging effort to integrate a philosophic interpretation of the universe with his Christianity. Scotus could say with Augustine: "Unless you believe, you shall not understand," and he could accept the Augustinian identification of the true religion with the true philosophy; but whereas for St. Augustine this had meant that the Christian religion contained whatever was true in philosophy because it was the religion, for Scotus it seemed rather to mean that the Christian religion contained all truth because it was a philosophy. There is another aspect of thought by which he separated himself from his predecessor. St. Augustine had been concerned with the relations of faith and reason; Scotus dealt with the relations of authority and reason, for there was at his disposal, in addition to the deposit of faith, an enormous amount of exegetical literature handed on from the Fathers. No matter what is contained in it, and no matter who may have been its author, it in no way constrains the intellect to its acceptance; reason, accepting Revealed Truth in its entirety, is free in respect of any and all authoritative interpretations of that Truth, all of them having to be submitted to the judgment of *vera ratio*, the reason of John Scotus Eriugena himself. And it is important to note that this reason was formed by Scotus' contact with neo-Platonism, resulting from his translations of the Pseudo-Dionysius and of Maximus Confessor.

An essential character of Platonism is the notion of dialectic, the ascending from individuals to generals, and the descent from the general to its species. Scotus adapts this intellectual program to a conception of nature in which all things descend from their cause and are ultimately reunited with it. This involves a typical hierarchic structure, which Scotus elaborates in his *On the Division of Nature*, in which we have these distinct elements: the nature which creates and is not created; the nature which is created and which creates; the nature which is created and which does not create; the nature which is not created and which does not create. Here is God as

uncreated cause (first division) and as uncreated end (fourth division); the second division, the created and creating nature, is the Ideas in God, which, since they have proceeded from a principle, are subordinated to God, and can in a sense be called created; the third division is the universe of things modelled on the Ideas.

Our knowledge of God is scarcely to be called knowledge. The ineffability of God permits us to speak of Him affirmatively: He is good, and negatively: He is not good. But neither affirmation nor negation is permissible in the strict sense, for God is the cause of being and the cause of intelligibility and is consequently beyond being and beyond intelligibility. Thus He is hyper-Being, hyper-Good. It is only by the hierarchically ordered Ideas: Good, Essence (*i.e.,* Being in itself), etc., that God is even self-intelligible. Each Idea is a self-revelation of God (a *theophany*), and it is by these Ideas that God, as it were, puts Himself within the order of being, creates Himself, limits Himself with the bonds of essence, begins to be. The intelligible Ideas are true beings, and God, in order to be said to be, has to reveal Himself within these Ideas. And what is true of God is *a fortiori* true of creatures; they are not, except as they are in the Ideas. "Man is a certain intellectual notion eternally produced in the divine mind." To be is to be intelligible.

In the hierarchic ordination of things which results in the production of the physical world, the higher principle contains what is present in the lower, for the divine illumination which is the self-revelation of God proceeds in an orderly manner through all the divisions of nature. Thus, man, placed on the boundaries of the spiritual and the material orders, communicates perfections from above to things below him. Possessing, by knowledge at least, all inferior perfections, and being joined to the intelligible universe by his intellect, he is a true microcosm. His own perfection is intellectual, and is to be found in a union with God, a union in which man is able to restore all things to God in such a way that all things are one in Him without losing their own identity.

Whatever be the problems arising out of the work of Scotus, and they are many, involving allegations of pantheism, rationalism, etc., there are some matters which are beyond doubt: his sincere faith; his neo-Platonic formation; and his obscurity.

There was little that was original in the two hundred years which followed the death of Scotus. The teachings of the Fathers and the

songs of the poets were handed on; the old models were preserved but they did not inspire each that was new or important. There was, indeed, a frequent rejection of the world with its philosophic and literary blandishments. Yet there was a revival of dialectics, best understood as a technique for handling concepts apart from their function in a philosophic system. Identified with reason itself, it was considered by some to be the activity by which man renewed himself in the image of God.

Notwithstanding the generally unphilosophical character of the eleventh century, it was the century of St. Anselm (1033-1109), famous for his struggles with the English kings and for his "ontological" argument for the existence of God. Like his predecessors, Anselm makes no rigid distinction betweeen philosophy and theology but, like them again, his formula: *fides quaerens intellectum,* faith seeking to understand, implies an understanding of what it means to believe and what it means to know. Like Eriugena, Anselm has an enormous confidence in the ability of human reason to arrive at truth, for, among other things, he will demonstrate the necessity of the Trinity by necessary reasons. Yet, unlike Scotus, who seems to be a philosopher handling the problems of a religious metaphysics, Anselm gives the impression of a theologian using metaphysics to solve problems of Christian doctrine.

Restricting the discussion to St. Anselm's proofs for the existence of God, we find that they are of two orders. The proofs of the first order, from the *Proslogium,* are Augustinian and even Platonic, for they are based upon our awareness of inequalities and gradations in this universe, inequalities which can be explained only in terms of a sovereign Good, Being or Nature, in which the unequal goods, beings or natures participate. The arguments are cogent, St. Anselm assures us, but they are several and complicated, and so he feels compelled to offer a proof which is both single and simple. This is the second order of proof, the "ontological" argument, which still echoes in our culture.

The proof is too familiar to bear repeating.[1] Arguments for and against its validity have occupied the attention of the most eminent philosophers and theologians. Unfortunately, most of these discussions have abstracted the proof from the context of Anselm's thought and have failed to locate it in the mind of the Anselm of history. In the first place, it must be noted that there is no problem

for him concerning the origin of his idea of God. Whether its origin be his faith or his reason, the only problem is the worth, the knowledge-value of the idea. Now Anselm knew two kinds of dialecticians: the nominalists, for whom the universal is but a word, having no real object; and the realists, who terminate their knowledge in things. Anselm was enough of a Platonist to subscribe to the realistic position. Thus the knowledge one has of God is not by an idea which is no more than a word; it is by a concept which permits us to grasp the very entity which is its object. From this point of view, which involves the Platonism of Anselm—further implied in his frequent use of the phrase *vere es,* Thou *truly* art, to express the very nature of God—and the contemporary situation in dialectics, the "ontological" argument may be seen as something other than a brilliant *tour de force.* It is in no sense a method of having being come from thought, precisely because if there were no such being there would be no such thought. It is vain to represent to him, as the contemporary Gaunilon did, that one could use such an argument to prove the existence of a perfect island, for the idea of the island does not compel the intellect to posit its existence. The island is known by a *vox,* a word, whereas God is not represented by such an idea, for He is present to thought by a knowledge which terminates in a nature, a nature which demands existence in order to be properly that nature.

The death of St. Anselm occurred at the beginning of a century which was marked by a new renaissance. Schools flourished in Paris, Orleans, Laon, Chartres, Melun, Bologna, and throughout western Europe. Law, theology, belles-lettres, philosophy: these became matters of vital concern. Of the many schools the most important were those at Paris and at Chartres. The schools of Chartres were the home of twelfth century Platonism, a synthesis derived from various sources and extending into various fields, including theology, metaphysics, cosmogony and grammar. In theology and metaphysics the most illustrious representative of Chartres was one of its chancellors, Gilbert of LaPorrée (1076-1154). Obscurities in the text and in his manner of expression make him difficult to follow, but the Platonic background of his thought is evident in his discussion of the Ideas, the only genuine (*sincerae*) substances, from which corporeal things come to be as from their exemplars, possessing only images of these ideal forms. Yet, since this image is the formal determination within the thing by which it is, one can ultimately assign

the existence of a given order of things to their ideal exemplar as to their *esse.* Once again, then, the Ideal, the intelligible, is one with Being. Humanity and the being of man are one and the same.

