APPRAISAL

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EDITORIAL

Aprraisal now begins its third year and second volume. We are also about to hold our second conference (April 17th-18th; places still available, please see enclosed leaflet), and are planning a third for March/April 1999 in Guildford. Perhaps it is time to change our mode of operation and to make it less of a one-man show. Would you support the idea of forming a UK Michael Polanyi Society, based on *Appraisal*? It would provide a parallel to the existing societies in Hungary and America.

What I would like to propose is this:

- Current individual subscribers to *Appraisal* would become members of the new society, unless they object;
- They would continue to receive *Appraisal* plus a new members' newsletter, an expanded version of the Polanyi Noticeboard;
- The wide editorial policy of *Appraisal* would remain the same.

Could you please let me have your views, for or against, on the enclosed form. If you are in favour, could you also please seriously consider volunteering yourself to play an active part in the new society, in order to spread the load.

It would also be helpful if you could send in your replies in time for those of us at the Sheffield conference to be able to discuss them while we are together.

RE-APPRAISAL: AUREL KOLNAI

I met Aurel Kolnai only once and briefly at that, when he gave a paper on 'The dream as artist' to the British Society of Aesthetics in 1971. But Francis Dunlop was one of his last research students (for a thesis on punishment), and we are very grateful to him for his help in putting together this Re-Appraisal of Kolnai, and especially for providing the four previously unpublished by Kolnai which appear here in print for the first time.

Kolnai's life, as can seen from the Biographical Note which follows, reflected the upheavals of this century. And one of the merits of his philosophical work is that he sought to engage with and understand those movements of life and thought. As an example of that engagement, Dr Dunlop has provided us with 'Three Riders of Apocalypse', a careful delineation of the essential aims and outlooks of Nazism, Communism and Progressive Democracy. Kolnai appears in this paper as a higher-level 'lumper', who discerns genuine convergences among the principles and assumptions of movements which oppose themselves to each other, especially and even more subtly between each pair of them and the third, and at the same time he is a lower-level 'splitter' who is very careful to note the real differences among those and also further divisions within each of them. This appears to me to be the only proper approach to all such matters.

Perhaps, in Kolnai's case, it also stems from his combination of the best elements in both the Continental (specifically Germanic and Phenomenologial) and Anglo-Saxon traditions of modern philosophy while avoiding their weaknesses: i.e. respectively, concern for universal principles and deep structures, which is prone to premature generalisation, barren abstractions and use of impenetrable language; and attention to detail and shades of meaning, though liable to result triviality. He combines these traits also with humour and lightness of touch, as can be seen in the paper on 'Advising'.

Between those two papers, appear two sets of jottings on Personalism, one pre-war, one post-war. Although obviously in note form and only schematic, we reproduce them because of the current interest in Personalism, and specifically because of last issue's article by Philip Conford on the Personalisms of Mounier and Macmurray. Kolnai distanced himself from Mounier and thus, to some extent, from the term 'Personalist'. (He was also critical of the Left-wing Catholicism of Maritain.) It would be interesting to elaborate the differences among these versions of Personalism, and their social and political implications, and we would welcome further articles upon that theme.

To return to the topic of Anglo-Saxon philosophy, in a letter on Linguistic Analysis (dated 23/7/59), Kolnai acknowledged that it was an important achievement of genuine philosophy (closely related to Common Sense philosophy and Phenomenology) but having some serious defects such as anaemia and sterility. Had its practitioners been competent linguists (Kolnai was fluent in German, French, English, Spanish, as well as his native Hungarian, a non-Indo-European language) and had added analyses of *other* 'ordinary languages', their achievements would have been greater. 'It is very bad to know it [Linguistic Analysis] *alone*. It is simply impossible and disreputable to *ignore* it'.

In the same letter, he also wrote:

> Michael Polanyi (whom I've never met; though an anti-Bolshevist and a strong one, he is on good terms with Karl [Polanyi] and would probably refuse to mix with me), in spite of some tendency to irrationalist obscurantism, is a most original mind (his critique of the critical attitude is more than remarkable in a man of Liberal substance), of course also schooled by L[inguistic] A[nalysis] as every decent person should be.

AUREL KOLNAI

Biographical Details

1900	Born December 5th, at Budapest, to Jewish parents. His father, Armin Stein, a bank manager.
1910-1918	Pupil at the Lutheran Gymnasium, though for about four years studies under tutors at home.
1918	Change of surname from Stein to Kolnai.
1918-1919	University study interrupted, then broken off, by the Liberal and Bolshevist revolutions in Hungary.
1920-1926	Period of involvement with Psychoanalysis.
1920	Moves to Vienna in the autumn, where he tries to live by writing (mostly in Hungarian) and clerical work.
1922-1926	University studies at Vienna in philosophy. Subsidiary studies in history; also attends von Mises's classes in political economy
1926	PhD with 'unanimous distinction'. Baptised a Catholic.
1926-1945	Lives as a writer and journalist, publishing books, serious philosophical articles, and thoughtful journalistic pieces in a variety of journals, in Hungarian, German and English.
1928	Studies under Husserl in Freiburg for 3 months.
1937-1940	Finally leaves Vienna in March, 1937, staying briefly in England, then, for longer periods in Zürich, Berne, Dijon and Paris.
1939-1940	Brief periods of internment in France.
1940	Marriage to Elisabeth Gémes, and escape through Spain and Portugal to the USA.
1941-1945	Living in New York, and then Cambridge, Mass.
1945-1955	'Chargé de Cours' and later 'Professeur agrégé' at Laval University, Quebec.
1952-1955	Finds it increasingly difficult to work in the Thomist atmosphere of the philosophy department.
1955	Moves to England, initially on a 'travelling scholarship' of the Nuffield Foundation to carry out studies of Utopian thinking.
1956-1959	Continues the study of Utopia intermittently as grants and other funds allow. Several lecture tours in Spain in and around this period, and publication of English and Spanish philosophical articles.
1959-1973	Visiting lecturer (part-time) at Bedford College, London.
1961-1962	Lloyd-Muirhead Fellow in Social Philosophy at Birmingham University.
1968	Six-month Visiting Fellowship in Ethics and Social Philosophy at Marquette University, Wisconsin.
1970	Heart attack.
1973	Dies in hospital on June 28th after a second heart-attack.

Main Publications up to 1955

Psychoanalyse und Soziologie: zur Psychologie von Masse und Gesellschaft, Wien-Leipzig: Psychoanalytischer Verlag, 1920, pp.115. Translated as *Psychoanalysis and Sociology*, London and New York: Allen & Unwin, 1921.

Der ethische Wert und die Wirklichkeit (Ethical Value and Reality), Freiburg i. Br: Herder, 1927, pp.171 (Kolnai's doctoral thesis).

Sexualethik: Sinn und Grundlagen der Geschlechtsmoral /(Sexual Ethics: the Meaning and Foundations of Sexual Morality), Paderborn; Schöningh, 1930, pp.447.

'Der Ekel' (Disgust), *Jahrbuch fur Philosophie und Phänomenologische Forschung*, X, 1929, pp. 515-69. Reprinted: Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1974.

'Der Inhalt der Politik' (The Content of Politics), *Zeitschrift für die gesamte Staatswissenschaft* (Tübingen), XCIV, 1, 1933, pp. 1-38.

The War against the West, London: Gollancz; and New York: Viking Press, 1938, pp.711.

'Privilege and Liberty', *Université Laval Théologique et Philosophique*, V, 1, 1949, pp.66-110.

Errores del Anticomunismo (Mistakes made in the attack on Communism), Madrid: Rialp, S.A., 1952, pp.167.

Later and Posthumous Publications

Kolnai's main papers from 1955 onwards can be found in the following collections which also include papers not published in his lifetime. For details of original publication, and of other works, see also below: pp. 35-6, 42.

Ethics, Value and Reality, London. Athlone Press, 1977, pp. 251, eds Francis Dunlop and Brian Klug, Introduction by Bernard Williams and David Wiggins.

The Utopian Mind and other Papers, London: Athlone, 1995, pp.xxxvi + 217, ed. Francis Dunlop, Introduction by Pierre Manent. (Reviewed in *Appraisal*, Vol. 1, No. 2, p.101).

PAPERS BY AUREL KOLNAI

1. THREE RIDERS OF APOCALYPSE

Communism, Naziism and Progressive Democracy (c. 1950)

Editor's Note:

This paper is Kolnai's clearest statement of the relations between Communism, Nazism and Progressive Democracy. It is well worth consideration in the light of recent developments in Western society.

1

Of the three classic types of modern mass régimes, made to fit the body of emancipated Man, one—Naziism—would seem to bear no relevancy except to Germanic mankind alone, and owing to the defeat of Nazi Germany lacks practical support for the time being; another—Progressive Democracy, as I call it for want of a better name— is of manifold appearance, a world hag-ridden with a certain well identifiable but flexible scheme of 'isms' rather than an embodied 'ism' proper, and in this sense again not wholly on a footing with that most genuine and powerful brand of Totalitarianism which is the Marxist-Leninist one. Progressive Democracy, from which the other two have sprung, may be looked upon as too universal to form a threefold division with these, whereas Naziism may appear disqualified for such a status in view of its being too particular: too limited in space and time. Still, it is not without reason that Christian Conservative—or in other words —anti-totalitarian writers have again and again emphasized the essential kinship of these three 'modes of life' of modern man, adding or not a description of their distinctive marks. Their emphasis may be an overemphasis, their attempt at distinctive characterization may be sketchy or shallow; for we are only too apt to lump together whatever things we dislike and to underestimate their mutual differences, though they were locked in a deadly fight among one another. So also the Liberal would assert that Naziism and Communism are 'essentially' the selfsame totalitarian 'dictatorship', only painted different colours; the 'democratic' Socialist, that Bolshevism is really a 'reactionary' system; and he in his turn will hear from his Communist rivals that he is nothing but a 'Social Fascist' or a 'lackey of capitalists and imperialists'. And yet, without allowing our *ressentiments* to tempt us into any of these inane simplifications, and aware from the outset that *Communism alone* represents, as it were, the fulness of the Inferno which man in the process of his self-enslavement has vowed to make unto himself for an earthly paradise, we may meaningfully consider the three-headed monster under the aspect of its unitary principle of life as well as under that of the respective contrasts between any two of the three heads or between any pair of them (taken as a unit) and the third. Naziism, indeed, which only yesterday astounded mankind with its tremendous outburst of energy and conquering appetite, is not a wholly parochial affair, nor in all certainty obsolete or irrevocably dead; Progressive Democracy, again, is neither a sheer recusancy from Communism nor perhaps merely its preparatory phase but the primal form of the 'Common Man' world, instinct with an 'ideology' of its own. In order even to fight Communism intelligently and effectively —which is our one paramount business of supreme urgency—we had better survey all these things, to the best of our ability, in their true proportions. I think it the fittest way of procedure to establish and delimit the 'three pairs' as against, respectively, the third member of the triad.

2

Naziism and Communism, as contrasted to Progressive Democracy, have in common most of their aspects, down to a great deal of concrete detail, relative to the *technique of government* along with its various mental paraphernalia and psychological accompaniment. They both imply one-party rule, severe dictatorship with deified 'leaders' as personal figureheads, a régime of terror in permanence exercised by the secret police, State omnipotence encroaching upon all domains of life including the most intimate ones, the reducing of law and morality to mere functions of state-power and of the government's will, the tendency to suppress such social inequality as is not inherent in the gradation of political power proper, and lastly, the substitution for transcendent religion of political ideology and the self-worship of Society as informed by an exclusive and militant will, implying a pretension on the government's part to 'represent' that will entirely, taken in its massive self-identity one and indivisible. Besides these basic traits —an utterly monistic and centralistic conception of social power; terror as a constitutive element, a

mainstay and a cornerstone, of government; the quasi-religious idea of a limitless self-sovereignty of man, to be made valid and guaranteed by the total sovereignty of state-power—we notice certain further points of structural similarity between the two systems: extending to the more or less arbitrarily specified objects they mark out for cultic veneration or sustained hatred, to the peculiar cants and styles they impose in the realms of art, language, science and so forth, as well as to other devices for ensuring a trance-like state of high tension, a continually whipped-up sense of privileged abnormality and a mood of taut militancy. Compared to this, Progressive Democracy, even in its most advanced and gravest forms—which are Socialist party rule on the one hand, Americanism on the other—, unmistakably clings to a kind of continuity with the normal life of society and the pluralistic landscape of interests, points of view and accents which is inherent in the ordinary consciousness of man; particularly, perhaps. or at least most evidently so as regards the man of Liberal civilization. Progressive Democracy, to be sure, is also informed by a 'secular religion', with its various trappings and the sullen fanaticism attaching to it; but this false religion intrinsically connotes an element of tolerance, indetermination, and *détente* (as an actual state of mind here and now, not as a chiliastic promise to be redeemed after a world-wide dictatorship and a reign of terror growing beyond all limits shall have created human nature anew); indeed, it is incapable of unequivocal definition and its adepts, unable to think except in an idiom of compromise, are constitutionally precluded from enforcing an un-'constitutional' mode of life and from claiming a massive totality of uncontrolled power. That, nevertheless, the goal towards which Progressive Democracy is progressing lies in such a direction, being in fact indistinguishable from that of Communism, is true enough; yet 'Progress', according to our Western coinage of its idolatry, is conceived of as an 'infinite' one, never to be accomplished definitively, and with its tangible fruits of safety, welfare, peace, freedom, 'culture' and the like being gathered, consumed and enjoyed by all of us daily; hence the driving force that makes *our* world go round cannot take body in one omnipotent centre of power but remains subject, so far as its actual workings are concerned, to the empirical tests of success and immediate pleasure: to a network of checks and balances, that is, which affords the plain man and even the Christian with some opportunity of making his weight felt. The world of Progressive Democracy, then, is ordered on a dualistic and 'idealistic' plan, which implies the recognition of a 'given' human reality underneath the 'ideal', subsisting in its own right and incurably falling short of the 'perfection' of Utopia it is expected to 'approximate' in time, with the division between the two remaining ineliminable; that this world, *so long as it would last*, should never be completely determined by its dominant ideology is part of the ideology itself.

Communism and Naziism, on the other hand both presuppose the antecedent of Progressive Democracy, from which they both represent a radical new departure, directed to entirely disparate or even antithetic aims but revealing a far-reaching analogy between the two as regards the totalitarian conception of 'identity' between the wills of the rulers and the ruled, the long-range programme of terroristic dictatorship, and the ingenious idea —thought up in response to the growing sense of emptiness, nihilism and palsy in Liberal society—of a new 'meaning of life' provided and imposed by state-power.

3

What Naziism and Progressive Democracy have in common is, to put it briefly, the character of *incomplete totalitarianism*. So far as ideological 'signs' and 'emphases' alone are concerned it would seem, admittedly, that our democratic régimes are not totalitarian at all, whereas Naziism is most noisily and defiantly so, connoting Socialism too and insisting on State omnipotence not a whit less than does Communism. Again, if instead of judging by the sound of party slogans and the demeanour of terroristic gangsters drunk with power we consider the 'insidious' totalitarianism inherent in the trend towards equality, uniformity and administrative 'planning for welfare', we might on the contrary find that Progressive Democracy really outstrips the totalitarianism not only of the Nazis but even of the Communists, assimilating as it does (under the deceptive verbal cloak of liberalism and tolerance) the thinking, moods and wills of everybody to a wholesale standard of the 'socialized' mind more organically and perhaps more durably; eliminating all *essential* opposition to its own pattern by incomparably milder methods but so much the more effectively and irrevocably. However, both these perspectives, though highly relevant to a full assessment of the objects of our study, are one-sided and liable to make us miss the central point of distinction. Neither our horror of Nazi perversity, cruelty and vulgarity nor our disgust at the mediocrity and duplicity, the inner unfreedom, the deadening quack rationality and the sickening pseudo-culture of Progressive Democracy should blind us to the patent and highly important truth that, in contraposition to the Communist régime bent on determining the whole of human reality according to the pattern of an unnatural utopia and reducing every aspect and detail of men's lives to a function of One all-absorbing political Will, both Naziism and Progressive Democracy represent the maimed forms of normal human society, not integrally suppressed but, respectively, overlaid with a fiendish tyranny

totalitarian in temper, and infiltrated by the virus of subversive utopia bound for a totalitarian goal. As regards Progressive Democracy, its essentially curtailed totalitarianism is too obvious to need elaborate treatment. Notwithstanding the subtle expansion of the old concept of political liberty into that of 'Freedom from Want' and the surreptitious displacement of citizens' rights by the changeling idol of a 'right to security', the elements of 'the rights of man' and 'the dignity of the individual' cannot be wholly ousted from Progressive Democracy short of a radical overthrow of the system: until that, the bar to keep out tyranny proper continues acting, though there is no denying that the inward logic of the system makes it wear ever thinner and threatens to eat it away altogether. Still, how could a Conservative writer call the democratic régime properly tyrannical or actually totalitarian, so long as he is able to get his very accusations into print? —and without on that score coming to immediate and crushing grief, into the bargain!

To deny a genuinely totalitarian character to Nazism may sound a little odder, seeing that not only liberal-democratic but also conservative and Christian authors have betrayed a fondness for arguing glibly from Communism to Naziism and conversely, interpreting Naziism as a 'Brown' variety of its 'Red' model and Bolshevism as nationalism or imperialism under a Red flag, overworking the term 'National Socialism', harping on the disciplinarian and allegedly 'nationalistic' traits in Russian Bolshevism, subsuming the two evil things under an identical concept of 'Neo-Paganism' and placing the Nazi worship of a 'superior race' on a level with the Marxian deity, absolutely different as to its logical structure and historical meaning, of the 'class struggle'. The truth is that the Nazi order never was, nor was intended to be, a *socialistic* one—in the proper, collectivist sense of that term—; and for that reason alone, which is far from being the deepest, could not amount and could never have attained to true totalitarianism. Despite the terrorism of Nazi dictatorship which bore down severely on the noble and wealthy classes as well as on the broad masses (thus connoting, as it were, a kind of new equalitarianism), it was utterly alien to the Nazi conception of society to do away with class distinctions; despite the enmity it had sworn to the 'Jewish money-lender', Naziism reserved a high place of honour to the 'German entrepreneur'; despite its playing ducks and drakes with the economy of the country and countries it had subjugated, Naziism would not dream of effecting incisive structural changes in the economic system, let alone of seeking them for their own sake; despite its wallowing in the ecstasy of 'total state-power', Naziism was definitely and consistently hostile to the idea of reducing all social relations of power and dependence to a mere function or expression of that state-power, and in fact ultimately aimed at creating a new type of social aristocracy. To be sure, Nazi tyranny was 'unlimited' in the sense that it kicked aside constitutional 'checks and balances' and even moral restraints just as scornfully as did Bolshevism, but not at all in the sense of claiming, as Bolshevism does claim, a total determination of the order of human life and relationships on behalf of one exclusive political will as actualized by the rulers; to be sure, it ruthlessly trampled under foot all 'opposition' but it did not define from the outset everything not of its own making as 'opposition'; to be sure, it would order about capitalists perhaps as harshly as workers, but without for a moment entertaining the idea of *'liquidating'* the capitalist class (or, for that matter, the peasantry) and of manufacturing Society anew as a homogeneous mass of 'toilers'. It should be added that, if Nazi tyranny was explicitly oppressive and (unlike the old absolutisms at their worst) positively totalitarian in the educational, literary, artistic and similar fields, the intellectual life of Germany under its heel—and of occupied France as well—still compared as a paradise of freedom and spontaneity with the spiritual cemetery which promptly covers every place where the Bolshevik steam-roller has passed. Could any one imagine, in Soviet Russia or one of her dependences a counterpart to Jünger's *Marble Cliffs*: a nauseating and at the same time wholly unambiguous vision of Stalin as the incarnation of malicious barbarism, published with impunity—or only published; or, indeed, only written—by, say, a Menshevik university professor or

Self-portrait, aged 19½, drawn in an exercise book

an anarchist Prince of yesterday, disillusioned with the revolution?

In some respects Progressive Democracy, and in another but not entirely different sense Naziism, might be described as more 'progressive', 'modern' and 'totalitarian' than Communism. Democratic thought is more anxious to be up-to-date and elastic; to scan, to recognize and to put to the test —rather than merely prescribe and enforce—the new states of mind rising, in society, in a kind of perpetual flux; to effect not only but to undergo a constant change, absorbing as it were all aspects of a 'world in change' into the very tissue of its own details and formulations. Naziism, in its turn, views man, his nature and history, in a perspective admitting of a greater manifoldness of dimensions, and thus aspires to a totalitarian determination of man by state-power through more numerous channels; through more complex leverage. Biological and eugenic points of view seem to rank higher, not only in Nazi racialism but also in the Progressive Democratic trend towards a medical and psychiatric dictatorship*, than in the Communist state-worship with its monomaniac reference to political power and social (in the sense of extra-political) equality. Thus Communism cares less, one might say, about an all-round predetermination of the 'human material', including its *natural quality,* on which Society as represented by its central agency of power expects to work. But, on the other hand, all such lines of determination are of a more partial, haphazard, experimental, uncertain kind than is the direct bending of men's wills by an unrestrained and effectively organized power of Command; moreover, they leave some space for categories of value—specifications of 'good and bad'—not defined in terms of present governmental decision as such: for measures of judgment that lie beyond the one and indivisible political will of man. Communism, then. remains the absolute, classic and insuperable type of totalitarianism proper.

4

Progressive Democracy and Communism are aligned together as the working out of the *selfsame basic concept of Social Revolution*, whereas Naziism essentially aims at bringing about a Counter-Revolution; a reversal of the trend which White mankind has followed ever since the first steps towards the secularization of Christianity (or, to be more exact, since the adoption of Christianity), and which has led up, itself coming to be more and more consciously experienced in the process and doted upon as 'the meaning of History', to the various forms of present Modernity. The two first-named 'isms' co-incide in *'Leftism'*; their Nazi counterpart, however unpleasant this may sound to many Conservative ears, embodies one extreme (or, rather extremist) type of *'Rightism'*. However, 'Right and Left' is a highly important but by no means an overwhelmingly sovereign division or test: one may be a Rightist yet an enemy of Naziism just as well as one may be a Left-wing democrat yet rigidly opposed to Communism, or again, an orthodox Communist who by definition is ready to suppress whatever other kinds of Leftists walk abroad; one may certainly be, as I am, a confirmed Rightist who yet prefers Democracy at its worst to Naziism. What is more, I even prefer the drab but comparatively solid common-place advocates of the liberal-democratic 'middle road' to the flippant aesthetes of Conservatism who despise 'trivial' facts and obvious 'truisms' for their lack of piquancy, twist the truth so as to fit the ideological need of the moment, and reel in skin-deep 'depths' such as the analogy between 'National-Socialism' and Communist imperialism or the violent moods and the patterns of action Naziism had in common with its so-called 'Red twin-brother'—labelling, on their strength, Naziism as a 'brand of Leftism', while the pundits of Labourism and Yankeeism no less libellously tag the terrible epithet 'reactionary' to their unloving brothers of Moscow.

This has been the primary, manifest, consistent and permanent principle, the set purpose, of Naziism—as, indeed, of all 'fascism', with which Naziism is partly identical but which it transcends *essentially—;* to save the national society from annihilation by the Bolshevists and from Socialist ascendancy; to destroy the Marxian and all independent (including the Christian) labour movement[s] in the world of capitalist economy; to abolish the liberal and democratic framework of bourgeois society itself, which provides Socialist subversion with a thriving-ground and thus dialectically invites its own destruction; reaching out into a vaster historical perspective, to undo the work of the French Revolution, together with the mental atmosphere of rationalism, enlightenment and progress which bred forth that revolution and again drew new strength from its impetus and achievements; to turn back to, and to revive, autochthonous national traditions, with more stress laid on their political exploitation than on their historic genuineness and therefore a tendency to interpret them in a narrow, aggressive, as it were 'tribal' and deliberately mythical sense. True Fascism—that is Mussolini's: the only one that existed —went further along this path than the improperly 'fascist' Right dictatorships—Dollfuss', Salazar's, Franco's and others—and for this reason, being more activistic, more aggressive, more overheatedly 'political', more reckless, more totalitarian, more anti-liberal, might *so far* be found more anti-bourgeois, 'subversive' and 'revolutionary'. Naziism again went farther; but this time with a decisively greater stride and broader scope, in a unique and incomparable style: negating, over and above liberalism and rationalism, Christian civilisation as such (the breeding-ground of Modernity

and Progress) as well as the Faith which has informed it, together with some if not most of its sub-soil in Greco-Roman antiquity; and groping back, in its quest for 'rejuvenating' anti-modern traditions, across the Prussian glory of yesterday and the more brutal aspects of the German Middle Ages towards the barbarous world of Teutonic heathendom—not without a side-glance, in my opinion at any rate, at Hindu racialism and caste religion. Call, then, Naziism extremistic and totalitarian; call it an arch-enemy of Conservatism proper; call it, if you like, subversive or revolutionary, provided you are clear in your mind what you mean by that: a revolutionists' state of mind, to be sure, afire with the ambitious vision of a vast and perhaps measureless transformation of society; dynamic, petulant, savage, uninhibited, in many a sense not unlike Bolshevism—but setting out in an opposite direction. No sharper contrast could be thought of than the one between the historical locus of Bolshevism and that of Naziism: the concept of history as a dialectical process ordained to the goal of a man-made 'rational' utopia, and the paganistic idea of restoring history to its place as an aspect of natural 'becoming', a 'cosmic wave' of vital ups and downs, an aimless clash and interplay of irrational forces with man as their mere emanation, product and sport, whose only task is to acknowledge his status as such and to make the most of it by submitting to the mysterious imperatives of that immutable order of everlasting change as re-echoed in the 'throbbing of his blood'. Communism takes action so as to bring Progress to a head: to institute the world-wide reign of Antichrist —which explicitly presupposes the historical lineage marked by the names of Jahweh, Christ, Luther and Calvin, Rousseau, Kant, Fichte and Hegel . . . —, embodied in mankind wholly organized on a unitary plan and wholly master of itself, that is, wholly slave to its centre of will. But Naziism would subvert, as it were, the tradition of Subversion; break off the beaten track of history and scorn the path of Progress struck out by an intelligible formula of the human Mind engaged in its dialectical self-creation; though aware of its unavoidable heirship to Christianity also to mass democracy, it would in the final reckoning 'cut out' the Christian 'episode' altogether and revert to a state of things in which the old daemons dwelling in the hearts and governing the fates of men should again come into their own.

The very immensity of a 'counter-revolution on a cosmic scale' as envisioned in Naziism cannot but imply a certain 'revolutionary' note peculiar to it, with an emphasis stronger than that of the Communists on the abstract elements of 'newness', 'youth', 'reversal' (*Umbruch*) and similar more [*sic*]. Whereas, in the Communist optics, Christianity and feudalism appear to represent an historical 'progress' over Paganism and slave economy, the Nazi writers, steeped in a mood of unreal but not wholly irrelevant wistfulness for 'Teutonic religion', were fond of vilifying Charlemagne, whom they used to call 'Charles the Butcher'. But the German *völkish* (ethnic or racialist) Conservatives had already indulged in such whims long before the advent of Naziism. From the moment of its birth up to the time when it achieved the uprooting of all Leftist and 'Centrist' forces in Germany, the Nazi movement was developing and manoeuvring in constant and organic co-operation —never felt by anybody to be 'paradoxical' or 'treacherous' —with parties and social groups of the 'Right'. It cannot be mere coincidence nor a matter of mere trickery that von Kahr should have patronized and encouraged Hitler in 1923 before 'betraying' him; that von Papen and Hugenberg should have prevailed over Hindenburg to appoint Hitler chancellor; that Hitler should have started his rule by dissolving the Communist Party and calling Parliament in Potsdam; that he should have obtained full powers from his Rightist allies and the Catholic Centre itself over the opposition of the Socialists, to be dissolved in their turn forthwith; that even at the time of his collaboration with Moscow, he should have persistently tried to use Pétain, Franco, Horthy, Antonescu and Mussolini as lieutenants in his campaign against the democracies; that it should have been the Conservatives in England (backed by most of the French Right) who endeavoured to come to an agreement with Hitler up to his conquest of Prague and the relatively Rightist or at least strongly capitalistic circles America who were busy hindering Roosevelt from opposing Nazi Germany up to Pearl Harbor. To try and discredit Naziism (or else, the Left) by calling it a brand of Leftism is just as absurd as it would be to apply the same epithet to Fascists and Falangists as well as to all Liberals, Conservatives and Christian Democrats or Catholic People's Parties of the present epoch, seeing that all these represent political forces acting on a mass scale in an 'age of the masses'. 'Leftist' would then be a synonym of the political man as such; 'Rightist' a word to designate the solitary thinker with an anarchical turn of mind and a scorn of collective discipline, whatever the content of his ideas may be. Such an utter misuse of current terminology is incompatible with any purposeful political thought, and indeed with intellectual seriousness and honesty.

'We fight the Nazis because we have to; the Socialists are the enemy we fight cheerfully, with joy in our hearts'—thus spoke, in the summer of 1933, Major Fey, a 'Rightist' half-way between Fascist and Monarchist, Minister for Public Security under Chancellor Dollfuss in Austria. It is with an even more pitifully bleeding heart than Fey when at war with Rightist 'hotspurs' that English Labourites and the like see themselves compelled

to take a stand against Soviet Russia, 'the greatest hope of the international workers' movement'. Nor is the secret of why President Roosevelt offered the Russian Bolsheviks half the world on a silver tray anything other than the simple fact that he loved them; that his heart went out to them as instinctively as he distrusted the English 'Tories' whom he was reared, fashioned and taught to regard as the hereditary and natural antagonist. The man of Progressive Democracy is loath to understand that the Communist is not only 'also a Leftist' but a *Totalitarian* Leftist, who is resolved to devour him lock, stock and barrel after he has ceased to be useful and 'preferable for the moment' or 'comparatively progressive'. But at a certain juncture, the instinct of self-preservation may prevail in the man of Progressive Democracy; he will then willy-nilly resist the onslaught of the Communist and, to justify this depressing necessity in his own malformed conscience, come to discover that Communism is not really a luminous beacon for the workers of the world but a 'reactionary' dictatorship and a re-edition of 'Tsarism'. The typical 'Rightist' attitude towards Naziism has been closely analogous to this. But, as we shall see, it is easier for a Conservative than for a Progressive thinker to avoid this pitfall; for to be 'a Rightist above all'—rather than to measure all political questions by objective moral and religious standards—is itself a mood copied from the Left.

5

The 'Riders of Apocalypse' are nothing but three classic postures, three epiphanies as it were, of *Man at large*: Man first set free by Christianity and lifted above the flats of his fallen nature; Man who then wrenched himself free *from* Christianity and construed the automatic workings of his fallen nature into a mirage of self-made heaven; finally, Man impatiently bent on converting that mirage into a cast-iron reality and thereby stultifying it so as to become in his turn, more than ever before, a house divided in itself, though still afire with the unholy rage of his emancipation and sovereignty.

Our appreciation—from a Christian Conservative point of view—of the three great hostile powers of this *saeculum* will however, differ both in degree and, particularly, in kind. In Communism, the pure embodiment of subversive totalitarianism, we shall see our foe most entirely and unequivocally; in Progressive Democracy, least so. For, although or just because Progressive Democracy enfolds the historical 'Left' in its broad and wholesale sense, it also represents in a backwater fashion the obscured, silenced, disfigured and disinherited remains of true Christian civilization with its timeless standards of right, honour and wisdom: the precariously surviving body of Christendom in a scene resounding with the slogans of Anti-Christ; a scant but precious heirloom of common decency and common sense overshadowed by the witless romanticism of its exact opposite—the cult of the Common Man. But none the less do we owe a debt of gratitude to the totalitarianisms proper, Communism and Naziism, for being *witnesses* to the truth that the idol of the Common Man cannot indefinitely reign without ruling beyond all restraint and absorbing everything into its hideous texture; for having *exploded* the lying prophecies and fond hopes clustered round the idea of Progress and the myths of 'social science' about an approaching golden age of sweet silliness and meaningless abundance. This has been and is being done by Communism, itself a victim of the giant imposture of Enlightenment, far more powerfully and definitively than by Naziism. Again, to Naziism we must assign the peculiar merit of having sounded, for once, though in as false a key and with as strident overtones as it possibly could, the bugle-call for a radical revulsion from the sleep-walker's path of Progress and thus broken the spell more sharply—in a more direct and positive sense—than Communism, whose infinitely greater terrors are still sweetened by the psychological credentials of a vision, false and self-contradictory as it is, of 'ultimate' peace and welfare. But Naziism, with its abstract worship (alien from Modernity and Communism) of wickedness, cruelty and deceit for their own sake, with its *en bloc* rejection of the Christian past as a corruptive and a lethal blind-alley in the life of the race, with its reading of history (no less dogmatic and arbitrary than are the creeds of Progress) as a 'dynamic' but aimless sequence of biological cycles of blossoming, thriving and decay, with is self-duping trust in the limitless power of human unreason and its calculated underbidding of the Progressive cheapjacks in the field of mob-mastery, is scarcely less tainted than are its rivals by the spirit of unnatural utopia and the hypnosis of the 'situation' and 'opportunity' as present at a given point in the dialectical course of the 'age of masses'. In opposing the mutilated and debased post-Christianity of Progressive Democracy by its forceful but wholly artificial and unreal evocation of a phantom of inferior Paganism (unmistakably doctored in the image of the Devil of Christianity), it reveals the character of an 'extreme Right' which is anything but Conservative; in substituting for the sanctification of the will of Man by Rousseau and—in a more concrete, determined and effective fashion—by Marxian Communism the more modest and less blasphemous but all the more irrational and wilful sanctification of one particular human 'We' or centre of power, it offers in the place of the Leftist misconception of order, not any elements of a true order but the mere lust of disorder.

Naziism, then, has shown—as have also done, less impressively but perhaps more conclusively and

fruitfully, the less ambitious but sounder contemporary attempts to ward off the Bolshevist menace, at least on a local scale and for a while, by a Rightist emergency dictatorship cleared of the biases of Progressive Democracy—that powerful spiritual and popular forces *can* be stirred up and made effective against the alleged fatality of an historical 'logic' by which mankind must drive itself, as a final and total 'solution' of its equation into the pen of the Red slaveholders. But Naziism, devoid of patience and wisdom, bent on prompt success, and mesmerized with the idea of taking mankind on the rebound, borrowed its soul from that very experience of an unstable historical situation calling for 'activism' and evoking a trance of 'dynamism', whose progressive and revolutionary meaning it irrationalized into the sublimely meaningless concept of a 'crisis in permanence': the hour of great deeds, the cosmic walpurgis-night, its own law and purpose and the object of a morbid mystical worship. In its very negation of the alleged meaning of history as a progressive self-creation of omnipotent human Reason and Will, the Nazi mind kept enslaved to the suasion of the 'historical situation' as a supreme political principle and the sovereignty of one human group-will over and above the timeless moral order which genuine Conservative statecraft recognizes as the irremovable measure of its designs and acts,—discarding it along with the pet concept of Leftism like progress, planning or universal education, as though it too were nothing but a presumptuous and licentious fabrication of human reason. If Leftism means the preposterous endeavour to abolish contingency and man's dependence on an order of things he cannot fathom and an order of right and wrong he can discern but not decree or improve upon, the endeavour in a word to subject all things that affect his condition to a human counterfeit of Providence, the adventurers of Naziism would jump to the opposite 'extreme' of erecting brute contingency itself into an all-embracing rule of the universe with nothing beyond it, under which the political agent that 'happens to be strongest' may, and is called to, assume an unregulated and irresponsible pragmatic mastery over all men, societies and domains of life he can bring within his range of power. Though undoubtedly a form of anti-Leftism, this 'extreme' Rightism by the same token is an *eccentric* Rightism, which cannot but miss entirely, shooting past it as it were, the vital centre of Conservative thought: the respect of that which is, *including* its order, manifoldness and various gradations, and therefore also the duty of men and of rulers to use their intelligence, to administer things and effect reforms prudently and in awareness of their limitations, to exercise their freedom of choice in the framework of moral standards not issued from that freedom, to wield power in keeping with rather than in violation of alien spheres of will or traditions of power, to contribute to the shaping of human reality in a state of mind responsible to God the Creator and Legislator (and *therefore* and *inasmuch* also to their fellow man affected by their actions); in other words, in a spirit of *intrinsic* and not merely of tactical moderation. Thus, again, Naziism represents by no means the only Right-tinged political initiative or trend of thought that has pitifully fallen short of essential Conservatism. There are many more forms, and less easy to array in a neat order of subdivisions, of 'Rightism' than of 'Leftism', because the Leftist mind is committed to the historically given 'trend of Progress' as ushered in by the Renaissance 'emancipation of Man' and modelled by its successive upshoots, whereas Rightist thought, so far as it outsteps the limits of mere retardation, expediency or formal traditionalism and to concepts of restoration, may (or, rather, must) choose its actual pivots of orientation and work out its structure of preferences with a broad margin of freedom. The Left expresses the mind of man as a fellow-traveller and interpreter of the movement of the 'world spirit' towards the goal of their fusion into one and man's becoming his own universal providence; the Right typifies man's submission to an unchangeable superior order and for that very reason, once it comes to the marking out of his concrete objects as an agent, his consciousness and love of being embedded in a motley world of contingency. That is why, as I hinted earlier, the Conservative is better able to disavow and repudiate Naziism, notwithstanding its Rightist sign, than a Leftist to disclaim affinity with anything that smacks of Leftism, but especially of a Leftism more advanced than his own (*'Pas d'ennemis à gauche!'*) and therefore in a significant sense foreshadowing his own motion towards his 'truer self'.