This study of early Latin Scholasticism can be closed with a brief glance at a Parisian philosopher who, by his rejection of Platonism, marks the introduction of a new method of thinking. The thirteenth century will differ from the twelfth largely by the introduction of Aristotle, accompanied by his Arabian commentators. This introduction posed fresh problems for Christian theologians and philosophers, since it put a new system of concepts at their disposal. These fresh problems do not concern us, but they are foreshadowed by the work of a thinker whose greatest dependence was not upon the Platonists but upon Aristotle. Unfortunately for our philosopher, his Aristotle was the Aristotle of the Organon, not the Aristotle of the *De Anima* and the *Metaphysics,* for most of his theological and philosophical embarrassments arose from his use of a logic which was not rooted in psychology and metaphysics. The philosopher was Peter Abailard (1079-1142), famed throughout Europe for his skill in dialectics, in which science he was sure he had discovered the laws governing all human thought. Thus he had an instrument of universal application, which he applied with equal vigor and unequal success to logical and theological problems.

In logic Abailard abandons the realism of the Platonic tradition. Marshalling a variety of arguments against his contemporary realists, he concludes with the assertion that universality, the characteristic by reason of which the same term can be predicated of several things, can in no wise be anything real but must of necessity belong to the term, the word which is so predicated. This word signifies no essence, nothing real, but it does make known a *status,* a state, *e.g.* "to be man." We have here a denial of Plato, not in the name of Aristotle, but in the name of a logic conceived as the unique method of knowing all objects, whatever they may be. The denial has curious consequences. Since the object of the universal idea is nothing real, it follows that the most genuine and valid knowledge that can be had is not of the universal, the abstracted form of Aristotle, the *verum ens* of Platonism, but is of particular things. So much for Aristotelian science.

The dialectical mind can be seen at work again when Abailard gathers together a multitude of texts from the Fathers in order to

reconcile opposed or apparently opposed views. Though this gathering of texts is not original with Abailard, his precisions on the methods to be employed, as well as his example in his *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans,* influenced the compilers of *Sententiae* in his own century and played a part in the development of the *quaestio* form in the following century. In Ethics, Abailard argues, logically and plausibly, from the inwardness of morality pointed out by the New Testament to the complete indifference of the external act, and further arouses his more traditionally minded contemporaries, already disturbed by his theological opinions.

In his interpretation of the relations of faith and reason, Abailard admits the priority of faith, but he insists that there can be no science of theology without the help of philosophy, understood, of course, as dialectics. For the opinion of the theologians of the twelfth century on his interpretation and its consequences there is the verdict of two councils, both of which condemned him. Yet his errors were not due to a desire to break with tradition, but were due rather to a lack of prudence in statement, and to a conceit which drove him to a solution of problems with which, as a logician, he was inadequately prepared to deal.

The influence of Abailard, personal and philosophic, extends beyond his own century and is seen in the logical speculations of the thirteenth. But the exaggerated respect for dialectics declines somewhat, both because of the set-back at the hands of the councils, and because in Spain a flourishing school of translators is making available to the West the treasures of Greek and Arabian thought.

The past does not die. In Paris the Victorines repeat and develop the psychological and mystical content of St. Augustine; Amalric of Bènes (fl. 1200) gives a pantheistic interpretation of Eriugena; dialectics, not as the whole of science now, but as a valuable tool of the intellect, continues to occupy an important place in the curricula of the schools.

But a new spirit is abroad in Europe. Platonism is no longer the only source of philosophic inspiration. Aristotle is entering the scene, and though he brings with him a host of Arabians whose Aristotelianism is suspect, he brings also a new way of regarding things, a new method of conceptualizing reality. It will be the task of thirteenth century scholasticism to integrate these new insights to Christian

thought, as it had been the task of the earlier scholastics to attempt the formation of a solid synthesis of Platonism and Christianity.

NOTES

1. For those who are unfamiliar with St. Anselm's proof for the existence of God from the *Monologium,* it is paraphrased here. It opens with a prayer, which is as necessary to the argument as anything which follows. In the prayer, Anselm retreats within the inner chamber of his mind to commune with his Creator. Then, seeking an understanding of God, he finds that God is that than which nothing greater can be thought of—*aliquid quo majus cogitari non valet.* Does such a nature exist? Its existence has been denied, for the fool has said in his heart that there is no God. Yet the fool, in denying that God is, at least admits that he has knowledge of the nature whose existence he denies, and this nature has existence in his knowledge. Thus there are two ways of knowing: to know an object as it is in thought, and to know an object as it is in reality. But for an object to exist only in thought is for it to have an inferior kind of existence, since this existence in thought is certainly not as great and as perfect as existence in reality. If, therefore, that than which nothing greater can be thought of exists only in the understanding it is inferior to that which exists in reality. But it is impossible that a being than which nothing greater can be thought of have something greater than itself. And so there is no doubt that there is a being than which nothing greater can be thought of, and it exists both in the understanding and in reality. Indeed, so truly does it exist that it cannot be thought of as not existing, for, if it were so conceived, it would be inferior to that which must be thought of as existing. Anselm concludes: "So truly dost Thou exist, O Lord my God, that Thou canst not be thought of as not existing, and rightly. . . . To Thee alone, therefore, does it belong to exist more truly than all other beings. . . . For whatever else exists does not exist so truly." Thus God is and is truly, because we can conceive nothing greater than He, and because we cannot conceive Him as not existing.

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CHAPTER SIXTEEN

REVIVED ARISTOTELIANISM AND THOMISTIC PHILOSOPHY

ARMAND MAURER

IN THE thirteenth century, Western mediaeval civilization reached its apogee. With relative peace and prosperity at home and fruitful relations abroad with the neighboring Greek and Arabian cultures, the arts and sciences flourished to an extent hitherto unknown in Western Europe. The newly-created universities in France, Italy and England became centers of intense intellectual activity to which the youth of Europe, eager for knowledge and adventure, flocked in large numbers.

One of the most decisive influences exercised upon the scholars of the time was the discovery of the main writings of Aristotle. The thought of the early Middle Ages was largely inspired by the Scriptures and the Fathers of the Church, especially St. Augustine. Its classical elements were for the most part drawn from the humanist tradition of writers like Cicero and Seneca, and its philosophical inspiration was deeply Neoplatonic. Little was known of Aristotelianism save the logical treatises, and they were not all possessed until the middle of the twelfth century. During the first half of the thirteenth century, however, Aristotle's works on natural philosophy, metaphysics, psychology and ethics were translated into Latin, along with Arabian and Greek commentaries. In these writings the mediaeval world was confronted with a scientific and philosophic vision of the universe far superior to any it had known before. The effect of the discovery was truly exhilarating, and as the writings spread through the universities a profound revolution took place in the mediaeval mind, the effects of which are still felt in our day.

The reaction to the new philosophical literature was mixed. At first ecclesiastical authorities at Paris looked upon it with suspicion, for it contained doctrines contrary to the Faith. To prevent the spreading of these errors, a local council in 1210 forbade the public and private teaching at Paris of Aristotle's natural philosophy and metaphysics, along with the commentaries on them. In 1215 the prohibition was renewed. However, this did not forbid or prevent their being read in private, and their popularity grew rapidly in the second quarter of the thirteenth century. In 1231, Pope Gregory IX, who was himself a lover of learning, temporarily renewed the earlier prohibition and then named a council to examine the writings of Aristotle and to correct any errors found in them. By this action he hoped to make them suitable for use in the Christian world; but his commission failed to produce any positive results, possibly because of the death of William of Auxerre, its most distinguished member. By 1255 the tide had turned so strongly in favor of Aristotle that the Faculty of Arts at Paris placed almost all his works on the curriculum. The entrance of Aristotelianism into Christian thought was by then an accomplished fact, and now the only question was whether he would be the servant of the Faith or its master and destroyer.