Here is, in addition to the irremediable absence of effective rulership and the no less organic disease of pacifism, a most essential source of weakness hampering the efforts of Progressive Democracy to marry the menace of Communism. 'Fifth columns', 'diabolically clever propaganda' and the misuse of liberty by its enemies, are scarcely more than embodied reflexions and obvious consequences of the basic fact that Progressive Democracy in its most intimate nerve-centres cannot help being vulnerable to the charms, monstrous though they may seem to its own upper-floor consciousness, of its more 'integrated' rival, whose apocalyptic rush it has both set on foot and timidly tried to imitate—both stimulated and lamely attempted to curb—but is unable either to outpace or to *mean* to stop earnestly at the risk of bringing its own movement to a halt and thus perhaps putting an end to the whole nightmare of modernity.

6

Progressive Democracy is, then, neither a spiritually acceptable choice in the teeth of Bolshevism (being too much kin to the foe precisely as regards its innermost substance) nor a safe rampart against that danger (being 'dialectically' subject to its attraction). Conservative thought—and, should it exist or were it to rise again, a Conservative policy underlain by such thought—must neither identify itself with the principles, habits and fashions of Progressive Democracy, melting as it were into a Right-wing shade thereof; nor forcedly interpret Progressive Democracy in its own likeness; nor even, withdrawing on its part into the secret chambers of a 'small elite's' mental inwardness, simply and cheerfully entrust the practical defence of Civilisation against Bolshevism to the forces of Progressive Democracy. If only to fight Bolshevism with the utmost rigour and the bitterest determination, with all resources of the mind and the heart human nature can muster, something more unlike Bolshevism and more deeply opposed to it than that Democracy is required. However, no less a blunder is it for Conservatives to observe an attitude of neutrality in the struggle between Democracy and Bolshevism, because both are of the Left; as if, for that reason, their fight (wherever Democracy puts up a fight, that is) were unreal or its outcome irrelevant to Civilization (and accordingly, to the chances of Conservatism). A kindred blunder Conservatives may be tempted to commit is that of 'unconditional Rightism'; the vice practised, from the middle of the 'twenties well into the middle of the 'thirties, by most of them in Central Europe—with consequences I need not stress at length. It can be hardly our ambition to conjure up the ghost of Naziism, were that practicable; nor, generally speaking, to breed or to set loose a fourth rider of Apocalypse.

It is unworthy of Conservatives, indeed a betrayal of the mode of life they stand for, to indulge in any postures of all-round 'radicalism', crisis-mongering or voluptuous visions of a *grand soir* or 'twilight of the gods': of a universal catastrophe leaving behind an empty field of ruins, so that kings, nobles and priests may rise again comfortably from the midst of the débris and start building the world anew in the void space. To be sure, the onerous, distasteful and lopsided partnership—a leonine contract, as it were, to our disadvantage—we may at present alone maintain with Progressive Democracy cannot constitute our final aim; but that does not mean that we should submit to such co-operation with dishonest intentions modelled on the totalitarian cheat of Communist 'Popular Front' tactics. To turn on our partner directly our common enemy has collapsed in order to destroy him likewise is an idea as utterly un-Conservative as that of establishing a uniformly 'Rightist' system of power all over the earth. Although a universal *reference* may properly belong to all serious politics (and particularly so in the present state of communications and interdependence), any world-political 'plan' is strictly incompatible with a Conservative outlook no matter how 'Rightist' the intention in which it be conceived; for all susceptibility to the magic of the 'clean sheet' and of 'extirpating the evil with the root' or 'curing the disease of Civilization by destroying its ultimate causes' is a stigma of the subversive and totalitarian mind bent on tampering with the Divine governance of human history and averse to the proper business of man: that of doing what is right—though with an eye on foreseeable consequences and in an intelligent framework of limited perspectives—and entrusting the fruits of his action to Providence. A 'streamlined' Christian 'blueprint' for the construction of the 'City of Man', notwithstanding the gilded lettering in honour of God that may be meant to adorn its portals, cannot be Christian except in name; an anaemic ghost of modernity unsuccessfully and unpleasantly trying to outvie its full-blooded daemons. Again, such political thought alone is truly Conservative as seeks above all to 'conserve', and in the second place to supplement and to perfect as well as to disengage and to revive the existing good rather than to 'create' the good out of the naught of an *a priori* scheme embellished with an arbitrary muddle of romantic reminiscences.

According to its dominant signature, its characteristic edge, the mechanism of its march and the appetite of its idols, Progressive Democracy is indeed *the* Rider of the modern Apocalypse rather than merely one among the others, seeing that it has sired the rest. But materially, it contains and shelters, it has devalued and impoverished yet so far guarded against utter peril and extinction, the traditions of civilization and fragments of liberty—the shreds of morality and cells of Christian tissue—which its violent and all-round destruction by *any* opposing force would wipe out, beyond repair, along with the species of evil that forms its more vigorous and more showy reality. Christian Conservatives cannot, therefore, aim at anything better than helping and stimulating all anti-Communist action Progressive Democracy may be capable and willing to undertake, though with a full inward detachment and sovereign aloofness from its genius, doctrines, habits and interests as such, and seeking at the same time (in a spirit of healthy empiricism) to encourage and support the genuinely traditionalist centres of power and types of society—such as, for instance, Spain—which are likely to play an invaluable part both in bolstering the anti-Communist front and in counter-balancing the world supremacy of Progressive Democracy, circumscribing its range of influence and breaking its totalitarian monopoly after the downfall of Communism.

2a. ELEMENTS OF A PERSONALIST CONCEPTION OF STATE AND SOCIETY (1932)

(Translated from the German by Francis Dunlop)

A. Persons

1. Definition of the person as rational being with own system of goals and different ontological strata. The personal 'realm'. Being in the image of God = unique existence in relation to values.
2. Essential characteristics of the person: Dependence and finitude. Freedom and rationality. Object-relatedness and trans-objectivity.
3. The 4 threats to personality: External impediments. The two kinds of moral threat: closure and dissolution. Varieties of social pressure.

B. Community

1. The person and society. It is an essential mark of persons to belong to communities and can never be made superfluous by any higher personal development. On the other hand community is not a superior goal into which the person could be 'absorbed upwards'. The person is distinguished by a lasting and indissoluble character. The chief value of community is not that it forms a supra-personal totality, but that it represents a plurality of persons in particular relations.
2. The particular content of community. A community possesses in relation to its members and in varying degree a binding and imprinting power within its sphere of being. On the other hand the person, in his completeness, transcends the totality of his communal memberships. Communities that absorb the person are evil.
3. The two structural principles of community: hierarchy and simple personal relationships. The second principle is more important.

C. Society.

1. Mankind and Society. The community of widest extent is mankind. 'Society' is 'mankind' as present for the person and contains the communities he belongs to. Society is not a giant family and not a uniform community of any kind.
2. The Nation as basis for division and definition; danger of substituting the nation (in its widest sense) for mankind.

D. The State.

1. General phenomenological definition of the state. State as the totality of a society in respect of its realisation of a legal order and its collective rational regulation of social relations. Positive law as the state's codification of natural law according to circumstances.

2. State and Person.

The meaning of the social contract theory is a discerning and active share in fashioning the state on the part of every citizen. To every sovereign power in the state there must correspond a wide-ranging system of protection for the individual person. The errors of the liberal doctrine come from its simplistic formalisation of the person and the state.

3. State and society.

The state is there not only for the personal being of the individual citizens as such, but also for the life of the most fundamental communities that fashion society. The tasks of the state in order of priority are: justice, welfare, culture.

E. Equality

1. The social-ethical demand for equality can only rest on ontological equality of a limited but particularly nuanced kind. That is: each individual has his own goals and all form a community of mutual understanding.
2. Primacy of equality over inequality in community. We may picture the ontological situation of the person as a kernel of equality surrounded by various kinds of inequality.
3. Equality and hierarchy. Hierarchical relations are all limited to a particular sphere. Every hierarchical relation leaves an essential part of the person out. Every other intention is evil.
4. Social equality means social acknowledgement of the equal dignity (high rank) of all persons on the basis of equality before the law.

F. Democracy in state and society

1. Democracy means primarily the state's being founded on the personality of all citizens and secondarily a corresponding patterning of social relations: an ordering of communities that makes possible the development and the discerning active power of all persons.
2. Democracy in the state. Free discussion and majority decision do not decide what is true and good, but are tools of personal being, enabling it to be effective in the state. The value of parliamentarism consists in its being an expression of shared consciousness among the citizens.
3. State and Party. The 'supra-party' nature of the state means precisely: 'many parties'. Possibility of relatively supra-party state-bearing strata, in the midst of the free development of parties.
4. Democracy in society. The primacy of the state among social institutions founds the concept of 'social democracy' and the idea of fashioning society primarily under the sign of freedom and equality. Social democracy cannot be anchored in a juridical 'constitution' but can only consist in a manifold of 'democratic' relations and life-forms in the various areas of society. Limitation and reduction of class differences is more genuinely democratic than their complete removal, since this is impossible.

2b. JOTTINGS ON PERSONALISM (c 1963)

1. Personalism is not a doctrine of man or of the world but an *ideal* of human existence in general and of the social and political order in particular.

2. It presupposes of course personality as a given attribute of man, but more significantly, the concept of a *more* and *less* personal mode of life. It may be defined as a central emphasis on personality in regard to man in general.

3. Conscientious morality, the 'rights of man' (preferably, of the person), and a constitutional form of government are self-evident single postulates of Personalism but far from exhausting its meaning.

4. Personalism conceives of 'freedoms' as of absolute intrinsic importance but as relative and limited in content and scope.

5. It differs from humanism (emphasis on man as an anthropological species, as opposed to God or to creatures other than man; naturalism; man as the 'virtual' embodiment of the supreme values . . .).

6. It differs from Liberalism (primary intrinsic validity of 'freedoms' and 'rights'), from all forms of Platonic, hierarchistic, moralistic or socialistic value absolutism (freedom interpreted as a mere means to ('the good')), and from anarchism and subjectivism (emphasis on 'spontaneity', 'life', anti-objectivism and anti-institutionalism, the person or the collective as 'creator of its own values' and a kind of divinity).

7. It attributes only a secondary and limited validity to the free market and to the economic self-sovereignty of the individual.

8. Personalism is incompatible with any kind of absolute and unchecked political power or authority, and by the same token with the 'sovereignty of the people' or the doctrine of the 'general will'.

9. Personalism is pluralistic and federalistic but in a qualified sense only: it affirms the State and the individual's direct relation with it, as contrasted with his being enclosed in any sub-collective and with the conception of the State as being only a society of such sub-collectives. The State, but in another way the person also, is regarded as a point of convergence and culmination of particular lines of social relationships.

10. Personalism emphasises free choice as a paramount manifestation of personal life: accordingly, it favours an institutionally ensured manifestation of elective citizenship on several political and sub-political levels at the expense of the plebiscitary aspects of democracy.

11. It advocates a rich manifold of objectivations and a personal 'overcoming' of them only in the sense of an ever-present transcendence of them by personal consciousness and confrontation.

12. The awareness and recognition of alterity and a readiness to self-limitation in various senses are integrating primary aspects of personality; what Personalism rejects absolutely is all confusion, massification, unreserved union or self-abandonment to a paramount community.

13. The basic formula of Personalism is *interdependence* as opposed to organismal union, isolation, one-sided dependence or the combination of the theoretical 'sovereignty of the person' with the factual omnipotence of the State entailed by it.

14. Solitude and direct lines of relationship with non-*actual* entities, themes and values (the Godhead and many others transcending the 'present environment' in any sense) are essential requisites of personhood.

15. Private ownership is a basic category of personality, without justifying the exclusion of various forms of State and co-operative ownership and means of production, provided that private ownership remains flourishing and so far as possible tone-giving, the tendency to concentration is checked, and the amplitude and autonomy of private spheres of choice is encouraged and cultivated in those in a dependent position.

16. The Christian—more particularly, the Franciscan—spirit of poverty and the negation of every ideal of prosperity (as a superior value or claim) beyond the securing of urgent wants are inherent in Personalism as opposed to humanism, socialism, 'rightist' aestheticism, etc. Personalism demands that external splendour should be rare, modest, and regarded as of second-rate value.

17. In regard to the professional side of man's life, Personalism implies a non-absolute vocationalism.

18. Personalism favours nationality (national differentiation and coinages) as opposed to human homogeneity or uniformity or national monism within the State: it is absolutely opposed to nationalism, isolationalism and the dogma of 'national self-determination'.

19. It rejects militarism and expansionism as well as pacifism and anti-militarism, including the suicidal limitation to pure 'defence'.

20. Personalism emphasises stability and continuity as well as variability, flexibility, discussion and progress; it recognises a vast scale of degrees between the 'necessary' and the 'contingent'. (Relation to the former polarity, in both senses.) (To explain 20.) In respecting the permanence of his given ambit and framework, the person submits to necessity (beyond 'reasons' intuitively grasped and discursively understood) but also to contingency (thisness and givenness apart from 'reasons' he surmises without actually knowing them). In postulating acts of progress, the person adheres to reasons fully seen and experienced as 'necessitating', but also affirms his right to make contingent preferences of his own (and of others to whom he bears some

particular kinship) valid.
21. Personalism tends to 'personalize' the ambient objects of the individual (which entails more than human reciprocity); this is the main reason why it tends to scarcity (not destitution or pure ' inwardness') rather than to affluence.
22. Personalism emphasises the objectively analysable element of correlationship (institutions, rules, definite particular solidarities and antitheses) seeing that this is the fundamental mode of consciousness, whereas the irrational as such is infrapersonal. On the other hand, Personalism stresses the penetration of all objectively expressed and recognised relationships by personal reference (preference, choice, grouping, etc.) in the closer sense, involving the irrational and the 'trans-institutional', which again adds a decisive dimension to consciousness. Thus, voting by lists but with nominative choices is a paramount symbol of the Personalist conception of society.

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3. ADVISING (1967)

My excuse for this unassuming paper is simply the nonexistence of any widely known, 'classic' discussion of the concept of Advising or Counselling in its own right. Some hints can be found, though, in A. MacIntyre, 'Imperatives, Reasons for Action, and Morals', (*The Journal of Philosophy*, 1965, pp. 513-24) and in D.S. Schwayder's immediately following comments on it; further, in B. Williams, *Consistency in Ethics* (Joint-Meeting Symposion, Glasgow 1965); and doubtless in other texts I haven't seen or have forgotten.

When I had my leave-taking audience of Husserl in July 1928 (it had been his last academic term) in Freiburg, he dismissed me with the Parthian shot: 'You have still a great deal to learn Mr K.; you can do description well (referring to my *Disgust*, accepted for the *Jahrbuch*) but you are still a long way from being a phenomenologist'. I am afraid today, forty years since, he would say pretty much the same thing, except that instead of crediting me with 'doing description *well*' he would just speak of trivial, pedestrian and platitudinous description.

1

For this reason, too, I can hardly pretend to put forward a 'thesis' or point to (and attempt to dissolve) a paradoxy, unless the mere affirmation that Advising is a well characterisable particular mode of the person-to-person practical or suasive approach ('social act', in Adolf Reinach's words) or that its concept analyses into an ambiguous or dual structure and possibly displays something of the 'spectrum' phenomenon (enjoying much favour recently) can pass for something like a 'thesis'; again, perhaps a faint tinge of paradoxy will after all be found discernible in the notion of Advising, at one end of the 'spectrum', and again, it may be, another faint tinge of paradoxy in the concept of 'moral advice'.

Roughly speaking, and cautiously disclaiming exhaustiveness, we seem to be able to divide the modes of practical approach—i.e. of suggesting to (or inviting) another person to do something or follow a course of action, at any rate one in preference to another—into three basic groups, which may be technically labelled as (a) the imperative or requisitive or rogatory, (b) the proposive or cooperative, and (c) the auxiliary or adjuvatory or participatory modes or approach. Advising would of course fall in the last-named category.

Alfred being the 'agent', i.e. the addressee or respondent or recipient of a suasion, command, advice etc., and Zebulon the issuer: the man who 'tells' or asks or commands or recommends him to act in a certain way, there are three paradigmatic modes in which Zebulon may address Alfred and which may characterise the logic of his wish or suggestion. These modes however divide into multiform subspecies and on the other hand reveal a strong tendency to form confluent types among one another, so much so that I dare not insist on a definitive, perfectly demarcated and exhaustive trinity analogously to our having five fingers on each hand, no more and no less. (Cf. the 'tables' and number of 'passions' to be found in various philosophers.) Another obvious caution: language, i.e. in our case the diversified typical linguistic forms of practical addressing, must be made to *guide* [and] not to entrap our thinking. There are no doubt standard grammatical forms corresponding to the specified distinct modes of practical approach, but they are by no means always used in their respective places: commands are often disguised as sweet suasions or as apparently straightforward indicative affirmations; an utterance may be a promise without containing any such phrase as 'I promise', 'I undertake' or even 'You may rest assured' etc. (Reinach); 'I advise you' or 'You had better' may well express a threat rather than an advice, and so on. Even standard grammatical forms (purely functional morphemes) am be logically ambiguous; Williams notices this in speaking of a 'deliberative'—advisory—'should' or even 'ought' as con-

trasted with the moral or imperative 'should' or 'ought'. (Linguistic expression is context-dependent and the meaning of spoken utterances is also often manifested by the inflexion of the speaker's voice.) But, keeping all that in mind I would still confidently say that Zebulon either (a) wants something of Alfred (though not necessarily for himself), raises a claim on him, confronts him with a demand, intends to exact something from him, orders or commands or again requests or prays or implores or entreats him to do something; or (b) addresses Alfred in view of some interest they have in common or might come to have in common to their mutual advantage: proposes a contract to him, lays before him a project on a *do ut des* basis; or finally (c) for some reason and in some sense, spontaneously or on being solicited by Alfred, places his own deliberative equipment at Alfred's disposal, offers him advice, and tentatively provides him in some context with guidance for action. (Hare has misdescribed morality as 'action-guiding'; what the description actually fits is advising.)

2

A few words about the two first families of practical approaches, (a) and (b).

The imperative or requisitive mode (a) displays a wide gamut of tones between the two poles of straightforward steel-hard commands and humble begging or tearful entreaty. About the centre, demand is nearer to the pole of command (in English, not in French) and request, somewhat nearer to the pole of prayer. Zebulon makes use of his position of superiority (perhaps legal or institutional, perhaps physical, perhaps both: cf. 'order' and 'command'); or insists on a more or less strict right of his; or merely asks for something he may ask for with express legitimacy without being formally entitled to obtain it; or again just strives to have a wish of his graciously granted. Matters are of course not quite so clear-cut, not quite so linearly arranged as that. Thus, in 'expostulation' entreaty is taking on a tone approximating that of command; ingredients of justification, sanction, threat, adulation and other types of persuasion may complete and modify the picture (in bribery we have moved towards the mode (b) of the offer of an exchange); and the admixture of an appeal to Alfred's own interests as intrinsically involved in Zebulon's satisfaction conjures up the mode (c) of advising. Commands that are part of the functioning of an institution point to impersonality and the reality or fiction of an underlying common interest. In a somewhat similar fashion, moral imperatives (demands, warnings, reminders, admonitions, etc.) bring in a dimension of strict impersonality: they embody a pressure or requirement of which Zebulon is merely a representative, not to say a vehicle. But it is characteristic of moral urging that as such it is not issued, either, on behalf of an institution, a corporate body or any informal though concrete community, any entity or authority whatsoever but of purely objective values with a peculiar deontic edge as it were; even if we are Theists and believe in God as a moral codifier and judge we must, on pain of a naturalistic falsification and utter collapse of its meaning, safeguard the descriptive contentual autonomy of Right and Wrong (commandments are issued by God but not defined as to their meaning and primary deontic force in terms of their being so issued). I indeed leave it an open question here whether *all* morality has an imperatival edge at all; I maintain only the weaker assertion, relevant to our present context, that all moral warning, advertence, reminder, exhortation etc. bears such a stress—how this relates to retrospective moral judgements or to appraisal of virtues and vices need not here be discussed. So much is certain that if Zebulon addresses to Alfred appeal of an ethical kind he is confronting Alfred with a moral *demand,* voicing a moral *claim* on him. Very often and typically, such a claim appears compounded with a personal claim on the claimant's own behalf, or that of his friends or clients or sponsors: if Alfred has 'wronged' Zebulon, i.e. infringed Z's rights, he has incurred both moral guilt and a debt of restitution or satisfaction to Z; but the two concepts are rigorously distinct, and neglect of this fact has given rise to certain standard and pernicious Leftist fallacies (the automatic, uncritical erection of underprivileged people's interests or wishes into so many 'rights').

As regards the mode of approach (b) we have distinguished two sub-categories according as the offer in question is made on a presupposition of divided interests (envisaged as complementary or as reconcilable to mutual advantage) or on a presupposition of joint or collective (i.e., to the extent of their range, identical) interests. The first, catallactic or commercial, type is in some way cast in the mould of requesting or 'asking for'. The vendor in offering his merchandise solicits the prospective buyer's attention and tempts his appetite, though what he emphasises (and usually overemphasises) is not so much his own need or greed as the usefulness of his ware for the client, to the effect that his offer tends to take on the (partly deceptive) conventional appearance of a disinterested advice. On his part, the buyer—in normal commercial circumstances, at any rate—is said to place an 'order' corresponding, somehow, to the advertiser's 'petition'. More rarely, he too appeals however to the seller's interests: 'If you name a reasonable price (or if I am satisfied with the article) I shall recommend your firm to my numerous acquaintances'. By contrast, suggestions made in the framework of joint interests (a collective, e.g. institutional, identity) bear a true affinity to advising proper, in that they are fitted into a common

deliberative procedure. Zebulon is endeavouring here to shape Alfred's policy which at the same time is his own policy and implies the consent and approbation of both of them; they are 'taking counsel' together, and their mutual advisive suggestions, as also objections and arguments, are naturally geared to one another in a dialogic unity. The difference from advising proper is still fundamental (though in actual fact, here as elsewhere, transitional and hybrid cases may frequently occur). In advising proper, so far as the practical theme in question extends, there is a clear distinction between Alfred 'the agent', 'the principal', and Zebulon his 'auxiliary' adviser, whereas in the (b)-type case Alfred and Zebulon are but individuations of the self same 'ideal' (collective) principal and are interchangeable *within* one and the same thematic field of policy.

3

Let us now turn to advising proper and especially to its dual—and, possibly, spectrum-like—stratification. First, we note that the most elementary type of advice is solicited (i.e. asked for by Alfred) and, in a certain consonance albeit in no rigorous connexion therewith, is simply informative and thus, in the practical perspective, purely instrumental. Advices may be solicited or unsolicited, as may other modes of approach, but it appears to be more in keeping with the nature of advices than with theirs to be solicited (for it is the agent that needs advice rather [than] the adviser that needs advice-*giving*; the position of the professional advisor or consultant is a complex second-order position); indeed, some (a)- and (b)-type acts are necessarily or at any rate normally unsolicited: such are commands arid commercial advertising for the general public, i.e. the indeterminate potential consumers. Again, it is a constitutive fact of practice that men are likelier to feel in need of—to want—instrumental help such as physical succour along with more complex kinds of protection, money, and information (i.e. relevant bits of fact-knowledge), for the attainment of their aims than assistance in the shaping of their aims (except for aims plainly reducible to a status of mere means). We ask one another 'Please tell me how I can get to Mornington Crescent' rather than 'Please tell me how I can best concentrate on worthwhile pursuits', or 'how I can increase in wisdom and nobility' or even 'how I can quickly attain enduring happiness'. Further, the literal meaning of the word 'advising' points in the same direction. Literally, the word means some such thing as 'to make see', i.e. to inform, to remind of a practically relevant fact or state of affairs, to orientate, to show a way etc. The French noun *avis* chiefly means an opinion, though it may also mean an advisory warning; *aviser* means, not 'to advise' (*conseiller*) but to inform or draw attention to something, though with a practical intent. In some technical contexts, 'to advise' is also used with such a sense in English: my bank has pleasure in advising me that a payment been added to my account, or advises me (omitting the pleasure) that I have lapsed into a state of mortal sin (incurred an overdraft, that is). Advising, then, is *primarily* supplying—spontaneously or in answer to a question—'theoretical' information, in other words fact-knowledge, with an eye on its obvious or probable practical relevance for the recipient, say Alfred.

But, so far as under the sway of practical intent the information shades over into a reminder or warning or rather adverting, an active redirection by Zebulon of Alfred's glance as it were, advising tends to lose its primary, straightforward instrumental note and moves closer to that hypothetical espousal of the advisee's concerns (beyond his mere supplying with a determinate piece of requisite knowledge) which is inherent in the standard present-English sense of the word, corresponding to *conseiller* or *beraten*. The germs of this transformation are discernible in the simple, trivial 'How to get to Mornington Crescent' model. The possible imperative form of the advice 'Take the Metropolitan Line to Warren Street etc.' expresses in itself, to be sure, nothing more than the fact-statement 'If one takes the M.L. etc. . . . and then . . . and finally etc. . . . one arrives at Mornington Cr in the quickest way and quasi-infallibly'. But even here it is assumed that the advisee (Alfred) has not enough time or vigour for walking, that he can afford the tube, that he cannot very well afford (or find) a taxi, that he is not a born fool but sensible enough to prefer the tube to the bus, and that he is not idle and playful enough to prefer a more circuitous underground journey to the shortest route. Zebulon's advice is not quite simply equivalent to the mere handing-out of a diagram of communications but a slightly more human act than that; in an inchoate sense, and although in a context strictly limited yet not limited with absolute technical rigour, he decides on Alfred's behalf: as it were puts himself for a moment imaginarily in Alfred's place, not to say steps into Alfred's shoes. Perhaps a resonance of this attitude tinges the use of the 'imperative' form ('Take the M. L. etc. . . .') instead of the form of a neatly neutral hypothetical fact-description ('He who takes . . . will arrive etc. . .'). The grammatical imperative is wholly devoid of course of any intent of commanding, requesting or praying (*prier*), as MacIntyre would rightly emphasise; Zebulon might also say 'You should take etc. . .' and perhaps even, in reply to an infelicitously groping query ('Is it best for me to take the Bakerloo Line?'), 'No, you ought to take the M. L.' in which case Williams would diagnose a 'deliberative Ought', with justified impatience

excluding the 'moral Ought' from the picture.

But the business of life is so designed that it involves situations, goals and problems incomparably more complex, richer in conjunctions and conflicts and less capable of delimitation and isolation than the theme of reaching some place (like Morn. Cr.) here and now in the manner most advantageous for Alfred; and accordingly, advising develops into more full-fledged—and, let it be added, not almost exclusively solicited but frequently also spontaneous—forms. It will very often come to embrace contents (points of view, relevant values and disvalues, dangers and desirable prospects etc.) that are not at first sight obviously related to the focal theme at all.

4

Even in its higher-level, more permanent or recurrent and contentually less delimited forms, suppose Zebulon being a personal friend of Alfred's though perhaps of lesser social rank or again his benevolent service superior, advising retains ineluctably, *ex vi terminorum*, a nucleus of its primarily technical, instrumental and fact-conveying nature. So as it is advising, it is not command, reproach, admonition, exhortation, apostolate and so forth. It expresses not a claim on the advisee or a project of the issuer concerning the advisee's future actions and mode of life but a contribution by the issuer to the furtherance of the advisee's (agent's) own purposes and policies; it remains something ordained to the agent's own preferences, wishes, deliberations and decisions. These are plainly known to the advisor, or found out by him in the given special context, or taken for granted (assumed as self-evident), or again hypothetically assumed to be in tune with the agent's personality and potentialities or dispositions. 'Read this book: I think you will like it'; 'If I were in your place I would do *x*; but I know this would hardly suit your tastes (or accord with your principles), so I think you should do (you'd better do) *y* which is the next best thing, perhaps the best for *you* to do'. However, advising in this sense transcends a mere supplying of 'means' to definite 'ends'; it attains to a specification of purposes, indeed suggestion of new purposes, as an aspect of Zebulon's dedication of [him]self to the furtherance of Alfred's staple purposes, his given stock of concerns as known to Zebulon and largely shared or subscribed to by Zebulon. By his more or less intimate affiliation to Alfred's practice he inevitably comes to participate in it as if it were to some extent his own, and thereby to influence, to add to, to redirect, in some sense to modify Alfred's valuations and pursuits —in intention at least, and in actual reality so far as, in virtue of the relations between them, Alfred listens to his advices, ponders them and is not in principle averse to follow them; in fact, even without actually following an advice of Zebulon's he may by seriously considering it decide to recast his own plan of action in some fashion not foreseen by them. Thus, Zebulon's auxiliary *entry* into Alfred's designs may, within limits, by force of logic become tantamount to his (occasionally dominant) intrusion into Alfred's counsels. So far as he meets with a response, identification of his interest with Alfred's cannot but engender a tendency to some incipient and partial identification in the inverse sense as well. Moreover, such an 'assumption' of another person's interests on a vaster scale and on a more or less permanent basis cannot remain wholly hypothetical but will take on, within limits again, a character of emotional reality. That is to say, Zebulon will not just 'oblige' Alfred by answering an isolated practical enquiry (acquitting himself as rapidly as possible of a duty imposed by conventional benevolence) but *care* whether Alfred is ready to follow his advice or whether his advice is going to be of some use to Alfred, and whether by his advice he has helped Alfred to prosper in the given context. In a fashion superimposed on this, he may also quite naturally care whether he has contrived to impress upon Alfred's mind a certain point of view or purpose or value that intrinsically matters to him, Zebulon.

We, in this country especially, find it preposterous and revolting if, say in America (as George Mikes observes) but also (in my experience) in Central Europe an enquiry like 'Will you please tell me how I can get to Morn. Cr.?' draws for an immediate answer the counter-question 'Why do you want to go to Morn. Cr.?' But, for all its misplaced responsiveness, it execrable indiscretion, precipitancy and abruptness, this ill-mannered reaction in fact prefigures the schema of development—the structure—of more intimate and full-fledged advisory relations. In any wider and more important sense of the word, Zebulon cannot 'advise' Alfred unless he knows, beyond Alfred's isolated here-and-now purpose, a good deal about Alfred's more far-reaching designs, his horizon of values and the comprehensive texture of his aims. And, speaking figuratively, Zebulon's advice may sometimes quite legitimately and usefully take the form 'Don't go to Morn. Cr. at all; go to Cheyne Walk, rather'; again, Alfred may solicit his advice in an *a limine* not properly instrumental style: 'My doctor urges me (once more an advice that is an 'urging', so to say an 'order'!) to take a good long enjoyable holiday somewhere in the South: should I go to Florence, to Dalmatia, to the Costa Blanca, to Greece, I wonder'. Paraphrasing MacIntyre, *tell how* (which is nearest to the straightforward *telling that*) may slip into a *tell what* and this in its turn may rise, or degenerate, to an imperative *tell to*. (In no foreign language is there to my knowledge an exact equivalent for 'tell', any more than for 'want', and the distinction be-

tween 'say' and 'tell'. Entirely self-interested requests or urgings are sometimes proffered, in an opportune context, in a manner pretending to be advices. About 40 years ago, K. P.* in Vienna mused about buying a dog but was far from deciding the kind of dog it should be. Being myself a morbidly infatuated idolater of dachshunds, I with eloquent insistence advised him in that sense. But K. P. knew his man and after some minutes of deep pondering shook his head and made the logically odd objection: 'But I don't want a dachshund; I want a *dog*'. At long last he acquired a cat: the next best thing to the dachshund.

5

A moment ago, I spoke of Zebulon's intrusion into Alfred's 'counsels', thus pronouncing a weighty word. All counselling is advising, but only the 'high-level', 'policy-forming' type of advising, the farther end of the spectrum we might say, is called (in more refined language) 'counselling'. This distinction is wholly or all but wholly specific to English; the nearest counterpart I can think of is the Spanish duality of the words *aconsejar* (the current term for 'advising') and *asesorar* (a more learned word, which pretty exactly renders 'counselling'—also *asesorarse con alguien, consultar a alguien* = taking counsel with, consult, somebody). Etymologically, 'advise' refers back to information (fact-communication), whereas 'counsel' (as also consult, consul etc.), supposing it as we may well do to be connected with 'council' (cf. conciliate, conclave etc.) appears to derive from an Indo-European verbal root meaning 'to call' (Latin *calare*? Greek *ekklesia*?): it suggests the idea of calling together, gathering together, deliberating in common (*asesorar,-se*). Indeed, English 'counsel' (noun) means not only advice and legal adviser but also consultation and agential disposition or tendency; it is more intrinsic to deliberation than is 'advice' (cf. expressions like 'cooler counsels prevailed', 'counsel' in the sense of one person's practical judgment, 'keep one's own counsel'). As 'counsellor' Zebulon takes a more organic part in Alfred's deliberations than as 'adviser', which more closely aligns with 'informant' or 'expert'. At the 'counselling' pole, advising has left behind the stage of mere informing and even of reminding and attention-guidance; it approximates to will-guidance proper and has thus taken on some connotation of the mode (b), deliberating in a joint framework of concerns, or indeed of the mode (a), demanding, requesting, 'making representations' etc. This does not by any means necessarily imply a moral veto or admonition or exhortation, although naturally counselling at its highest, but also any advice at the stage of practical reminding or warning, *may* well include a reference to moral points of view, once Zebulon knows or supposes—which he generally may do—that Alfred *is* concerned, besides other things, about morality, and presumably specially sensitive to *some* moral norms and values. Anything like a relation of sustained counselling (even if not educational or not amounting to joint policy-making) will rarely lack all moral reference. But the moral implication of counselling should not be confused with what is meant by a 'moral advice'. The paradigm case of the latter is Zebulon's giving a straightforward opinion, on his being expressly consulted by Alfred, about whether a contemplated course of action is morally permissible, or about the comparative weight of two conflicting moral demands he is confronted with. A moral advice proper is typically a *solicited* advice; otherwise it would be in the nature of a moral demand or appeal rather than of an advice, for advising (even counselling) as such is primarily ordained to the recipient's own existing interests and purposes, not to the universal or objective desirability of his cherishing commendable (e.g. moral) concerns and discarding others (e.g. sinful ones) to *the good of* Alfred rather than to *the goodness of* Alfred. To a consultation involving moral alternatives, Williams would sometimes return the answer 'Do neither but rather go to the pictures tonight and give morality a rest'. He seems to entertain doubts about the universal valid *supremacy* of moral over other considerations, a principle to which I (with some reservations) feel definitely committed. But I emphatically concur with Williams's more rigorous rejection of the stronger (in my belief, insane) principle of an *ubiquity* in human practice of the moral stress; and in the same sense I may lean on such distinguished thinkers as B. Mayo and Prof. MacIver, and also call attention to the excellent article 'Definition of a Moral Judgment' by Timothy L.S. Sprigge in *Philosophy*, Oct. 1964.