There was a special danger to the Faith because Aristotle's works were read at first in Latin translations made, for the most part, from Arabic versions. What is more, the writings of the two great Arabian followers of Aristotle, Avicenna (980-1037) and Averroës (1126-1198), were translated and used to interpret the many enigmatic statements of the Stagirite. As a result, the Christians first saw Aristotle's philosophy through Arabian eyes and interpreted in such a way that it contradicted the Faith on important points of doctrine. A serious effort was needed to make new translations of Aristotle from the original Greek and to compose new commentaries free from Arabian interpretations. By the 1260's the need for this was acute because of the rise of an heretical Averroism in the Faculty of Arts at Paris, and once more the Papacy took action. In 1263, Urban IV reminded scholars that the decree of 1231, which seems to have become a dead letter, was still in force. But, not content to play a merely negative rôle in the issue, he set about to accomplish in his own way what Gregory IX had intended to do in 1231. St. Thomas Aquinas (1224/5-1274) was summoned to the Papal Court where

he began his voluminous commentaries on Aristotle. William of Moerbeke was at the Court, too, and at St. Thomas' request made a new translation of the Aristotelian works directly from the Greek to serve as a basis for the commentaries. More than anything else, this combined effort of William of Moerbeke and St. Thomas, under the patronage of Pope Urban, turned a potentially hostile Aristotle into an ally of Christian wisdom and made possible a vital and fruitful assimilation of his thought.

If we cast a glance over the doctrinal history of the thirteenth century, we can see that opinions differed widely as to the worth of Aristotelianism and the possibility of its being used by Christian scholars. To begin with, there was a group whose main ambition was to continue and to develop the Augustinian heritage of the early Middle Ages. These traditionalists looked upon Aristotle and his Arabian commentators with suspicion or even hostility. True, they would not refuse to make use of the new philosophical vocabulary and even on occasion to adopt some of the new notions; but these never occupied the center of their thought, which in all its essentials remained attached to Platonism and Augustinianism. Their attitude is illustrated well by St. Bonaventure's saying, that Aristotle spoke the language of science and Plato the language of wisdom; while St. Augustine, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, spoke both languages. Like St. Augustine himself, they insisted on the primacy of Faith over reason, but they so conceived that primacy as to cast doubts on the ability of reason alone to solve the main problems of philosophy. If anyone thought otherwise, they simply pointed to the grave errors, from the Christian point of view, in the current versions of Aristotelianism. As theologians, they viewed their work as an attempt to understand better the contents of Revelation. This does not mean that they were uninterested in rational thought; quite the contrary. But their philosophical speculation was contained within their theology and it never developed autonomously as philosophy. As heirs of St. Augustine, moreover, the type of rational thought to which they were accustomed was Neoplatonism, and that is why they showed a lukewarmness to Aristotle and a preference for those writers who, like the Arabian Avicenna, were themselves under the influence of Neoplatonism.

William of Auvergne (1180?-1249), Bishop of Paris, is an inter-

esting case of this type of theologian. A critic of Aristotle and Avicenna, his interests were clearly on the side of St. Augustine; yet his philosophy contains a large dose of Avicennism. Of course, he found much to reject in the Avicennian philosophy: the necessary emanation of the universe from God, the eternity of the world, the interposing of a series of Intelligences between God and man, the last of which is man's immediate origin, the source of his knowledge and his final beatitude. Yet there were aspects of Avicennism which struck a sympathetic chord in the Parisian theologian. For Avicenna, we do not acquire truth from the sensible world but through contact with a superior cosmic Intelligence which illuminates the minds of all men with ideas. This Intelligence is, in Avicenna's view, the Agent Intellect of which Aristotle wrote. Now, as a good disciple of St. Augustine, William of Auvergne was equally convinced that truth is to be obtained through an interior illumination of the mind and not from sensible things. He was ready to agree with Aristotle that we abstract universal ideas from the sensible world, but for him this is simply an occasion for the mind's turning inward to God, the true source of its wisdom. God thus becomes the Agent Intellect of human minds through a fruitful combination of the philosophies of Avicenna and St. Augustine, which has recently been given the name of "Avicennian-Augustinianism."

This theme was developed in different ways in the thirteenth century. Roger Bacon (1210/15-?) not only considered God the Agent Intellect of our minds, but he looked upon all human knowledge as a kind of divine Revelation. For St. Albert the Great (1206-1280), all true knowledge presupposes grace of the Holy Spirit. St. Bonaventure (1221-1274) would not go to the extreme of saying that a special help of God, such as grace or revelation, is needed for human knowledge, since that would destroy it precisely as *natural* knowledge. At the same time he did not think that man's created faculty of knowing is capable of grasping the truth by itself or with the ordinary influence which God exercises upon nature. One of his disciples, Matthew of Aquasparta (1240-1302?), tried to make his thought more definite by saying that the divine illumination by which we know the truth is a *more special* help than that which God generally exercises over nature, although it is still a general one. However this is to be understood, it is clear that

Matthew of Aquasparta's point is substantially the same as that of his fellow Augustinians: The light by which we judge the truth is not a created faculty of man but a divine illumination, so that, strictly speaking, it is not our own weak reason that is the cause of the truth of our knowledge but God Himself.

This theory of knowledge goes hand in hand with a definite conception of the soul and man which was shared by the Augustinian school of the thirteenth century. If the soul does not find truth through the perception of matter but by an interior and upward glance towards God, it is because it is a spiritual substance which is only at home in a spiritual world. The soul may be called the form of the body, and even a substantial form, but care is always taken to ensure its independence from matter. St. Bonaventure, for instance, would not say that the intellectual soul is the only substantial form of the body. Before it is informed by this soul, the body has already been completed by several other substantial forms which confer on it its organic and vital perfections and activities. There is a gap, therefore, between the intellectual soul and matter which for St. Bonaventure is the guarantee of its spirituality and immortality. If St. Albert somewhat closed the gap by asserting that there is but one substantial form between the soul and matter—the form of corporeity,—in his own way he too was bent on assuring the soul's independence. The soul, he tells us, can be considered either in itself, as an intellectual substance, or as a form exercising the function of animating a body. The first view, defining the soul's very nature, he attributed to Plato; the second, describing one of its external and accidental functions, he assigned to Aristotle. Here St. Albert was simply following Avicenna, who had already tried to reconcile the two Greek philosophers in this way. What neither Avicenna nor St. Albert could see was how the soul can be essentially the form of the body. A substance by definition, its relation to another substance such as the body could not be more than extrinsic and accidental. Now this indeed safeguards the independence of the soul from matter; but it is difficult to see how, under these circumstances, man is anything more than an accidental aggregate of soul and body.

If soul and body are so radically distinct for St. Albert, it is because each is thought of as an essence which by definition differs from the other. Indeed, the Avicennian world is composed of

essences of this sort, each of which corresponds to a definition and includes only what is contained in its definition. Whatever is outside the definition is accidental to it. When we define "man," for instance, we mention "rational" and "animal," but we do not say that he is individual or universal. Individuality and universality are accidental to the essence of man as such, so that it can be individual in Peter and Paul and universal in the concept we form of it in our mind. Moreover, although the definition of a thing tells us *what* it is, it does not say whether it exists or does not exist. Consequently, existence itself is not included in the essence of a thing but is accidental to it. At least this is true of everything except God, who is pure existence.

The extension of metaphysics in the thirteenth century to include problems of existence as distinct from those of form or essence was due mainly to the initiation of Avicenna. William of Auvergne adopted his view of the accidentality of existence and used it to explain the contingency of created being. For, he reasoned, if God *is* existence, all other things must *receive* existence as an accident of their essence. Existence, then, is given to them as a free gift and they are contingent in their very being. St. Albert expressed these same views, which St. Thomas Aquinas was to use and transform for his own purposes.

Since the Avicennian interpretation of Aristotle was known to Christian scholars in the second half of the twelfth century, its influence preceded that of Averroism, which became known about 1230. Within the space of thirty or forty years, however, a new movement gained prominence under the aegis of Averroës, called "Latin Averroism." Unlike the Avicennian movement which flourished among the theologians, the Averroist found its devotees among the professors of philosophy at the University of Paris. Averroës had rebuked Avicenna for destroying the purity of the Aristotelian philosophy by mixing his Mohammedan religion with it. It was his aim to return to the pure thought of Aristotle, whom he considered the very model of human perfection and whose doctrine he treated as synonymous with philosophy itself. For him, to philosophize meant simply to comment on the words of Aristotle. The Latin Averroists, like Siger of Brabant (1253?-1281/84) and Boethius of Dacia, also wanted to be philosophers, and for them, too, this meant to return to the philosophy of Aristotle, generally as interpreted by Averroës.

Now, this attitude was bound to lead them into difficulty, for Averroism included doctrines contrary to the Faith. Among others, it taught the eternity of the world, the unicity of the intellect for all men, the denial of divine providence and personal immortality. When rebuked by the theologians for their heterodoxy, they did not deny the truth of Revelation; they simply made it clear that they were pursuing their work as philosophers, not as theologians. Siger said: "When we philosophize we seek the thought of the philosophers rather than the truth." Far from teaching a double truth, as is sometimes claimed, one theological and the other philosophical, and in contradiction with each other, Siger definitely asserted the superiority of revealed truth over philosophical reason. This is precisely the opposite of Averroës' own view, for he had exalted reason over Revelation.

Both Averroës and Siger of Brabant, however, claimed the right to philosophize apart from religion. "We have nothing to do with the miracles of God," Siger protested, "since we treat natural things in a natural way." The Averroist movement thus had as its aim the separation of philosophy from theology and the freedom of the human reason to pursue its work without any control from religion. Boethius of Dacia illustrates this attitude in a little work on the philosophical life ("the best state possible to man"), in which he outlines a natural moral order separate from the supernatural order of grace and beatitude.

In 1270 and 1277 there were violent reactions to Latin Averroism on the part of the traditionalist Augustinians. Its doctrines were condemned by the Bishop of Paris and the leaders were called up before the ecclesiastical court. Siger of Brabant fled the University of Paris and took refuge at the Papal Court where he died about 1284.

In the fourteenth century, Averroism developed further in the direction of rationalism in the philosophy of John of Jandun (d.1328), who exalts the rights and dignity of reason at the expense of Revelation. Marsilius of Padua (d.1336/43), his political collaborator, applied his separation of reason and Faith to the political domain and advocated the separation of Church and State. Dante himself, having placed Siger of Brabant in Paradise along with St. Albert and St. Thomas, reflects this Averroist separation of the spiritual and the temporal orders in his *De Monarchia*.

St. Thomas Aquinas differed from both the Augustinians and the Averroists in his attitude towards Aristotle. The thirteenth-century followers of St. Augustine tended to remain loyal to their master and to the Neoplatonism he had espoused in whatever touched the very essentials of their thought. What they accepted from the Stagirite always remained more or less on the periphery of their philosophy and did not penetrate to its very center. The Averroists, on the other hand, seemed to look upon him as philosophy incarnate. Now, it was St. Thomas' decided conviction that the Augustinians' fear of Aristotle was unfounded. He believed that when the Aristotelian texts were freed from their Arabian contamination, they revealed a philosophy which was sound in its principles and which could be of immense service to Christian wisdom. At the same time he was clearly aware of the insufficiencies of that philosophy and the need of developing and enriching it in the light of reason and Christian truth. Philosophy for him is not the mere understanding of what Aristotle had said. Rather, it is a specific manner of comprehending reality—a comprehension which admits of ever-increasing depths. "The pursuit of philosophy," he wrote, "is not to find out what men have thought, but what the truth of the matter is." Like the Averroists, he realized the importance of studying the philosophy of Aristotle, but because his gaze was turned towards truth he could use that philosophy without becoming its slave.

Unlike the Augustinians of his century, who tended to depreciate the power of the human reason to attain truth without Faith or a special divine illumination, he was confident that an autonomous philosophy based upon experience and the light of the human intellect is possible. He was convinced, moreover, that this philosophy would be in accord with Faith, since the light of reason and the light of Faith come from the same source, God. A theologian by vocation, he himself never developed such a philosophy, but was content to express his most personal philosophical thoughts in the context of his theological *Summae*. Yet he laid down the principles of an autonomous philosophy and on occasion showed us how they were to be developed. In his philosophical works, such as "On Being and Essence" and "On the Unity of the Intellect against the Averroists," we see him approach problems of his day as a philosopher without appealing to Revelation. At the same time he

had no intention of separating philosophy from the light of Faith in the manner of the Averroists; as if a philosopher who is also a Christian should not on that account be a better philosopher. In ordering the relations between reason and Faith, St. Thomas thus kept a wise balance, upholding the rights of reason against those who disparaged its claims, while opening it to the influence of the higher light of Revelation against those who would close it within itself.

One of the achievements of Aristotle was to show, in contradiction to Plato, that the changing physical world bears within itself an element of stability which can serve as the object of true knowledge. The human mind need not turn to a world of Ideas in order to find truth. St. Thomas maintained essentially the same position against the Augustinians, who fixed the certitude of human knowledge in its contact with divine Ideas. He saw clearly the essential bond between Plato and St. Augustine on this point. "Augustine," he said, "followed Plato as far as the Catholic Faith permitted." In place of the separated Ideas, he continues, Augustine held that there are Ideas in the divine mind through which we judge of all things illumined by the divine light. Of course Augustine did not mean that we see the divine Ideas themselves in this life, for that would be impossible. But those supreme Ideas impress themselves on our mind, and by sharing in their light we can have true knowledge. When St. Thomas wrote this he was not only thinking of the Bishop of Hippo, but also of his mediaeval disciples whose doctrine of divine illumination revealed their essential allegiance to Augustinianism. To his way of thinking, however, to deny that the human mind can know the truth by its own natural light is to detract from its perfection and therefore from the perfection of God who is its author. As a Christian he knew well enough that the Psalmist says: "The light of thy countenance, O Lord, is signed upon us." But what is this light save the one received by the soul at its creation and which Aristotle described as the Agent Intellect?

St. Thomas thus recognized that the natural object of our knowledge is to be found in the sense world and that we are by nature adequately equipped to apprehend it. Starting with a knowledge of this world of sense, we have to raise ourselves slowly and with great difficulty to a knowledge of the Source of our existence and our last End, whose essence in this life escapes our comprehen-

sion, but whose existence is attested by His manifest effects in the world about us.