6

I do not insist much upon this, but I would suggest that there is *some* feature of paradoxy in advising, at any rate in counselling, that is not present in the other modes: the series commanding-demanding-requesting etc. and deliberation in common; nor even in altruistic conduct (renunciation of some advantage for another person's good). It lies in practical thinking in a framework of concerns, values, tastes, preferences and projects as if it were one's own, whereas it is not one's own nor is globally or for any specified part of it genuinely adopted or assimilated so that it would actually become one's own. For if we have identity we can no longer have advising, which precisely is for somebody else's benefit. Nor on the other hand does advising fit into the schema of straightforwardly divided interests and divided agential subjecthood—whereas a selfless act of withdrawal before another's need or convenience does fit into that schema, since it clearly maintains the pattern

of dividedness and does not imply an *intrinsic* quasi-sharing of the beneficiary's practical position or valuational structure. I will not deal with this puzzlingness of advising at any greater length but just briefly refer to observations already made about advising at the 'farther' or 'top' end of highly engaged counselling fading over into a partial interfusion, collective unity or identification, or again into the mode of urgent demand. There is moreover, as initially hinted, a feature of paradoxy in moral advising, in that the imperative edge of moral assertion is thrust forward here sheathed, as it were, in the style of advisory service or even mere factual information in a practical context (a statement about moral consensus or the prevalent opinion of ethical authorities, say moral theologians). A moral Ought, in other words, is translated into the incongruously anodyne language 'You had better' or 'It would be wiser of you' or 'You would be well advised to': a servant, we might say, tactfully conveying to his master the ordainment of their common sovereign. But perhaps this appearance of paradoxy amounts to no more than simply one manifestation of the non-simple, the extremely complex, logic of relations between divided agential selves enmeshed in a texture of objective states of affairs and normativities.

Advices, springing as they do from a cognitive root *without* an imperative edge, are inherently argumentative: there seems to be little point in following an advice merely in virtue of the fact of having received it *qua* advice. Shwayder points out the contrast between our following advices primordially from the same motives from which they are given (i.e. incorporating the deliberation on our behalf which they represent in a condensed form into our own direct agential deliberation) and our obeying commands *not* primordially from the motives they are issued from. Hence it is an anomaly, a deviation—a 'human frailty' (like, on the other hand, 'mock advice', self-interested suasion): and of course not uncommon—if Zebulon feels offended at Alfred's refusal or omission to follow his advice. That doesn't mean that it may not, *sometimes*, be *wise* to follow an advice which fails to appear to us *intrinsically* wise. This is most likely the point of the pretty Spanish 'refrán'

El consejo de la mujer es poco,
y el que no lo toma es loco:

for in minor matters at least it may often be less unwise to act somewhat foolishly than to expose oneself to the perpetual nagging of a creature difficult to get rid of. On the other hand, arguments of a practice-directed kind, even if embodying subtle and apparently unrebuttable wisdom, on principle lack the cogency of straight theoretical argument (when valid) inasmuch as personal tastes with their possible unpredictable eccentricity and intensity of personal desires and aversions are utterly incalculable and only most imperfectly knowable, and are yet (along with physical necessity and the moral law) the starkly valid data on which practice and thus advising must build. It is difficult to say what a 'good', i.e. a *wise* counsel is—though I confidently assert that the concept is by no means vacuous—and it is another difficult question to decide whether it is wise on the agent's (Alfred's) part to act upon (to follow) a certain counsel, wise or not; for, in blatant contrast with objective canons of value and particularly with moral standards, everyone's practice is *his own* and although it *may* be informed, guided, inspired etc., it can never be 'assumed' or superseded by somebody else's deliberative contribution. We are responsible before the tribunal of morality, and in a very different sense also as regards our obedience to commands addressed to us, nay even, in again a different and much vaguer sense, in the context of our complying with or rejecting requests and entreaties, and still in another sense on the plane of theoretical argument or, finally, of collective deliberation; but not before advices, which are essentially something placed at our disposal and subordinate to our practice, and can at best 'claim' to be earnestly listened to, not in any sense 'claim' to be 'taken', i.e. actually followed or conformed to. The same is true, in particularly sharp contrast with the status of universal moral principles, standards and rules, of those depersonalised and generalised pieces of counselling, condensed and tinned counsels as it were, which we sometimes call 'rules of practical wisdom' (*Maximen der Lebensweisheit*). I wouldn't say that on the plane of practice, as opposed to morality, it is simply success that counts; but I do say that in the perspective of practice *one* irreducibly valid proof of the pudding is in the eating. Suppose a war (whose issue was not a foregone conclusion) in which the application of an unorthodox strategy has led to definitive victory. Hosts of silly commentators will set themselves to 'demonstrate' that that strategy was really a translation into actual practice of sound eternal principles, that it could not but succeed, that it reflected a firm and infallible grasp of what the situation required, that it meant riding the mystical steed of historic necessity, and the like. But it would be worse than silly, it would be arrant lunacy to say that because the strategy was irregular victory has not been 'really' won, pointless to the point of insanity to say that *in view of* the unorthodox strategy the victory was 'invalid' or that *because of* that blemish the war has been won to no good purpose.

Editors's Note

* This is almost certainly Karl Polanyi, brother of Michael, with whom Kolnai was associated in Vienna.

AUREL KOLNAI'S 'INCHOATE SKETCH OF A THEORY OF MORALITY'

Francis Dunlop

1 Moral philosophy in Kolnai's thought

If we take 'moral' in its traditionally broad sense, Kolnai was a moral philosopher all his life, and virtually everything he wrote embodies or relates to some aspect of his moral philosophy. If, on the other hand, we think of 'moral philosophy' in the special sense predominant in the modern Anglo-Saxon tradition, according to which it is contrasted with political philosophy, social philosophy and the philosophy of mind, Kolnai's contribution to this field forms only a small proportion of his total literary output. Certainly we have his doctoral thesis, *Der ethische Wert und die Wirklichkeit* (*Ethical Value and Reality*), written in 1925 and 1926. This is a substantial work embracing many of the main themes of modern moral philosophy, though its extremely difficult German style, and the allusive and often obscure, though original, way in which the central questions are approached rather reduces its usefulness. This work was followed by another work in German, *Sexualethik* (*Sexual Ethics*); in refreshing contrast to its predecessor, the language and style are clear and direct. It is a comprehensive and profound work, but, as one might expect, only a small proportion of it is of general ethical interest. After that there is a gap of over twenty years before the ten or so substantial papers written in English from the mid-forties until shortly before his death in 1973 begin to appear. Certainly Kolnai did write a textbook of phenomenological ethics in the early thirties. But, although the German publisher paid the agreed fee, and the printing plates were prepared, the book never appeared, probably because the Nazis had just gained power, and all trace of the work is lost. After that politics and social philosophy absorbed most of his energies, until he came to England in 1955. Here he at once started to write 'The Utopian Mind'. The theme of this bears directly on moral philosophy, but, unfortunately, it was never finished (though the completed parts are now in print, with some supplementary essays). The same goes for the important general work 'Morality and Practice', which never got beyond the first two chapters. The result of all this is that, though we have an impressive body of work by Kolnai on moral philosophy, there are fewer indications than one might hope for of how the material dispersed around the distinct papers and chapters of books might have been fitted together into a 'theory of ethics' or comprehensive 'moral philosophy'.

However, towards the end of 1969 an influential friend of his, the Hungarian historian Ferenc Fejtö, who lives in Paris, visited him, and exhorted him to write such a work, saying that only he could really do the subject justice. Kolnai says in a letter that he rather agreed with this last point, but told both Fejtö and his correspondent, with equal candour, that the undertaking was now beyond his powers. Soon after the meeting he had his first heart attack, and, after another three years, he was dead. But among his papers is a twenty-page photocopy of a manuscript in his own hand entitled 'Moral Truth: inchoate sketch of a Theory of Morality'. Mrs Kolnai dated the original to 1937, though it was clear from the handwriting that, if she was right, the original sketch must have been re-written many years after its composition. It now seems clear to me, because of its contents, that this is a 'late' manuscript, and it seems at least a reasonable supposition that Kolnai wrote it after the conversation with Fejtö referred to above. It is of considerable interest, since its main theme, though presupposing the most substantial points of the published papers, is unique among Kolnai's works in the prominence and strong emphasis it gives to self-distance, and to the 'moral status' of man. Whatever its date actually is, it is the only work of this 'English' period of Kolnai's in which he presents a 'theory' of morality at all. Although it is only an inchoate sketch', it complements the finished papers so well that I feel justified in giving it pride of place in what follows.

Before I turn to the moral philosophy I shall say something about the most general characteristics of Kolnai's thought.

2 A philosopher of common sense

Kolnai is first and foremost a philosopher of common sense. Philosophy is, for him, not a 'subject' detached from ordinary experience, but in essential continuity with it. That means that it ought to be possible for a philosopher to be understood by any intelligent person familiar with the object area (or subject matter) concerned. Where moral philosophy goes, there must be a presumption that every mature and normal person is familiar with the object area, and is capable of some limited reflection about it. Kolnai sometimes expressed his common sense approach thus: the philosopher must think *with* the plain man, not *for* him; he must, that is, begin his thought in his own

capacity as moral agent, and never lose touch with this ('feet on the ground') aspect of his own self. We are all subject to the moral demand, all have to make moral choices, all pass moral judgment on the conduct of our fellows and ourselves, and are morally accountable to others. And we do all this as 'plain men'; not as 'experts'—even in moral philosophy, not as having been enlightened by an, kind of theory *about* morality, but simply as moral agents responding more or less thoughtfully and conscientiously to the problems and choices thrown up by the ordinary business of life. Kolnai assumes that all normal persons are, in this formal respect, in the same boat; the detailed *content* and even the form of their responses may differ, but, 'structurally' speaking, all human beings are moral beings, and cannot help being so.

Kolnai also associates himself strongly with some of the early phenomenologists. As he saw it, Husserl in his early anti-psychologistic work (and also in the posthumously published *Erfahrung und Urteil* (*Experience and Judgement*)) was primarily concerned with exploring and expounding the meanings of things as encountered in experience. As he put it in a letter written in late 1971:

> We have no other mental grasp on objects, including values and disvalues, than our exterior and inner 'senses': the essential 'intentionality' of our consciousness (which is always 'consciousness *of* . . . ') and the 'self-giving' and 'self-presenting' of the object to it - as the Phenomenologists, whose disciple I am, used to put it.

In Kolnai's view Husserl spent far too much time on technical and methodological issues, and, while never for a moment doubting his genius, he tended to prefer thinkers like Reinach, the early (i.e. pre-metaphysical) Scheler, Pfänder and von Hildebrand. He saw the early phenomenological movement as the most important modern manifestation of the stream of uncorrupted philosophical speculation striving to assert itself against the predominantly utopian 'systematisers, reductionists, immoralists, nihilists', and so forth, who largely constitute what is known as 'modern philosophy'. The true tradition—always attempting faithful obedience to 'the sovereignty of the object' —comes down from Aristotle to the Scholastics, and then largely goes underground, reemerging fitfully here and there, but above all in the Scottish Common-sense school and Husserl's great teacher Brentano and the phenomenologists, and then again in G.E.Moore and some other English 'intuitionists'. Kolnai does not devote much attention to the links between common sense philosophy and early phenomenology, but saw the two as essentially akin.

3 His attitude to metaphysics

Kolnai used to say that he wasn't intelligent enough to engage in epistemology or metaphysics, and he never devotes sustained attention to the theoretical problems that arise in these areas, preferring to concentrate on the philosophy of practice. On the other hand he is perfectly clear that a person must *trust* the deliverances of his experience unless he has good reason not to. Physical objects are quite obviously objectively 'there' in front of us; the mind inescapably 'confronts' them; and it is also part of common sense to realise that, under certain circumstances, our senses may deceive us, or we ourselves may jump illegitimately to conclusions. The ultimate way of coping with this—apart from consulting our fellows—is to make more *considered* use of our cognitive faculties. As he says in the letter quoted above, 'We have no other mental grasp on objects' except with the help of our various senses. But experience presents us not only with physical objects and qualities, but also with 'meanings', logical relations and 'values'; it is precisely in the investigation of these objects that philosophy consists. As far as meanings go, Kolnai never equated them to 'ideas', in the sense of objects constructed or produced by the mind. We confront meanings (they are objects of consciousness) as we confront material objects; neither are in any sense 'products' of the 'will', except illegitimately. We also confront values; they too are simply given to us. We already know that there is a difference between given values and illusory values created by desire, and so on. The fact that there are obvious differences between values and physical objects, say, does not alter the fundamentally receptive basis of cognition. Where values are concerned, Kolnai, like the other phenomenologists, also observes the given distinction between values and goods. Goods are (spiritual, material or mental) things, states, and so on, that have value; values are those aspects of things that make them approvable, desirable, and so on, in various ways. Values, then, are—at least in a grammatical sense—'properties' of things. Kolnai's doctoral thesis explores aspects of the claim that values can only be given to us as properties of existing, or real, things. The value of courage is only given in the contemplation of courageous acts. As in the case of material objects, we can subsequently *imagine* cases of it. But values must be the values *of* things, and must be initially experienced in reality. This claim is the basis of his crusade against utopian thinking and its fixation on unimaginable 'perfections'. But the main point to be made here is that metaphysics and ontology, the exploration of types of object, and speculation about how the different types are all related, must come *after* the mental grasp *of* these same objects, and can make no difference to that grasp, since that is the basis of all our knowledge. Perhaps values are often given more obscurely, or more uncertainly, than most

physical objects. That fact is also given to us. We must, then, be the more scrupulous in examining our experience, and sifting it for the obvious distortions occasioned by desire and other possible interferences. But, in principle, inadequate intuitions can only be replaced by more adequate ones. Kolnai himself came to realise that something else was also needed, as we shall see, and made the reference to 'consensus', in a carefully defined sense, an essential part of the business of morality. But the ontological or metaphysical status of values, and so on, is not his concern. Values—and he is careful to analyse value-experience—are simply given, and, for the moral agent, cannot cease to be so given. What is more, there are many different kinds of them; they cannot be reduced to a single kind.

Kolnai's moral philosophy is also founded on his views about persons. It is entirely consonant with his common sense approach to philosophy that, instead of taking up some theoretical position in the Mind-Body controversy, he concentrates on our experience of our own 'splitness'. Unless temporarily incapacited, we are always somehow *aware* of ourselves. Hence the possibility of self-criticism, which presupposes that the critic is not exactly 'the same' as what he criticises, and of conscience. To dismiss this split as 'Cartesianism' because it is difficult to understand is beside the point. It is simply given to us, however obscurely, and cannot be fully explained. It marks the difference between true personal life and the life of the species Homo Sapiens. Kolnai attaches great importance to the fact that a human being can live more or less as a person. Someone who is apparently unable to resist any impulse, is completely self-satisfied, or seems to be the willing slave of fashion or convention, is living less as a person and more as a degenerate member of the species or of some social group. Such a person is more nearly 'identical' with his own self. Hence Kolnai's frequently expressed horror of drunkenness and sexual licence, or any kind of exaggerated and contrived 'oneness' among people. It is a mark of persons, in Kolnai's sense, that they are always conscious of 'alterity' (otherness), or personal boundaries and alien perspectives between and within other people, of their own responsibility to take up some attitude to both their own 'appetites' and the conformist currents outside them.

4 His idea of 'moral theory'

In what sense does Kolnai provide an 'ethical theory?' In this sense: he gives us a picture of morality, drawn from the analysis of moral experience and of personal being, which hangs together, and makes sense. He does not provide us with a principle, or even a set of principles, or again a formal procedure, for the definitive settlement of moral disputes. In other words, he does not provide any means of 'proving' moral claims. However, he does provide a 'non-naturalistic' picture of morality in which moral argument and discussion have a very important place. He does not claim that morality is completely intelligible. Indeed, he says, if it were, morality would not be morality, but part of the natural conduct of life, and all immorality would simply be error. Some 'residual opacity' is therefore a necessary feature of any morality which fully accords with our experience of it. But it is intelligible *enough* to make sense, and to give someone a reason for trying to be moral.