St. Thomas' empiricism in epistemology is closely associated with his view of the intellectual soul as the immediate substantial form of the body. If the intellect were a spiritual substance accidentally joined to matter or separated from it by another substantial form, its dependence for knowledge upon the senses and the sense world would be equally accidental and remote. Knowing, in the most perfect sense of the word, would be a journey of the soul within itself where it would find its own spiritual nature and the wider spiritual world with which it is in communion. But for St. Thomas such an angelic or quasi-angelic mode of knowing is not natural to man precisely because in his case it is not an intellect or soul that knows, but rather a man whose intellect is by nature the substantial form of a body. Under these conditions the gaze of the intellect is naturally turned outward to the material world, and the senses become the only channel of natural knowledge.

The Augustinians were afraid to admit that the soul is so closely allied to matter for fear of losing sight of its spiritual nature and immortality. Were not the Averroists there to warn them that if the soul is the immediate substantial form of the body it is simply another material form which cannot survive death? One way of avoiding this conclusion is to say that the soul and body are only accidentally united, or that one or more substantial forms are present in matter before the intellectual soul informs it. But St. Thomas was convinced that both explanations lose sight of an important fact. Each of us is aware that it is he himself who knows, and not just a part of himself. Experience demands, therefore, that we find a mode of union of soul and body which will permit us to attribute the act of knowing, not to the intellect or soul, but to the entire man. Now we could not say that the whole man, body and soul, knows, if the soul is simply the mover of the body or uses it as its instrument. In either case knowing would be properly the act of the soul. The only mode of union satisfying the datum of experience is the one described by Aristotle as a union of substantial form and matter. For in this case soul and body are but two incomplete principles uniting to form the complete substance of man. Consequently, *that which* thinks is the substantial reality of the whole man and not his soul alone, although he does so by means of his intellect.

Granted this, it remains for St. Thomas to explain more precisely in what sense the soul is incomplete. If the soul is looked at from the point of view of essence or nature, it appears deficient and in need of the body, for it is only a part of the complete essence of man. But from the point of view of existence, this is not true. As a substantial form the human soul has a complete act of existing (*esse*), and since it is a spiritual form, its act of existing is itself spiritual. When it informs the body it communicates to it that act of existing so that there is but one substantial existence of the whole composite. For St. Thomas, therefore, the unity of man does not consist in a combination or assemblage of various parts or substances, but in his act of existing. It is no wonder, then, that he denied the presence of several substantial forms in man. If a substantial form gives substantial existence, several forms of this kind would give man several existences and his unity as a substance would be destroyed.

St. Thomas' solution of the problem of man's unity shows us how he used Aristotelian notions while surpassing them with his own principles. Aristotle himself explained the constitution of man and all corruptible things in terms of form and matter, but he never thought to express their being or unity in terms of act of existing. Indeed the Greeks always tended to view being as form, and that is why form generally occupied the center of their philosophical discussions. Aristotle did not differ from Plato on this point. He merely substituted the Unmoved Movers for the Ideas and definitely located the forms of sensible things in the things themselves. What is new in St. Thomas' metaphysics is the notion that a being is primarily an act of existing (*esse*); so that his world is one of individual acts of existing rather than one of forms or essences. The form of each being is that whereby it is *what* it is; the principle, in other words, which specifies and determines it to be of a certain *kind*. In addition to form there is a further and ultimate act which makes it to be or *to exist*. This is the act of existing, which St. Thomas describes as "the actuality of all acts" and the "perfection of all perfections." It is that which is most profound in any being, its metaphysical nucleus, so to speak, the root-cause of all its perfections and of its intelligibility.

St. Thomas upheld his doctrine of being in the face of widespread opposition from his contemporaries. On the one hand, phi-

losophers like Siger of Brabant wished to return to the Aristotelianism of Averroës who had hardened and fixed it against any development. Siger reminded St. Thomas that Aristotle had written about form, matter and the composition of the two; he had never mentioned an *esse* distinct from them. On the other hand, he faced the opposition of those who admitted *esse* as a distinct metaphysical principle but simply as an accident of essence. This had been the view of William of Auvergne and St. Albert, who traced the notion to Avicenna. For St. Thomas, however, this was still to look upon being as primarily essence or form and to reduce the rôle of existence to an accidental determination of essence. In maintaining the primacy of the act of existing over essence, St. Thomas stood alone in his century and indeed in the whole Middle Ages, a prophet not for his own age but for the ages to come.

St. Thomas' new doctrine of being was bound to have an influence on his notion of God and indeed upon the whole of his metaphysics. All the theologians of the Middle Ages knew that God is Being, for He revealed to Moses that His proper name is "He who is." (*Exodus*, iii, 13.) But the statement is open to different interpretations. St. Augustine, St. Anselm and their thirteenth-century followers like Alexander of Hales and St. Bonaventure, interpreted it to mean that God is pure *essence*, emphasizing by this term His supreme knowability and unchangeableness. For St. Thomas, however, to say that God is "He who is" means that He is the Pure Act of Existing. God is neither a static essence, nor a special kind of actuality like Aristotle's Pure Act of Thought. He is the infinite Act of Existing, including within Himself the absolute fulness of being with all its perfections. What we call "essence" in other things in God is nothing but His Act of Existing, or, to put it another way, God's essence is identical with His existence. A creature is nothing but a limited participation in the Act of Existing of God, and its essence marks off the measure of that participation. In all created things, therefore, there is a real distinction between essence and act of existing.

Our human intellects are entirely inadequate to penetrate the Act of Existing which is God. We can know *that* He exists, but we cannot comprehend His essence so as to know *what* He is in Himself. There are certain things which we can deny of Him, such as change, composition and passivity, for these are incompatible with

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His absolute perfection. We can thus have some negative knowledge of God. We can also know Him by analogy with His creatures, for there must be some resemblance between Him and His effects. But since the distance between the Creator and His creatures is infinite, we know that any perfection that we attribute to God—such as existence, goodness, intelligence, unity, freedom—is in Him in an infinitely more perfect manner than in creatures. Consequently, we have no positive knowledge of God as He is in Himself, but only as He is represented in creatures.

Since God is infinitely perfect He has need of nothing. If He creates a universe, it is not because of any necessity on His part, but because in His supreme goodness He wishes it to share in His own perfection. Creation is thus a free act of God and the expression of His liberality. Moreover, as the Infinite Act of Existing, it is only natural that His proper effect in creating should be to give the universe its very existence. And since without existence it is nothing, creation is *ex nihilo*, from nothing. St. Thomas' view of being as primarily act of existing thus enables him to give to the doctrine of creation its true existential import, which is somewhat obscured in a metaphysics which looks upon being as primarily essence.

The thirteenth century witnessed a lively debate on whether the world is eternal. The Averroists, following Aristotle, thought that the eternity of the world could be rationally demonstrated. Theologians like St. Bonaventure were equally convinced that reason could demonstrate the contrary. St. Thomas saw no reason why God could not, if He willed, create a universe which always existed in the past and always will exist in the future. Reason cannot prove the eternity or non-eternity of the world, for whether it is eternal or not depends solely on the divine will. Only by the revelation of that will in Scripture do we know that in fact our universe began in time. But even if God created a universe endless in time, it would still be a *created* universe, eternally contingent and dependent on the creative influx of existence from God.

The universe is thus an expression of God's will, but it is above all a manifestation of His intelligence. The creative act which establishes all beings as dynamic centers of existing also confers on them their natures by which they are centers of definite activities. Now, these activities are not aimless. Coming from the Divine intelligence, creatures act in view of an end, which is to achieve their own per-

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fection and in so doing to resemble God. Thus all beings come from God and tend back to Him as their final end.