5 Morality and practice

Before I turn to 'Moral Truth', I shall first briefly expound one or two of the most important principles of Kolnai's moral philosophy, which are taken for granted in it. Most fundamental of all, perhaps, is his concern to distinguish morality from practice (see the papers with that title in *Ethics, Value and Reality*). Practice is coextensive with human life, embracing everything that people do, and Kolnai often glosses it as 'the pursuit of human concerns'. It is fundamentally self-centred, and only concerned with 'the other' in so far as we have some special interest or concern relating to it. Morality is an aspect of practice, but not in the sense in which, say, public and private life, work and leisure, or 'socialising', 'economic activities' and 'family life' are. The point is that morality has no particular subject-matter of its own, is not primarily a human concern. You cannot 'go in for' or 'specialise in' it! But neither is it straightforwardly coextensive with practice, as in Utilitarianism, where absolutely everything one does should be judged by the one fundamental utilitarian criterion. On the other hand Kolnai will not assert dogmatically that some things we do always entirely lack moral significance. Even the well-known scholastic example of a morally indifferent action, 'going for a walk', *may* be of moral significance under some circumstances, though no doubt this is not usually the case. The relation between morality and practice is in fact complex: some actions, examples of 'classic' types of wrongdoing, such as stealing, murder, lying, false witness, cruelty, and so on, always have strong 'moral emphasis'; others, including certain everyday instantiations of helpfulness, cheerfulness, courtesy, duty-fulfilment, and so on, may still have moral significance, but are not 'emphatically moral' because they are not bound to attract moral attention, and may well be closely integrated into the pursuit of 'human concerns'; others again seem to have no moral significance at all except in very exceptional circumstances, such as putting one's left shoe on before the right. Kolnai sometimes sums up the differences instantiated in this three-fold divi-

sion of types of action or conduct as those between 'thematic morality', 'implicit morality' and 'the morally indifferent'. Such terms as these are needed if we are to find our way around among moral phenomena, but in fact the boundaries between them are fleeting and uncertain. In his doctoral thesis there is frequent use of the term 'gradation'; among its applications is its use to mark the nature of the 'boundary' between morality and practice. It is only traceable in terms of certain typical examples which shade off into each other. It is its neglect of gradation that Kolnai most objects to in Kantianism and other moral formalisms.

6 The primacy of the negative

A closely related theme in Kolnai's ethics is that of the 'thematic primacy of moral evil', discussed in the paper of that name. There is an urgency about what he calls the 'great moral taboos', as in most of the Ten Commandments, which is quite lacking to even conspicuous acts of doing good. This is because of the already noticed feature of much 'good-doing', such as acts of duty-fulfilment and kindness, which are often quite indistinguishable from the pursuit of the ordinary concerns of life. They do not stand out in people's lives in any special way, though they may do this, of course, when measured against the ordinary conduct of people who are not generally kind and conscientious. This 'implicit morality' is usually only thematic when its absence approaches the measure of moral neglect, or evil. The everyday kindness of kind, cheerful people, shades gradually into that ordinary help and assistance whose withholding is commonly experienced as callous or despicable conduct, such as passing by when a frail old person in the street has dropped something, or fallen, and cannot help himself. Here the failure to help would be 'thematic', since the withholding of assistance in such circumstances would, other things being equal, be wrong. As with all such examples, it is not difficult to think up exceptions to these claims, but, equally, not difficult to imagine circumstances when they hold. The point remains that moral evil or wrongdoing has a special place among moral phenomena; it is 'thematically primary'. It is in such conduct that 'the moral' primarily impinges on the simply 'practical', that ordinary 'human concerns' have to submit to some other claim that we have not chosen for ourselves and do not identify with. Kolnai also points out that this principle of the thematic primacy of moral evil is virtually equivalent to the theme of moral obligation (in a general sense). We are morally *obliged* to refrain from acts of cruelty, injustice, deceit, culpable neglect, and so on; as plain moral agents, we are only *exhorted* or *encouraged* to engage in positive acts of kindness, friendliness, the cultivation of intellectual or artistic values, and so on. In some circumstances certain kinds of action may pass from one category to another. For example, the boundary between being kind and helpful (not morally demanded), and not ignoring the discomfort or difficulties of others (morally demanded), may be hard to draw in general; it is clearly 'graded' and varies according to circumstances. But the kind of difference should be clear and familiar, and it was Kolnai's conviction that these immediate data of the moral life were not to be distorted by arguing, for example, that all moral evil was 'really' a form of deficiency in doing good. Such tricks were the result of imposing on the data a theory—in this case 'omne ens ad bonum appetitur' (every being strives for its good)—which neglected to 'save the phenomena' and was therefore devised in despite of true philosophy.

7 Conscience and consensus

Kolnai's treatment of conscience and consensus, and moral principles, clearly illustrates another aspect of his general philosophical approach, his tendency to accept 'both-and' rather than 'either-or' solutions, and to argue that the tension between apparent alternatives, which the typical theorist ascribes to insufficient ingenuity on his opponent's part, is inherent in the nature of things. As I have implied, the construction of rigorous or all-embracing theories was wholly foreign to his nature. Even his 'theoretical' remarks *about* this tend to be incidental or tentative asides rather than elaborated at length. He sometimes talked about his 'religion of the fragmentary', according to which we can never see 'the whole' of anything in philosophy, but only aspects or parts, which it is incumbent on the thinker to make as clear as possible; the theorist, who glosses over this essential imperfection in the evidence always distorts the data in trying to extend them further than they will go. So, in ethics, Kolnai thought, both form and content are important, both conscience and individual moral insight and also social consensus and tradition. Clearly the appeal to conscience is extremely important in morality; indeed, to act against conscience has often seemed the epitome of moral wrongness. Yet what if a person's conscience tells him to jeopardise the lives of ordinary people out hunting, or to blow up abortion clinics? Are we not compelled to accept that, in the end, generally accepted moral principles are more important, and conscience an 'epiphenomenon'? Rather than take sides in this debate Kolnai prefers to begin by carefully analysing the phenomena. It is true that conscience is meaningless unless it is informed with the moral principles, the moral consensus, of mankind. Yet consensus may itself be subject to moral distortion, against

which conscience may protest. If it were the last word on the matter, there would be no moral reform. And no general moral principles, including generally accepted weightings between them, will ever suffice to settle all moral problems. Yet we surely need waste no sleep over certain claims to be acting conscientiously, when the agent's moral awareness seems very selective, or obviously in thrall to some extra-moral idea or ideology, or to a person or organisation. Kolnai's paper 'Erroneous Conscience' explores these issues, especially the vital distinction between various forms of 'dissentient conscience', which still demands respect, even when we feel compelled to disagree with its deliverances, and 'overlain conscience', where the agent is no longer acting morally at all, but simply carrying out the programme of the 'party', or obeying the dictates of someone to whom he has surrendered his conscience. Many of Kolnai's distinctions depend on his demonstration that conscience tends to incorporate non-moral valuations, which are then counted as moral. Morality and practice, though there is much convergence, or consonance, between them, must be distinguished as far as possible.

In 'Moral Consensus' he takes up in more detail the claim that the 'intuitional' view of morality, which is closely associated with the appeal to conscience, is 'theoretically' incomplete without the appeal to consensus. This is because valuational judgements 'include an objective factual reporting of our own emotive response', and cannot therefore be quite as 'objective' as, say, perceptual judgements. Again, not only did we learn our morality from 'other people', but morality essentially involves

> reciprocity, mutual responsibility, and 'demands' both binding *upon* the moral agent and represented *by* him in relation with others.

Nevertheless morality cannot be defined in terms of consensus. The relation between the individual's independent moral judgement and consensus is one of dialogue rather than one-way dependence. In the end the relationship between them cannot be reduced to rule. But, of course, the major objection to consensus as authoritative is that it is relative to time and place. Kolnai's reply is that, just as there is something we must recognise as a general human nature, so there is a 'moral consensus of mankind' which he then briefly runs through (it is worth comparing this with C.S. Lewis's parallel endeavour in *The Abolition of Man*). He then surveys the confusions which prevent many people from accepting this, for example the assumption that humanity is neatly divided into non-communicating groups, the confusion between morality and practice, the identification of basic morality with moral *ethos*, which includes the specific *weightings* between (basic and universal) principles established in individual societies under the influence of their predominant practical concerns and prevailing religious and factual beliefs. The heart of Kolnai's thesis concerns 'the validity & claim for earnest consideration of all moral points of view, always, everywhere, and in all circumstances'. He accepts that the resulting consensus is not rigidly permanent, and that it is subject to 'basic structural changes in the human condition'. Again, our access to it is always 'perspectival', slanted by our own non-moral concerns, and membership of particular social groups. Nevertheless, what we have is a 'quasi absolute'.

8 Morality and self-distance

I turn now to the sketch entitled 'Moral Truth', in which Kolnai tries to combine his various insights into a more unified picture of morality which can still be measured against the moral experience of the 'plain man'. The centre of this sketch is the claim that the basic meaning of morality is 'the affirmation of self-distance', and that this is expressed in both its formal and material aspects. The best way of approaching these claims is to turn to the 'Note on "self-distance", "self-restraint" and "self-transcendence"', from which we can extract something like three or four distinct 'levels' of morality, through which these terms take on a more exact significance. We have already seen that Kolnai assumes a 'scissure' or 'division' in the human person. I cannot be absolutely identical with my self. With this split, then, is immediately given 'the capacity of self-distance'. This, together with rationality, by which Kolnai means the power of disinterested grasp of objects in concepts and the ability to reason, is part of the 'anthropological' concept of man. It follows from the capacity of self-distance that all men are 'virtually', or potentially, moral or immoral, although 'a *semblance* of conscience-less "amorality" is also possible' as regards actual behaviour.

Then comes the 'level' [this is my own term] of actualised self-distance, where man 'continu[es] to live as self'—that is, to pursue his practical concerns—but in awareness of self-distance and the experienced possibility of 'rising above selfhood' by accepting moral principles, the need for self-criticism and the recognition of 'alterity' (things other than oneself and one's concerns). Thus, from the start, self-distance introduces an obligational and self-critical 'tinge', and is therefore liable to be disregarded, either openly or through various strategies. Then comes the 'level' of morally exercised self-distance, which has aspects of continuing to live as self, but also *against* self. In the face of wrong we encounter morality as an emphatic theme, which requires 'self-restraint as a discipline of consciously accepted and exercised self-distance'. This is not a matter of substituting a 'moral' self for the 'amoral' one. Rather, it is an *affirmation* of self

qua 'self-distant, disinterested, self-restrained and self-transcendent self'. I shall return to this below.

The last level is that of 'self-transcendence', of virtuous 'moral performance' (as opposed to merely restraining ourselves in accordance with the great taboos), in acts of generosity, self-sacrifice, 'creative love', living for a cause, and so on. This is not really a different 'level', since it is also present in more lowly form in things like craftsmanship, and all positive pursuit of good. But it is distinct from active self-restraint in that, if all forms of heroism, idealism, spiritual concerns, and so forth, are rejected, then the level of active self-restraint is itself imperilled. Self-transcendence means being ready to advance beyond the self as shaped by customary choices and the conventional morality of one's given social groups, and has an obvious link with 'reformatory conscience'. Kolnai ends this note with the observation that these distinctions cannot be easily applied in reality to our fellows, except in a highly provisional and tentative fashion. In general, 'we know only better and worse men', and even that without any certainty.

Let us return to the idea of self-distance. The obverse of this is humble submission to alterity. Thus, I put aside my own concerns and submit to the deliverances of conscience and the moral consensus of mankind. But, as we have seen, Kolnai argues that both these are inadequate on their own, and even together. Thus, I cannot do right by simply deciding to 'keep the rules' and 'conform to conscience', but must keep myself alert to sense where these are inadequate. As far as individual moral principles go, all reveal the pattern of the call to self-distance, to alter or adapt our own concerns. Kolnai shows this in relation to a well-known classification of principles. In Justice (fairness, probity, veracity, etc.) we submit to 'fittingness', to 'quasi logical requirements of the situation'; in Benevolence (generosity, complaisance, courtesy, neighbour-love, patriotism, etc.) we submit to other people as such, variously related to ourselves; in Temperance (purity, sobriety, self-control, etc.), we submit to our own 'spiritual' self as opposed to the 'self' of appetite. To those who ask for some more rigorous principle from which these three heterogeneous principles (and the sub-principles related to them) might be derived, Kolnai answers that this element of mystery is itself part of the essence of morality. If there were some more perspicuous principle from which we might derive the rest we might take refuge in it and lazily abandon self-distance, with its readiness to be surprised by new intuitions. As it is, reliance on a rational scheme all too easily becomes one of our 'concerns'. We can see this more clearly in Kolnai's explication of moral evil as whatever *negates* or *prevents* the affirmation of self-distance. We can (and do) *identify* with 'logics'; we make them our own and dwell in them, abandoning the painful precariousness of virtually all-questioning self-distance.

9 The moral status of man

What, then, is at stake in all this? Put more crudely (a question Kolnai regards as perfectly legitimate), what is there in it for us? The answer lies in the 'higher' 'self-affirmation' mentioned a little earlier, in the 'moral status', or feeling of true human worth it is the business of morality to protect. This moral status is a metaphysical fact; unlike our rational capacities it does not belong in the 'natural world'. But we can sense it in ourselves and others. It has nothing to do with 'character', which, Kolnai argues, is too redolent of Nature, with its slow evolution and possible decline. Moral status, by contrast, can be lost in a single episode of conduct; it can also be regained by a single act of genuine 'disavowal' or renunciation. (During an old television series, 'Starsky and Hutch', one of the cops once exhorted the criminal to confess and 'join the human race'.) The need to guard and protect this status accounts for the basically imperatival form of morality and the pain of moral sanctions. To every 'thou shalt not . . .' is silently appended 'on pain of losing a precious possession' (a good conscience, the title to look every other person frankly in the eye). Thus all moral imperatives are hypothetical. And moral truth, or validity, is related to it. A morally good act is one that confirms the status; an evil act removes it.

A little more should be added here about the relation of self-distance to rationality. There is some self-distance in rational thought, but the self-distance of morality ('volitive self-distance') is more emphatic and existential. But the prime objection to reliance on rational schemes in morality is that they reduce moral evil to practical error. Some self-distance may be needed to check whether the reasoning is correct; but, where all is cut and dried, one identifies with the scheme of reasoning itself; operating it becomes part of practice, like any other kind of calculating that expresses or furthers one's concerns. Kolnai argues cogently that the self of morality must stand lightly to its concerns—except of course where the moral theme is not given, or where it is only implicit. These considerations about 'rational schemes' do not mean that morality is irrational. There is still much room for argument and discussion. But the rationality is not complete; the ambition to produce 'water-tight' schemes is itself immoral because in the end it destroys self-distance, and confuses morality with practice.

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AUREL KOLNAI AND THE METAPHYSICS OF POLITICAL CONSERVATISM

John Pollard Hittinger *

1 Introduction

The political thought of Aurel Kolnai is difficult to classify. He identifies himself as a 'conservative' and that designation is apt; but it is of course terribly vague and subject to emotive connotations and partisan distortions. The American landscape alone is filled with a wide spectrum of 'conservative thought;'[1] and when one adds the British and Continental varieties the term conservative no longer holds a coherent centre of meaning. The purpose of this paper is in part to outline and display the unique brand of conservatism that marks Aurel Kolnai. It bears some affinities to Alexis de Tocqueville and Edmund Burke, and shows the imprint of G. K. Chesterton, but it bears its own distinctive mark. This is due in part to Kolnai's philosophical method which is neither textual, nor sociological, nor historical. It uses linguistic analysis but soon passes into a phenomenological approach, ultimately yielding a metaphysical perspective. I shall say a word about his method in due course, but further elaboration on Kolnai's Conservatism, which I have labeled a 'metaphysical' conservatism. I mean by this that his analysis arrives at a very fruitful notion of 'participation' by which he penetrates the ideological core of modern Liberalism and at the same time retrieves the basic principles of pre-modern political philosophy, which become a most flexible and adroit tool for analysis and open to various applications.

The metaphysical perspective is not that of an a priori system, nor is it a detached abstract system which he brings to bear on politics; rather we find in Kolnai a man of unique political experience who through keen observation and reflection arrives at some essential core principles of political life. In a statement of method Kolnai said that his was a 'phenomenological temper averse to speculative dogmatism but in revolt against the tyranny of the positivisitic, monistic, and naturalistic outlook.'[2] 'Let the phenomena speak'[3] Kolnai elsewhere counsels. And indeed it is to phenomena that Kolnai's keen mind tends—the irreducible and diverse strands of a rich and broad human experience that characterise his own life's journey. His own statement of nationality reflects this broad experience: 'Until 1929, Hungarian; 1929-1938, Austrian; thereafter stateless; 1951-1962, Canadian; thereafter British.'[4] He wrote numerous articles in various languages attending to particular political issues of the day. His massive work *War Against the West* is an intricate exploration of particular Nazi writings, persons, and proposals.[5] Kolnai knew politics first hand and from the front seat. He was well acquainted with its various forms, its different appearances, and the distinctness of its ontological texture, as distinct from ethics per se, art, religion etc.. So Kolnai's metaphysics of conservatism is well grounded in human experience and aided by careful analysis of precise meanings. Yet his political philosophy is a bold and daring attempt to view political life in its metaphysical depth.

In addition to metaphysical depth, Kolnai's political thought achieves a high degree of purity and freedom from cant and political slogan. This is not to say that Kolnai is not a man of deep political passion; at times he engages in harsh critical judgment.[6] Perhaps his condition of being stateless for 12 years offered an opportunity for political detachment; whatever the reason, Kolnai is also a writer remarkably free of partisan spirit or an ideological programme. He wrote a fine article entitled 'The Moral Theme in Political Division,' in which explores the various shades of meaning and connotations of the terms 'right' and 'left' as they pertain to morality.[7] From reading this article, one could not tell where Kolnai himself stands; he views them as complementary positions with different takes on the conditions and implications of morality, both of which have strengths and weaknesses. Let the 'phenomena speak' Kolnai counsels. From other writings, as we shall soon explore,[8] it is perfectly obvious that Kolnai considers himself to be a man of the right or a conservative; but he is well aware of the special illusions, shortcomings, and exaggerations which that political side might fall prey.[9] To conclude this opening attempt at orientation to the political thought of Aural Kolnai we should consider his own qualification of his designation as 'conservative':

> What we have in mind is not, of course, a proposal to substitute for Western Democracy along with its ideological biases, a fancy system of Conservative Constitutionalism, nor a return to this or that specified stage of the past, but a suggestion to displace the spiritual stress from the 'common man' aspect of democracy to its aspect of constitutionalism and of moral continuity with the high tradition of Antiquity, Christendom and the half-surviving Liberal cultures of yesterday.[10]

Exactly what is the 'common man aspect' of democracy is the great theme of Kolnai's critical political thought, and the prospect of 'moral continuity' the great theme of his constructive socio-political vision.

The core of Kolnai's philosophy, which we shall explore in detail below, may be stated in two broad statements. The first is that political liberty, and democratic regimes, require a respect for vari-

ous forms of 'privilege.' Indeed as he forcefully argues 'Privilege is the rampart of liberty,—not the liberty of the 'privileged' only, but of all classes of the people, of the whole multitude,—because it safeguards the existence of relatively independent persons.' And further, privilege inextricably entwines both natural and artificial excellence: 'there is no "natural" distinction which is not the fruit of various "privileges", and none which not generative of new privileges'. Contra Thomas Jefferson, Kolnai seeks to demonstrate, not the need for aristocratic government, but the appreciation of diverse pockets of excellence, many of which have been sheltered in the folds of social privilege.[11] Kolnai's second basic thesis is that the hatred of privilege and hierarchy is the bridge to a totalitarian form of democracy.[12] In more poetic form, the thesis states that a 'dialectical chrysalis is hidden from the outset' in modern political liberalism, which 'ready to develop while feeding, by virtue of the original kinship of stuff, on the flesh of the host, may assume full life and cast away the carcass of its devoured relative.' In more conceptual terminology he shows that liberal individualism was united at birth with collectivism, and that Machiavelli, Hobbes, Rousseau and Marx merely work out the logic of the democracy of the common man.[13] Or to reverse the metaphor, Kolnai said that 'the graceful butterfly of personal dissimilarity can-[not] alight directly on the drab fabric of social homogeneity' but it requires a 'congenial framework of social hierarchy and the "fields of tension" implicit therein.' (CM 293) To finish the broad stroke of Kolnai's philosophy—as a post-war writer, Kolnai has the experience of Nazism directly behind and Stalinism ahead; but he foresees an eventual demise of the Soviet scourge and the same threat of political danger to liberal democracy from within. At stake is a 'metaphysical substructure' of sound political order and the contrast of a 'metaphysical subversion' (PL 75) of the highest order which comports not simply with a Hitler, a Lenin, or a Mao, but an 'inherent tendency towards anti-constitutional, monistic, totalitarian types of power,' which tendency may be discerned in America, Britain, or Germany (CM 317).

2 Hierarchy, privilege and liberty

Kolnai's understanding of political life centres on the presence of social hierarchy and various forms of 'privilege.' He shows the vital connection of hierarchy and privilege to political liberty. This connection is historical, analytic and phenomenological. His vision of the best régime is not aristocracy *per se,* but some form of mixed régime which has the broadest possible participation of people but which maintains intermediate groups and sources of influence on social and political life which are independent of a central power—these groups and centres of influence he thinks operate through 'privilege' and often exhibit hierarchical patterns of organisation and operation. Thus, like Tocqueville, he thinks that the existence of political liberty requires such things as intermediate groups, religious activity, and thoughts, sentiments and mores which may counter the relentless trends of egalitarianism. To explore this area of Kolnai's thought we shall elaborate his notions of hierarchy, privilege and liberty.

Hierarchy.

The notion of hierarchy Kolnai subjects to a thorough linguistic and phenomenological analysis. He explains the vital social role played by hierarchy. And finally we must understand a metaphysics of 'participation' by which hierarchy plays such a vital role.

The notion of hierarchy is a complex one which includes quantitative (higher number), qualitative (higher study), social subordination of command and obedience, social prestige based on excellence, higher forms of life and activities, and finally the notion revealed by the etymology (the Greek ιερος)—the sense of the sacred, that which transcends the human as outside and 'above' man. (CH 170-175) He also explores the metaphor of verticality and its contrasting meanings of height and depth; finally he considers the phenomenological approaches to hierarchy of values and marks 'noble' not as a sheer vital value a la Scheler, but as a 'compenetration between a concrete being and some salient of vital, aesthetic, intellectual or moral values' (CH 181). He finishes the phenomenology of hierarchy with a brief consideration of nobility in society; his thesis that 'division, equilibrium, control and manifoldness of social hierarchies, positions of authority, power, rank, prestige, wealth etc.. deserved being respected and honored not because they warrant personal excellence but because they stand for a vital necessity of social order and are conducive to the recognition by and in society of the hierarchical distinction of values' (CH 185). Kolnai admits both that the presence of hierarchy is irksome in the 'egalitarian atmosphere' of the present world and that a democratic corrective is necessary for the aristocratic features of hierarchy as such. These political ties are explored in great depth and with great vigor in his political philosophy. But by establishing the phenomenon of hierarchy, Kolnai provides a certain grounding for the political analysis.

To begin with the social phenomenon already touched on above, the so-called social hierarchy results from a natural leadership in various sectors of human endeavor. Kolnai notes that a noble is a notable—one who is known and is not anonymous (CM 297) and therefore exists and acts with a degree of independence. Kolnai points out that a notable is not restricted to 'medieval feudality' or

'modern age rural squirearchy' (CM 299). Notables are members of the higher middle class, urban patriciates, Church organisation—as well as found in 'military, academic, and even trade union *milieux*.' Such notables have a claim to social prerogative or leadership in virtue of a 'value intrinsic, distinctively qualitative, pervading the essence of its bearer.' Yet the sense of hierarchy does not as such mean the noble persons are higher morally or even metaphysically better than another; but they do serve as 'a stimulus and a gross provisional measure of value.' The noble represents a higher value; there is an exemplariness—such as the general of conspicuous courage, the scholar's devotion to truth, the monk's dedication to prayer, the union leader's commitment to justice etc. The idea of exemplar now strikes to the depth of the metaphysical substructure of a well ordered society. Kolnai says that nobility simply means 'the reception by society of a structural principle of order that is not of its own making or positing but originates in a supra-social quasi-entitative human value . . . . it is a recognition of what is higher and better than its own "thesis", "volition", or appointment may be' (CM 299). This notion of participation is quite profound. It means that we receive the good; we hold it precariously and tentatively; we are stewards if you will of the good. The notion of participation implies analogy—that is diverse modes of fulfilment of the value, with various sets of primacy and secondary modes of fulfilment and responsibility. Hierarchy and participation may mean that 'certain personnel, by virtue of its very constitution and in a sense penetrating its distinctive being as it were is primarily ordained to actualise and to cultivate a certain set of higher values; to attend to and to serve certain aspects of the common good' (PL 72). This notion is embodied by the professions. The importance is that there are higher values—indeed the noble stands for the idea of 'man's participation in values higher than those universally and actually obtainable for man, and with it, Man's bondage to an objective order of natural being which essentially and metaphysically surpasses his power and outranges his sovereignty' (CM 302; PL 73) At the end of the day

> we are merely creatures and guests of God even on earth, not in any sense claimants on Him . . . and we are also ineliminably and most fortunately for us all, beneficiaries and benefactors, servants and masters, pupils and teachers, imitators and exemplars of one another . . . always in a more proper sense receivers and followers than as 'privileged' spenders or leaders' (PL 70).

Response not fiat is the primary gesture of man. The notion of hierarchy then leads to that of privilege.

Privilege

The notion of privilege parallels that of hierarchy. Kolnai says that 'privilege means the social projection, institutional recognition, traditional embodiment of the essentially insurmountable dividedness, imperfection and subjectivity (in the face of a transcendent Object and Good) of Man' and a correction of our smallness and fallenness—in fact, he says, very few or rather 'very many men in different ways transcend the common level' and those who have achieved in some limited respect may be their instrumentality have others reach out 'beyond their own immediate possession or proper nature and enrich themselves.' (PL 69) What Kolnai has in mind here by privilege would be something like privilege of rank, privilege of attaining a social position such as a tenured faculty member, member of the bar, physician; or alternatively students at a college, traders in a market etc.. They are able to carry on their business or profession without external interference and to gain access to the information, tools, etc.. which they need to perform such activities. It is the very independence of the actual will or appetites of society allows the privilege to serve such an enriching function in society. Privilege Kolnai says is an established positional value in society relatively independent of the will of society, yet fundamentally in tune with it. Privilege allows 'a pattern of concrete and specialised 'points of interblending' between private and common good.' It implies intermediate groups, classes, bodies with their own 'perspectives, insights and devotions, virtues and loyalties, responsibilities and vocations, standards of honour and accumulations of value' (PL 93). The vital functioning of a society will have many diverse such groups with their hierarchy, leaders and privileges. But no elite group is the only one, nor does any such group excel the rest of society in all humanly relevant values and achievements. Not every group will be equal in all respects, nor will every individual be equal in all respects as they are members in various groups and participate at various levels within each group. And as we said above, there is no natural distinction which is not a fruit of privilege and none which is not generative of privilege (CM 289). So sons and daughters of a physician may have a privilege (a social, not legal of course) to gain the habits and knowledge to enter medical school and become a physician. So too sons and daughters of an Ivy League school may have a certain privilege that leads to their entry into the same Ivy League school.

Kolnai points out that privilege derives from the notion of exemption from the law granted to a particular category of persons; they are set apart, not set above the law. 'Privilege means in the first place, "distinction" and hence limitation' (PL 99) Thus it is not simply a favour but a confirmation of the distinguished. Kolnai thus exhibits the connections between hierarchy (distinction), privilege (exemption), and liberty (relatively autonomy to

act). The metaphysics of participation is how the various notions are united, and it is worth quoting Kolnai at length on this matter:

In all true participation there must be present some element embodying a specific stress on the dissimilarity and distinction between what participates and what is participated in; this indeed is what Privilege chiefly signifies on the level of social reality, in a three fold sense:

1. as regards the participation of the privileged *qua* private parties, in public authority and rulership;
2. as regards the participation of the 'common' or relatively underprivileged citizens in the possibilities and benefits of a more excellent mode of life as realised, adumbrated, or tried out by the holders—that is, the prime beneficiaries and 'trustees' as it were of privilege;
3. as regards participation of human reason, by its proper use including its acceptance of the irrational and contingent as well as the fact of its own social dividedness in a Reason infinitely surpassing man's own (PL 100).

Privilege therefore is not a position generated for its own sake or for the pleasure and private good of the individual holding the privilege; but it is a function of the common good

Liberty.

Kolnai understands liberty politically as a certain independence from the central power; it first appears as an exemption. Privilege serves as the rampart to liberty; again because of its social role and because of the metaphysics of participation and the dispositions it cultivates in a social body. The historic root of political liberty lies in 'privilege' and its extension (PL 89). There were privileges of the barons against the crown; or privileges of universities from political and ecclesiastical control; so citizens' rights are in some way

> geared to and dependent upon the subsistence of certain 'exemplary' privileges necessarily limited to a minority. In this way then privilege is the 'rampart of liberty'—for all classes of people 'because it expresses and safeguards the existence of relatively independent persons as quasi finite parts of society, as principles of the community (PL 94).

A free society will be a society 'rich in privileges, affording manifold means of redress and opportunities (not devised in the spirit of effacing the framework of privileges) to the "underprivileged"' (PL 96). It should be a balanced society involving a plurality and limitation of all social powers and political prerogatives, and an ordering 'in deference and reference to a Power radically beyond and above Man in his social reality, in his political dignity, and in all manifestations of his "will"' (CM 274). Freedom is a 'high good' because it is the signature of the 'civic status of man.' It implies a constitutional state because this limits the power of the state to allow manifold privileges to the citizens. Kolnai explains the notion of 'liberty under God.' It is an 'intrinsically limited freedom' susceptible to be developed in concrete social institutions, and attached to a moral order in which man is a responsible agent (PL 86). Limitation and balance are essential to the very idea of freedom.

Kolnai's notion of hierarchy, privilege and liberty does not at all entail an aristocratic society. He emphatically insist that the conservative concept of liberty entails a mixed régime, balanced in the fashion outlined above. It requires equilibrium among 'finite, limited and unequal weights' (PL 90). In fact Kolnai sees Aristotle's mixed régime, preponderantly democratic, in a 'spirit of time-conditioned, 'realistic' compromise' as the ideal. Indeed he says that the 'participation at various levels of the broad strata of the people in shaping public policy is essential to remind the elites of their 'limits' and to restrain them from 'one sided vagaries and predilections' etc. (CM 309). The high and low are complementary and not even a designation of better Kolnai points out in his analysis of hierarchy—the low view is as essential as the high (CH 174?).

Thus Kolnai's initial analysis and proposals are in tune with liberal democracy; but as we shall see, they are counter to the stress of the common ideology which seeks to eliminate all privilege, equalise all sectors of society, and use a central consciousness and will to bring about a more just society. Against this totalitarian tendency, Kolnai thinks the direct argument for hierarchy, privilege and liberty is the only counter.

3 Equality as Identity

Beyond envy

Why is the presence of 'privilege' and 'hierarchy' so irksome to contemporary liberal democracy? Why is it so relentlessly under attack? It is a truism concerning democracy that envy is a special problem insofar as it champions the many against the few. Indeed, Alexis de Tocqueville noted the various manifestations of envy in American democracy.[14] Kolnai explains that the dynamic of democracy springs from a source deeper than envy as such. That is, modern democracy contains a sentiment, an ideology, a spiritual orientation that go beyond the classic understanding of the relative claims of the many, or the poor, or a lower class against the few, the rich, the upper class. This new democratic spirit showed itself most distinctively, of course, in the ideological claims during the French Revolution. Kolnai is fond of citing Sieyes's formula 'What is the Third Estate? Nothing;—What ought it to be? Everything;' thus Kolnai says 'the quasi-religious impetus of Total Equalitarianism draws on deeper forces than envy and jealousy, competitive self-assertion, the need to overcome for one's inferiorities, and craving for material comforts' (CM 281; PL 90). The deeper source lies in the new metaphysical conception of the common man. Tocqueville also

connects the vehement hatred of privilege with a new conception of man and its concurrent trend towards centralisation;[15] but Kolnai's analysis is more trenchant, on the one hand being less sociological than is Tocqueville's, but on the other it gains in conceptual and phenomenological clarity.

At the outset of his best account of the issue, 'Privilege and Liberty,' Kolnai lists three false presuppositions of the new egalitarianism:

1. goods of society are solely goods for consumption, such that the possession by one entails the want of another;
2. strict proportional equality must obtain in the distribution of goods based upon some evident test of contribution to society;
3. sameness of reference, use, enjoyment, and immediacy (CM 68-69).

The first false presupposition is the standard condition for envy; classical writers from Aristotle through Augustine and Dante noted the problem of reducing the good to the material and exclusive; and it drives in part the Hobbesian conception of the state of war.[16] This notion can be overcome by a number of political and moral devices including a more expansive notion of the common good, the expansion of the material goods themselves. The second notion is more challenging and starts to formulate the ideology of the common man. It does pervert the notion of justice, Kolnai explains, by taking a pattern of commutative justice and strict rectification and applies it to distributive justice (CM 282-283). Kolnai notes that greater access and opportunities for ascent, for greater participation in social benefits and privileges is an important part of democracy properly understood (PL 96);[17] further, political democracy need not have a direct bearing upon socio-economic, cultural and traditional gradations within its prepolitical structures (CM 279). The notion of strict proportional equality will wreak havoc when combined with the demand for a central consciousness to determine and equalise the just shares; and this can be set in motion by a sloppy notion of equal opportunity and equal chances to advance and acquire privilege and social benefits. But the sloppy notion of equal opportunity often resolves itself back to elimination of legal bars to participation and means of encouragement for development among some classes of society. That is, even this presupposition need not drive the new vision of totalitarian equality. It is the third presupposition that is 'more recondite' and 'carries us straight to the core of the matter' (PL 67).

The basic false presupposition is that the common good must be interpreted in terms of 'sameness of reference, use, enjoyment, and immediacy'. This very thesis is hard to grasp at first, yet it has the farther-reaching implications (PL 68). It can be grasped only by way of opposition to the metaphysics of participation; it substitutes a metaphysics of identity. It involves the dialectic of modern political philosophy of individualism versus collectivism, both inextricably combined when drawn into the orbit of the identarian schema: 'individualism prefigures collectivism from the outset and collectivism is only individualism raised to the high power of an absolute monism centred in "all and every one"' (PL68). The core notion is the thesis that 'no man must hold more or be more than his fellow man' and if he does happen to 'hold more or represent more' this be 'on behalf, and in the name and jurisdiction of Society as an actual Unit of Consciousness, an actual Subject of Will entirely contained in the collective thoughts, moods, decisions of the moment.' It is the notion of common man that allows this fundamental sameness of reference, rationale for centralisation of power. The common man is more than a plaintiff, nor simply a victim of spoliation; the common man is the construction of preferable type of man, indeed 'a hero, if not a new god' (CM 279). The notion of common man embodies the modern aspiration to overcome limitations and contingency; to become the master and owner and nature; to be free in the most radical sense of free from limitation by nature and God. Thus Kolnai claims that the 'war against nobility' (hierarchy and privilege) is 'in truth an essential and metaphysical rebellion levelled at something that towers infinitely above kings, dukes, barons, squires, factory owners, generals and admirals, fops or usurpers' (CM 302). We must therefore carefully trace the contours, origins, and effects of this notion of the common man.

First, Kolnai's attempt to account for political life in terms of a type of man hearkens back to classical political philosophy; Plato and Aristotle traced the essential formality of political life to the *politiae* or régime, which reflects a purpose and form of good life, as well a distinct notion of justice. Leo Strauss explains this idea as follows:

> The character or tone of society depends upon what the society regards as most respectable or most worthy of admiration. But by regarding certain habits or attitudes as most respectable, a society admits the superiority, the superior dignity of the those human beings who most perfectly embody the habits or attitudes in question. That is to say, every society regards a specific human type as authoritative. When the authoritative type is the common man, everything has to justify itself before the tribunal of the common man; everything which cannot be justified before that tribunal becomes, at best, merely tolerated, if not despised or suspect.[18]

What is the 'tribunal of the common man'? Kolnai provides a very sharp description. First, the common man is very different from the plain man, but may be rightly described as 'any man'; second, the common man requires the sameness of reference mentioned above, entailing an equality of similarity or identity (entitative equality); third,

the common man must be the generator of value, not submissive to any higher value. The tribunal of the common man, so constituted, must lead to the utopian goal of abolishing alienation and rely on the means of centralising a mass consciousness and will.