Now, beings tend to this end in different ways and attain it with different degrees of perfection. Some things unconsciously tend towards it by the activities of matter, but they manage to achieve it only in a very imperfect way. Man also attains his final end and his beatitude by activity, but by that activity which most befits him as a human being, namely, an act of the intellect. Secondarily, he attains it by the activity of his will, enjoying the good possessed. By his spiritual intellect man can know all things, even the universal good or God, and nothing short of that will satisfy him. He discovers the traces of God in nature and yearns to know His very essence. But by his natural powers alone he cannot see God face to face. His loftiest speculations fall far short of that goal and fail to satisfy his deepest longings.

For St. Thomas Aquinas, therefore, man's ultimate happiness is unattainable by his natural powers. In a word, it is supernatural. But we have a free will by which we can turn ourselves to God who infallibly offers us His supernatural help to reach the happiness lying beyond our grasp. Not only has He made a Revelation of Himself to man and established an order of grace by which man can begin, even here on earth, to live a supernatural life. In the Incarnation He himself has become man in order that we might not despair of a union with Him in Heaven. Thus for St. Thomas the supernatural crowns the natural and grace completes nature, not by doing violence to it, but by fulfilling its deepest aspirations and needs.

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CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

SCOTISM AND OCKHAMISM

ARMAND MAURER

THE ECCLESIASTICAL condemnation of Aristotelianism and Arabian philosophy in 1277, which even included some of the theses of St. Thomas Aquinas, had a deep influence upon the subsequent development of mediaeval thought. Of course, opposition to Greco-Arabian philosophy was nothing new to the thirteenth century. Its opening decades had seen the newly-translated works of Aristotle and Averroës prohibited; but their vogue spread, and in the years that followed a reconciliation was attempted, with varied success, between Christian dogma and the "new learning." The heresy of Latin Averroism at the end of the century only confirmed the suspicion of the traditionalist theologians that any Christian who accepted the essentials of Aristotelianism must arrive at conclusions contrary to the Faith. The great condemnation of 1277 expressed their renewed reaction to Aristotle and left an even deeper impression on subsequent scholars of the inadequacy of philosophy and pure human reason. If, as has been claimed, the fourteenth century is a period of criticism, it is above all a period of criticism, in the name of theology, of philosophy and the pretensions of pure reason.

The attitude of Duns Scotus (1266-1308) towards Aristotle and philosophy in general is seen in his doctrine of the object of human knowledge. According to the Greek philosopher, the human intellect is naturally turned towards sensible things from which it must draw all its knowledge by way of sensation and abstraction. As a consequence, the proper object of our knowledge is the essence of a material thing. Now, Duns Scotus was willing to agree that Aristotle correctly described our present way of knowing, but he did contest that he had said the last word on the subject and that he had

sufficiently explained what is in full right the object of our knowledge. Ignorant of Revelation, Aristotle did not realize that man is now in a fallen state and that he was describing the knowledge, not of an integral man, but of one whose mode of knowing was radically altered by original sin. Ignorance of this fact is understandable in a pagan like Aristotle, but it must have seemed inexcusable to Scotus in a Christian theologian like St. Thomas. The Christian, Scotus argues, cannot take man's present state as his natural one, nor, as a consequence, the present servitude of his intellect to the senses and to sensible things as natural to him. We know from Revelation that man is destined to see God face to face. Now this would be impossible to achieve if the adequate object of his knowledge were restricted to the essences of material things, for God is not contained within their scope. To be open to the vision of God, the intellect must have an object broad enough to include Him, and the only one that satisfies this condition is *being*. Being, therefore, in its full indetermination to material and immaterial things is the first and adequate object of the intellect.

When as a theologian Duns Scotus made this decision, he was not only assuring the human intellect's capacity for the beatific vision; he was also making metaphysics as a science possible by marking out its proper object. Natural philosophy moves in the realm of finite mobile being and theology in that of infinite being. Metaphysics, on the other hand, has for its object being as being, or the pure undetermined nature of being. For Scotus this is not a logical universal. It is a reality, and the most common of all. Taken simply in itself, the notion of being abstracts from all the differences of beings. That is why it is, for the metaphysician, univocal, having one and the same meaning when applied to all things. Only in its finite and infinite modes is being analogical.

Being has consequently a univocity in Scotism which is not found in Thomism. For St. Thomas did not treat of being as if it were a nature or essence; rather it is for him *that which is,* at whose center is an act of existing. And since every act of existing is irreducible to every other, there is a radical *otherness* in every being which the work of abstraction can never erase. That is why in the philosophy of St. Thomas being is, for the metaphysician, not a univocal, but an analogical, concept.

It was the Arabian philosopher, Avicenna, who taught Scotus to

conceive of being as an essence in an absolute state, *natura tantum,* and at the same time suggested to him his solution of the classic problem of universals. The Scotist nature, like the Avicennian, is simply what the definition of it signifies. Now, neither individuality nor universality is included within the definition of any nature. When I define "humanity," for instance, I mention its essential parts, "animality" and "rationality," but I do not say whether it is individual or universal. Indeed, in itself it is entirely indifferent to being one or the other or both at the same time. It can be individual in real existence and universal in the mind and still remain basically the same nature, for these modalities are entirely accidental to it. Suppose that the nature were of itself universal. Then it could never be individual; but as a matter of fact it is individual in the world of existing things. On the other hand, if it were by its very nature individual, it could never be universal, but it is universal in the mind. Consequently, the nature in itself must be "absolute," abstracting from both individuality and universality.

In Scotism the absolute nature does not exist as such. Humanity, for instance, does not exist except in individual men and in the concept which we form of it. But it is not on that account simply a conceptual entity. Scotus says that it is a real being. This real being is contracted or limited by an "individual difference" or "haecceity" which renders the nature individual. Following upon this contraction of the essence or nature, the individual is actualized by existence, which (at least in creatures) is the ultimate act of a thing, related to it simply as a mode of being.

If this is true, it is evident that essence plays the primary rôle in Scotist metaphysics. The metaphysical nucleus, so to speak, of an individual thing is an essence which is limited by different modalities which are purely accidental to it. That is why Duns Scotus' metaphysics has justly been called "essentialist," in distinction to the "existentialist" metaphysics of St. Thomas,[1] in which the metaphysical center of an individual thing is an act of existing and its essence is but a limitation on that act. Because they do not agree in their notions of being, the two metaphysics are fundamentally different. To confuse them and to equate Scotism with Thomism is simply to invite misunderstanding in both doctrines.

On the other hand, seen in its own light, the metaphysics of Duns Scotus is entirely intelligible. He carefully distinguishes be-

tween two orders of real beings: the order of things (*res*) and the order of realities or formalities (*realitates, formalitates*) which are in things. Things are such that one can exist in separation from the other, if not naturally (like Peter and Paul), at least by the omnipotence of God (as matter can exist apart from form). Realities or formalities, however, cannot possibly exist separately. They are only formally non-identical, in the sense that one is not contained within the formal definition of the other. In Peter, for example, rationality is not contained within the definition of animality and his individuality as Peter is not contained within the definition of humanity; otherwise there could be no animality which is not rational and no humanity other than Peter's.

What is characteristic of the philosophy of Duns Scotus is that he attributed reality even to these formalities. They are not simply abstractions of the mind; they are abstract from each other even before the mind considers them. Each has a real being of its own and a real unity distinct from that of individual things. Peter and Paul, for instance, are each numerically one. But in them there is present humanity, animality, substance, etc., each of which is formally non-identical with the others and constitutes a real being with its own specific or generic unity. True, Scotus always maintained that individual things are most worthy of being called "real," and that their numerical unity is "major unity." Still, formalities are also real, and their generic or specific unity is for him a real "minor unity" and not simply a unity in the conceptual order. Scotus conceived of an individual thing, then, as a coming together of many formalities or natures of this sort, all of which are made individual or concretized by an "individual difference" or "haecceity." But even though these formalities are individualized in things, in their own order they remain common or universal. That is why Scotus can say, paradoxically, that only individual things exist, but that there is something common in reality which is not *of itself* individual. This means simply that in the order of existing things there are only individuals: there are no existing universal *things*. But in the order of formalities or essences there are common natures which guard their commonness within their own order even when they are individualized in the order of things.

The reason why Scotus says that there are common natures in reality is to assure a suitable object for knowledge. The primary

object of knowledge and science is not individual things but universals. Now, there are two kinds of science: one which concerns conceptual entities, namely logic, and another, such as physics and metaphysics, which concerns real being. Since the object of both kinds of science is universal, there must be two kinds of universals: the complete universal, which is the product of the intellect and the object of logic, and the incomplete universal or common nature which is the object of the sciences of real being.

The world of Duns Scotus is thus peopled not only with individual things but also with real common natures which the intellect has merely to seek out to read their intelligible messages. In such a world even the senses can perceive a reality which is in a way universal. According to Scotus, the object of sensation is not properly an individual thing as individual, but a reality common to all the sensible objects in one genus, the whiteness, for instance, of all white things. Under these circumstances there is no need of an abstractive process of the intellect, in the Thomistic sense, by which the intelligible object, bearing the stamp of singularity in a sensible image, must be rendered universal and actually intelligible in order to be known. For the object present to our cognitive faculties is a common nature in which, as a recent historian put it,[2] the Agent Intellect can read, as in an open book, the intelligible object from which the concept will be born.

By his realism of common natures Duns Scotus placed himself in the long line of mediaeval Christian Platonists, all of whom agree that in some way there is universality or community outside the mind corresponding to our universal concepts. Of course, historical Platonism is realized in very different forms. The rather crude realist philosophies of Boethius, John Scotus Eriugena and William of Champeaux are a far cry from the refined realism of Duns Scotus; yet we can see the same Platonic inspiration behind them all. And just as early mediaeval Platonism aroused the unrelenting criticism of Abailard, so the Platonism of the fourteenth century found an even more formidable adversary in William of Ockham.

A student at Oxford in the first decade of the fourteenth century, William of Ockham (1290?-1349/50) became acquainted with Scotism either from the Subtle Doctor himself or, more likely, from his immediate disciples. But he was a student with an independent mind, and while listening to his teachers he formed his own philoso-

phy in opposition to them. Ockhamism thus grew out of a criticism of contemporary doctrines, and especially of Scotism, whose founder, he says, surpassed all others in subtlety of judgment.

Duns Scotus had accepted the Avicennian metaphysics of essence, but there was much in the Arabian's philosophy which as a Christian he rejected. For one thing, according to Avicenna God is not a free creator; all things flow from Him in a definite hierarchy with all the rational necessity with which conclusions are drawn from premises. Now, necessity enters the Avicennian world—and the world of Greek and Arabian philosophy in general—precisely because it is a rational world of intelligible essences. For even though existences or facts are contingent, essences are necessarily what they are. The problem which Scotus faced was to reconcile the freedom of God and the contingency of created things with the fact that there are intelligible essences in the universe and ideas in the divine mind. His solution was to assert the transcendence of God as infinite being above all essences, and to teach a radical voluntarism according to which all things—in a way even the divine knowledge—are subject to God's will.

Now William of Ockham was equally certain that God is all-powerful and the free creator of the world. Like Scotus, he did not think this could be proved by natural reason; but he knew it to be true by Faith, for we say in the first article of the Creed: "I believe in God the Father Almighty." The only question for Ockham was: Can the omnipotence and liberty of God and the contingency of the world be saved in the way Scotus tried to do it? Ockham was convinced that they could not; an essential reform would have to be made in Scotism and every trace of intelligible essence removed from it if the danger of necessitarianism was to be avoided.

At the same time, Ockham was a shrewd logician and a man who loved clarity and simplicity of thought. An explanation, to his mind, should always be in as simple terms as possible, or, to put it another way, we should not posit a plurality without necessity. This principle of thought, which has come to be called "Ockham's Razor," is not original with him. It was a common dictum of the time and is traceable to Aristotle. What is new is the devastating way Ockham used it in accordance with his theological aims and his basic metaphysical and logical notions.

In Ockham's criticism of Scotism and other contemporary phi-

losophics, one of his first aims is to eliminate common natures and universals from reality, and in doing so he proceeds as a logician. When terms are used in propositions, he reminds us, they serve as substitutes for things. This function of terms standing for things in propositions the schoolmen called supposition (*suppositio*). Now, there are three ways in which a term can exercise this function. In the first place, it may stand for the word itself, as when I say "Man is a word." Here "man" stands for the word "man" taken materially. Consequently, this kind of supposition is called material supposition. Secondly, a term may stand for individual things, as in the proposition "Man runs," for it is the individual person who is signified as running. Hence the name of this kind of supposition is personal supposition. In still a third way, a term may have a simple supposition, as when we use "man" in the proposition "Man is a species."

Now, the point which particularly interested Ockham was the meaning of simple supposition. What precisely does "man" stand for in the last proposition? Peter of Spain, whose treatise on logic served as a text book for the schoolmen, thought that it stood for and signified a universal thing. Obviously this is to prejudice the debate over universals in favor of realism. For if he is correct, there is a universal thing which the common term signifies and for which it can stand in a proposition. Ockham, however, had another view on the matter. For him, in simple supposition the common term simply stands for a concept in the mind and properly speaking signifies individual things. This was also giving an answer to the problem of universals, this time in favor of nominalism or conceptualism. If Ockham is right, there is nothing common or universal in reality; universality abides solely in the mind and nothing is real except individual things.

We can see how thoroughly Ockham was convinced of this by reading his treatise on universals in his commentary on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard. There he arranges the various realist doctrines according to the degree of reality they attribute to universals and then proceeds to refute them one by one. The burden of his criticism is generally the same. If a universal is outside the mind and realized in things, it is either one (and then we cannot understand how it is multiplied in individuals), or it is many (and then we cannot understand how it is one). In either case we end in absurdity, and it is

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better to admit that universals are simply in the mind and have no reality whatsoever. They are present in things neither actually, nor virtually, nor potentially. They are strictly in no way in things.

If this is true, the common natures so dear to Scotus lose their status as realities and the complicated structure of being built upon them is eliminated. For one thing, there is no need of an haecceity added to nature to account for individuality. Every individual is individual in itself and not in virtue of an added principle. Moreover, the Scotist formal distinction is banished from philosophy along with the realities which are its basis. The only kind of distinction left in reality is real distinction, in the precise Scotist sense of a distinction between individual things, one of which can exist without the other. Ockham admitted formal distinctions only in theology, for instance between the three Persons and the Divine Essence, although for him this is contrary to the ordinary laws of logic. A logical distinction, such as Ockham conceived it, is simply one between concepts without any foundation in an individual thing. The distinction between the various concepts the intellect forms of a thing has thus no meaning as far as the individual itself is concerned, for they all signify one and the same reality. That is why, for him, the concepts we form of God are all equal in signification. If we distinguish between the divine intellect and will, for example, this is purely a distinction between concepts which signify the same indistinct divine reality. We can say, then, that God knows by His will or wills by His intellect, for the two concepts have precisely the same meaning when predicated of God. The same is true of all universal concepts predicated of an individual thing. Consequently, an individual in the Ockhamist sense is absolutely impervious to distinction; it is by definition "the indistinct."

If real being is thus radically individual, what is a universal, and what relation has it to things? A universal, for Ockham, is simply a sign which stands for many things. Now signs, he tells us, are either conventional and artificial, like written or spoken words, or natural, like the noise an animal makes to signify its feelings. There are universal artificial signs outside the mind, but on analysis they are found to be simply individual things whose signification is purely conventional. Within the mind, however, we find natural signs or terms which are our universal concepts. Their signification is not conventional but natural, since they are produced in us in

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an obscure way by nature itself as likenesses of things. That is why the concepts of men are alike while their languages differ. As to the exact reality of these concepts, Ockham, after some hesitation, seems to have taken the stand that they are simply our acts of understanding.

We know already that, for Ockham, concepts can have no foundation in reality save individual things. But how can they be a basis for *universal* concepts? If there are no common natures in reality, is not our conceptual and abstract knowledge completely out of contact with it? In the twelfth century, Abailard, faced with the same problem after his criticism of the realism of William of Champeaux, resorted to the notion that God created things with a common status or condition which accounts for the resemblances among them. Consequently, even though things do not share a common essence, they can be designated by a common name because of their common status. Ockham adopted a similar solution although it was more radical. It is evident, he said, that there is a greater similarity among some things than among others. Plato, for instance, is more like Socrates than he is like an animal. Accordingly the mind forms a concept of the species "man" which signifies both men but not the animal. Then it can form a more universal concept of the genus "animal" because of the common likeness of all three. The difficulty with this solution is that Ockham has really no intelligible explanation for the likenesses of things. They are not alike because they share in a common nature. Neither are they alike because they were created by God according to a common idea or model. Abailard had resorted to the divine ideas to explain the common status of things, but this was not acceptable to Ockham for the good reason that he did not think God's mind contained distinct ideas; the divine ideas, in his view, are simply the individual things which God creates. As a result, the likenesses of things are purely factual. They can be experienced but not rationally explained.

Once Ockham shifted the interest of philosophy from common natures to individual things, a new theory of knowledge was inevitable. The primary object of the senses and intellect can no longer be a common reality, as in Scotism, but individual things. Following the terminology of Duns Scotus, Ockham distinguished between intuitive and abstractive knowledge. Intuitive knowledge, he says, is always concerned with a singular thing as existing and present to the

observer. Abstractive knowledge, on the other hand, tells us nothing about the existence or non-existence of things, but concerns abstract ideas or representations. Now, for Ockham, all our knowledge begins with an intuition of the senses and this is followed by an intellectual intuition. Abstractive knowledge comes afterwards and depends on intuition. Thus he insists as strongly on the primacy of the individual in knowledge as on its primacy in being.

Although sensible intuition is at the origin of all our knowledge, absolutely speaking it does not guarantee the existence of its object. There can be an intuition of a non-existent thing, and even a judgment of its existence, without the actual presence of the object. This doctrine of Ockham's comes as a surprise in view of his definition of intuition; yet we can easily see what led to this conclusion. God, who is omnipotent, can always do alone what He does by secondary causes. Now, Ockham says, when we see a star, God produces our intuition of it using the star as a secondary cause. He can, then, supernaturally conserve our sight of the star without the star. Of course, Ockham never doubted that in the normal course of events the object perceived is really the cause of the intuition. What is in question is simply what God is, absolutely speaking, capable of doing, not what He in fact does. It may be objected that the Ockhamist God, for all His omnipotence, cannot do what is contradictory, and the intuition of a non-existent thing is contrary to the very notion of intuitive knowledge. Faced with this objection, Ockham admits in one place that such a cognition would not be a true intuition, but rather an assent lacking evidence and belonging to the realm of faith, although the assent would be of the same kind as the evident judgments based on intuition. What Ockham does not explain, however, is how we could for all practical purposes distinguish between our knowledge of existing and non-existing things, and he thus opens the way to idealism and skepticism even though he himself does not enter upon it.

We are witnessing here the final result of Ockham's attempt to rid theology and philosophy of Greco-Arabian necessitarianism. Scotus thought that he could do it and still retain the divine ideas and common natures with the necessity which they introduce into the world, if they were subordinated to the divine will. Ockham would not concede even this much. While keeping Scotus' voluntarism, he abolished ideas from God's mind and common natures from

things, with the result that he had nothing left but an omnipotent God governed by no law save that of contradiction, and a morcellated universe of individual things, no one of which has anything in common with any other. In such a universe God can act in a very arbitrary way. He can, if He wishes, make it meritorious for us to hate Him. Hatred of God, theft, adultery are bad only because of the will of God, not for any intelligible reason. So, too, God can make fire cool, just as easily as He makes it heat, for there is no necessary connection between cause and effect. The nominalist universe of Ockham is thus a world of *fact* rather than one of intelligible necessity, a world of things to be experienced rather than one of intelligible natures to be understood. Such a world, it is true, would prove interesting to the experimental sciences which were soon to set out on their brilliant career. It was barren soil, however, for philosophy such as it was known to the schoolmen of the thirteenth century.

Scotism and Ockhamism spread widely in the fourteenth century. Followers of the Subtle Doctor, like Francis of Mayronne (d. after 1328) and William of Alnwick (d. 1334), continued and developed his thought. Through them and subsequent Scotist commentators his teaching took deep root in the later Middle Ages, especially in the Franciscan Order of which he had been a member. Indeed, certain Scotist themes, such as the univocity of being, formal distinction and common nature, continue to have an influence in our own time.

Ockhamism also had a marked success in the fourteenth century and its influence was felt in many of the doctrinal developments of the later Middle Ages. Its influence is seen, for example, in the tendency of that period towards probabilism and skepticism in philosophy and especially in natural theology. Continuing a trend of both Scotism and Ockhamism, an increasing number of theses regarding God and the soul, considered rationally demonstrable in the thirteenth century, were regarded as merely probable from the point of view of philosophy. At the same time, the tendency to separate the domains of philosophy and theology gained momentum, leading in some circles to a more positivist theology of Sacred Scripture and to fideism and mysticism. Ockhamism was also influential in the domains of logic and experimental science. In its wake a school of natural scientists arose at Paris, devoted to the nominalist

logic and emphasizing the need of immediate experience; and its investigations were to prove important for the development of modern science. For example, John Buridan's (*c.* 1350) studies of *impetus* foreshadowed the theories of Galileo and Descartes. His disciple, Albert of Saxony (d. 1390), exercised an influence on the development of statics, as did Nicholas Oresme (d. 1382) on that of astronomy. The exact indebtedness of modern science to William of Ockham is still in dispute. There can be little doubt, however, that his nominalism and radical empiricism were influential in laying the grounds for its beginnings in the fourteenth century.

NOTES

1. In calling St. Thomas Aquinas' metaphysics "existential" there is no intention of using the word as it is applied to the thought of such moderns as Jean Paul Sartre or Gabriel Marcel. It is simply used to express the primordial importance of the act of existing (*esse*) in that metaphysics.

2. E. Gilson, "Avicenne et le point de depart de Duns Scot," *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et litteraire du moyen âge*, vol. 2 (Paris, 1927), p. 146.

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Part II

MODERN AND RECENT