The first point, that the common man is a 'construct of subversive sophists and power seekers' and quite different from the 'plain man' shows Kolnai at his best in attending to the nuances of language and phenomena of every day political life. The 'plain man' Kolnai says has a centre of gravity in 'his practical concerns' but is attached 'by firm if somewhat elastic ties to "things higher than himself"' (CM 310); the plain man is embedded in particular background; the plain man may be distrustful of the elites; he may be indifferent to the concerns of higher culture. As such, Kolnai says the plain man is necessary as a corrective and supplement to the 'higher' or notables of society (CM 309). In his phenomenology of hierarchy, Kolnai even points out the positive good embodied by the 'low' view as well as the limitation of a strictly 'high' perspective; thus the plain man 'presupposes distinction [and] embodies a complementary relation to it' (CM 311). The common man, on the other hand, is what philosophers now call the 'unencumbered self'—Kolnai says this 'anyone' implies a standard

> without the implication of either mature personal judgment or a particular creed or tradition which most members of a community happen to share. It is precisely this foundation of an empty humanistic 'universality' in the sense of 'anyoneness' upon which this 'creed' the cult of the Common Man and the mentality bred by that cult, is erected (CM 323).

He is indeed not a notable (without distinctions of wealth or social position) but can be 'anyman.' Any particular commitment or perspective is a limit to his commonness. He is not only distrustful of power, but is intolerant and covetous of the higher ranks. He cannot appreciate the meaning of any ideal point of view 'not assimilable to his welfare' (CM 310).

Second, the tribunal of common man requires that sameness of reference for all benefits and achievements. This encourages and breeds a reductionist and materialist ethos; only with a uniform scale of value, identical standards of value and 'habits of valuation' can there be quantification, 'calculation and functional regulation' (CM 290). The subtle, the immaterial, the qualitative are soon lost. In addition, the notion of equal opportunity or equal chance leads to a positing of similarity:

> Once we fall prey to the illusive ideal of an absolute 'formal' equality, that is, of a neutral and homogeneous medium of equal 'rights' and 'chances'—we cannot help sliding down the path that leads to the abyss of material equality, with its concomitants of an impoverishing, oppressing, suffocating and deadening uniformity.

Indeed, it is the contradiction between the claim of formal equality and the absence of social or material equality that long gave fertile ground for Marxist critiques of bourgeois society. This antinomy is rooted in the role of contingency, limitation and dividedness of the human condition; it is only the structural role of privilege and hierarchy which leads us to give a realistic appreciation of this condition.

> Thus finally the tribunal of the common man can brook no superiority: the Common Man is Man Divine as mere man . . . Man above whom is set no Order, no Power, no Being essentially different from him, impervious to his reason, independent of his will; no social authority, therefore, either, which symbolises, expresses, and fructifies, illuminating its various aspects and corollaries, this fact and this sense of metaphysical subordination (CM 318).

Indeed, Kolnai sees political power of the Common Man become but 'the ensemble of human consciousness moving and decreeing in complete unison throughout all individual minds' (CM 319), or again, the common man must represent 'humanity pure and simple, sheer humanity' such that 'all particular determination must be broken up [as] it implies Man's creaturely limitation' (CM 281). The metaphysics of participation must be replaced by a metaphysics of identity: the tribunal of the common man just is the standard of the good, the maker of right. If Hierarchy, and privilege, stand for 'submission of man to what is highest in man', i.e., participation, then equality of the common man proclaims the 'equal and joint sovereignty of men' and speaks the idiom of Identity which taunts 'man with the mirage of 'positing' and 'generating' reality, including his own, of absorbing the infinite into one human Consciousness, of supplanting or indeed 'creating' God' (PL 73). The true goal of the régime of the common man must be that utopian goal of overcoming alienation.

Alienation and utopianism

In a marvellous brief essay entitled 'Utopia and Alienation' Kolnai attacks this issue directly. Utopia is defined as 'Life without alienation.' Alienation is man's 'being confronted with what is not himself: the landscape of Alteriety which constitutes his world.' In fine phenomenological style Kolnai lists out various features of alienation: objective categories; works of man; distinctness of human wills and their precarious harmony; the caducity of individual life; the 'very fact of conscience; problematicity of practice; contingency of social process'. Each is elaborated. But in the core, alienation means 'man's dependence on human reality that is not the expression of his mind and will' nor the expression of 'any self-identical and unitary human essence and will with which he may identify himself.' He goes on to expound on the utopian temper which is hypersensitive to aliena-

tion. This is the tribunal of the Common Man.

The secret motive beyond envy lashes out at hierarchy and privilege because of the sheer otherness, altereity, of them, that is the contingency and divideness of the social reality. It is not masterable or controllable by immediate reason and will of the common man. Therefore the ideology leads to an 'active suppression' of what is alien to self; this suppression may involve branding the other as an outcast or pariah, or an 'immature' section of mankind in need of re-education. Kolnai observes that every human face in which the common man cannot recognise his own reflection is 'crazy' or 'uncanny' (PL 75-76). Hierarchy and privilege are most irksome in their claim to represent some higher demand and its fragility and tentativeness to human possession. The superior or higher must be brought down and neutralised; that is, whereas the 'plain man' may register some indifference or avoid contact with the higher claim, the common man must either eliminate them, or better yet, 'annex' and 'remodel them' thereby bending them to 'the measure of his requirements, with the pretension of thus enhancing and intrinsically improving them' (PL 70, see also CM 311). For example, the institutions of religion and education are particular vulnerable to the process of annexation and remodelling. The idea of the common man as just 'anyone' means that 'any subjectivity as such is—equivalently to others—a judge of truth, and similarly any human need an immediate sovereign determinant of the good' (PL 76). The rampant spread of subjectivism and relativism in ethical thought reflects this trend—'who is to say what is right or wrong?' since anyone's judgment is good as anothers; and so too the notion of a therapeutic society places any felt need as a *prima facie* right to be reckoned with. Kolnai perceptively notes that unity becomes a 'self contained theme of society' no longer is it 'a function of the convergency of minds towards a transcendent cause, measure and end' (PL 77). Thus religious differences do not require true civility and dialogue, but rather such differences are suppressed as divisive or a remodelled along the lines of a new age substitute for religion, a generic unifying spirituality that substitutes for divided, particular faith traditions.[19] The utopian goal is that of a 'tensionless common subjectivity' (CM 320) and this means the destruction of any 'objectivisation' be it religious, philosophical, juridical or social. This goal reflects the metaphysics of identity.

Participation presupposes division and contingency, form and limitation; man receives the good and the standard and in turns renders an appreciative response; there is an acknowledgment of the tentative hold on the higher value; and an acknowledgment of realities beyond self, higher than self, such as common good, human good, etc. The metaphysics of Identity, on the other hand, projects human mastery and unity, and progress and emancipation. It is by the fusion of all into one, the mediate into the immediate, that that such mastery and emancipation appear possible. But in fact, Kolnai considers this utopian projection to be an 'impossibility on the border of the 'analytic' and empirical'—it violates the 'basic constitution of man' and leads to an 'incurable self-contradiction.'[20] The violation of human nature involves the very requirement of an object for human activities of 'love, fight, curiosity, understanding, virtue, possessions, rank, equalisation, conquest, adaptation;' and further 'alienation constitutes a fount of pleasure, thrill, happiness, vitality, [and] sense of being alive.' As Kolnai explains it elsewhere:

> By claiming Identity, we stop ourselves, as it were from participation; by asserting man's absolute and all-comprehensive Actuality we foil the manifold real potentialities in man which can only thrive in spheres remote from a totalitarian concentration on the evident needs of the moment, and prevent them from actualisation; by 'emancipating' man from 'divisions,' 'tensions,' 'contradictions,' *'Verdinglichen'* and 'alienations' that are inherent in his natural condition we isolate, 'divide' and 'alienate' him integrally from his proper humanity, se him against whatever represents the reality of freedom and dignity—of nobility and sovereignty, of virtue and wisdom, of perfection and progress—within him (and can never be simply he, anymore than his) and reduce him to an abject Thing while inflating him into a self styled Deity. (PL74)

The violation of human constitution leads to the great contradiction: it leads to a super-alienation, it requires an all-powerful central consciousness which can overcome the alienation and rectify the injustices of privilege and liberty.

The central consciousness

We return full circle now to Kolnai's claim that 'privilege is a rampart of liberty.' It destruction requires and encourages a central consciousness and power to achieve the utopian goal of equality as identity. The step towards the utopian goal is already taken by liberal democracy when it proclaims formal 'equal opportunity' and must thereby arrange for equal chances and opportunities—the contradiction arises because 'an omnipotent leveling power itself needs a distinct supremacy over the power of he common man' (CM 289). How else shall we secure true equal conditions; who shall cleanse 'the tissue of society' from power relationships ('relations of dependence and from 'vertical' principles of articulation'). We must be led to concentrate power in the hands of '"One Subject" of consciousness and will: the subjectified, totalitarian collective; to make all social order dependent on the decree of one human agent supposed to incarnate the "rational will" of "us all"' (PL 95). Kolnai is most amazed at the ultimate willingness to be di-

rected by the central consciousness; it amounts to a self-enslavement of man. This is the temper of the utopian mind.

The power must be centralised in order to suppress any 'private factors' of public relevancy and influence because these would introduce privilege, division, superior standard etc. Kolnai views the tendency towards centralisation as something more than a sociological trend or fact; it is part of the logic of the common man. The real object of hatred is the idea of 'a concrete natural order of society's life; of an artificial texture of social relationships and appreciation's reposing on a receptive incorporation of 'natural' data of value rather than on the opinion and will of an omnipotent collective subject' (CM 301). Although liberals are adverse to totalitarianism and certainly to methods of terror, Kolnai thinks that the liberal has virtually become totalitarian in the war against privilege in the name of the Common Man. How the dialectic of the common man unfolds itself in the life of western liberal democracy is our next topic for consideration.

4 Western liberal democracy

The forms of democracy and models for interpretation

As we emphasised at the outset of this paper, Kolnai is not about a reactionary return or conservative utopianism; his sights were trained on Western liberal democracies as high historic achievements requiring support. His main concern is the preservation of liberty against the ideology of the common man. We can review some of the points made already. The historic roots of political liberty are to be found in privilege and the extension of privilege. As such privilege still holds out a standard for political liberty and shelters in it more good than bad. Kolnai does not have in mind an aristocracy let alone an oligarchic defence of privilege. The best arrangement for liberty lies in a mixed régime, first recommended by Aristotle. The form of mixed régime Kolnai has in mind is of course a popular democracy in which a broad stratum of society is enfranchised and participates in the political process. It is a society that most of all reflects balance; political checks and balances as well as division of social power. And we should add, Kolnai saw capitalist and market economy as a support for liberty:

> Their power [capitalists]—obnoxious as are many of its effects, and howsoever desirable its curtailment may be in itself—is radically inseparable from a certain groundwork of division, independence and competition of the liberal bourgeois type, as inherent in the structure of market economy .

So Kolnai concludes that the case of Capitalism versus Socialism represents the case of 'human dignity and political liberty, of Constitutional Society, as against the self-enslavement of man' (PL 95; see long note, p. 107).[21] At least Mammon is 'an outgrowth of polytheist heathendom' whereas socialism amounts to a monotheist worship of man by himself.

Since Kolnai understands prudence and does not seek a utopian refashioning of western liberal democracy, we must understand his work to be involved with the interpretation of those basic institutions and historic roots. At stake are two fundamental models of democracy rooted in political philosophy. We have given a brief sketch of that political philosophy which uses a model of participation, recognising a true common good, indeed a good higher than immediate human needs and moods. Kolnai does not often refer to textual sources for this view. In part this is his phenomenological method. From time to time he does mention Aristotle and Aquinas. I have suggested an affinity with Tocqueville. His own formulation runs as follows:

> what has made the concrete reality and duration of liberal democracy, with its manifold compromises and elements of sanity, possible and practicable has been 'Conservative'—the Christian, hierarchic, pluralistic, and realistic—as it were 'finitistic' substance of our civilisation (PL 87).

The alternative view he traces to a certain dialectic of individualism and collectivism that originates with Hobbes; he also mentions Descartes, Machiavelli, Rousseau, and Kant as sources for understanding the humanistic and rationalistic orientation that gives rise to the philosophy of the Common Man. Although Kolnai does not write as a theologian or as a Catholic apologist, he does see the role of religion as an important component in the new philosophy. In the more polemical 'Cult of the Common Man' he attributes many feature s of the new philosophy to the imitation or substitution for religious concepts—universalism, monotheism, will of God, providence, Christendom all have their equivalent in the new philosophy as totality, monism, will as God, planned economy and collective security. Elsewhere Kolnai does allude to a 'humanistic misreading of the gospel' that holds out a promise of a terrestrial paradise and a divinisation of reason and will (PL 90). And indeed interpretations of Bacon and Descartes have come to recognise this new interpretation of charity as benefaction for human progress.[22] There is no doubt that Cartesian rationalism has had a devastating impact upon political philosophy and this constitutes a great topic for conservative political writers like Oakeshott and Russell Kirk. But the key issue concerning religion is that of the question of objective value and moral obligation over and above human desires (PL 96). Hierarchy and privilege, the metaphysics of participation, reflect this philosophical orientation. Religion has an important role in being the most direct reminder of this metaphysic. Kolnai has written a very percep-

tive and careful analysis of the religious and humanitarian attitude, the details of which we need not belabour at present.[23]

He sees liberty is a fruit rather than the foundation of civilisation; it requires a finitistic notion of the human condition and a scheme of participation. Or again, he says no organisation of freedom can guarantee freedom. The most direct account he gives lies in the dialectic of individualism and collectivism—the mere horizontal limitation of freedom, i.e., freedom limited by the equal freedom of others cannot support liberty. Individualism and collectivism are not 'point and counterpoint' but 'essentially the self same thing' in Hobbes, Rousseau, Kant, and Marx.

> The combination of 'popular sovereignty' with the 'rights of the individual' is not a purely arbitrary mixture of two contradictory schemes, [since] they are both meant to express one basic dimension, respectively of the sovereign self-determination of man as shared equally by every man as such (PL 85).

Kolnai was struck by the claim of communist citizens to have greater freedom; they meant that the state is not so limited by dividedness, contingency etc. The habits and customs in liberal democracy are to reject the notion of central power; yet it is called forth by the notion of the common man as we showed above.

Kolnai anticipates the communitarian critique of liberalism now making its way through contemporary political philosophy.[24] The common man is naught but man, rescinding from 'local, racial, cultural, professional or other particularising and limiting data' (CM 307). He has a remarkably incisive description of what Rawls would later construct as the 'veil of ignorance'—the neutrality and shedding of 'pre-established biases' to use morality as leverage for moralisation of life (MT 246). Beginning with isolated individuals, a collective approach is demanded. How will their actions and interests be coordinated without the central authority; the classical liberal notion of the market or invisible hand will disappoint because of the inequalities and privileges it will generate. The contradiction between formal equality and the material chances, with 'no socially meaningful inequality of status, no qualitative "pretension of value" to support it' pushes the dialectic of the common further towards Identity and centralising power:

> The 'liberal axiom' conceives of human life as a welter of discrete 'points' which 'meet' accidentally as it were in an empty space . . . the assertion of an 'equally absolute freedom'—the divinisation of the subjective will as such, in the sense of a rigorous formalism, independently of its intrinsic quality and its specific object must needs take a turn towards Identity in the place of mere mutuality; toward an actual fusion in the place of harmony or arrangement (PL 87; on formalising morality see HR 446-447).

Present dynamic

Kolnai characterises the contemporary (1945-1970) dynamic of liberal democracy as a threefold situation:

1. the reduction of good to desire and want fulfilment and the interpretation of freedom as a means for comfortable preservation;
i2. the restless spirit caused by the gap between the formal rights and the material conditions and outcome;
3. the growing attack on the very conservative values (i.e., privilege and hierarchy as reflecting an objective, transcendent order of value).

Kolnai marks the beginning of the end of the dialectic of the common man the emergence of welfare state. We have become, he says, a democracy of wants. He was appalled by the American rhetoric of freedom from want and fear. The idea of freedom from want transformed freedom as a high good, a constitutional value for limited government, to the idea of freedom through government (PL 82). Government must do something to make me happy, equal, free etc. The loss of an objective axiology, the reduction of good to appetite is also part of the issue (CM 315; 327). Of course the seeds of this corruption are directly traceable to Hobbes and to the revered John Locke.[25] The desire for comfortable self-preservation sets the dynamic for at least what Tocqueville calls a 'soft despotism.'[26] Kolnai says the common man 'craves security, comfort, and the bliss of never being denied a need' (PL 82).

But it is the contradiction between the formal equality and the material conditions and outcome that creates an unrest and conditions the people to embrace more and more of state intervention, uniform conditioning, in short the soft despotism.

Kolnai's plea is for the recognition of the importance of conservative values, in the form of the metaphysics of participation, to offer any limitation on the power of government and the centralising consciousness and will. The liberal democratic order reposes on pre-liberal axioms, conventions and traditions which limit the excess of individual liberty and popular sovereignty, and it is not the automatic mechanisms of constitutional order.[27] The liberal state must destroy the very thing that gives it balance and sanity; the 'liberal conception of society' cannot support and sustain liberty 'except in a precarious and self-contradictory fashion' because it must rely on conservative values 'unofficially tolerated yet continually harassed, and eaten away, by the immanent dialectic, the law of evolution, of liberal democratic society as such' (PL 86).

5 Kolnai and the present crisis

Kolnai's metaphysical approach to political liberalism and conservatism still provides a very insightful and useful heuristic for understanding the state of politics today. His

core project appears all the more relevant today as it was in 1945. We must 'displace the spiritual stress from the "common man" aspect of democracy to its aspect of constitutionalism and moral continuity with the high tradition of Antiquity, Christendom and the half surviving Liberal culture of yesterday' (CM 274). We do this by emphasising Balanced Society' or 'finiteness of all human power, the plurality and limitation of all social powers and political prerogatives; and the ordering of society in deference to a power radically beyond and above Man in his social reality.' The defence of privilege and hierarchy is as timely as ever; it must be done with the sure dialectic finesse as Kolnai's so that the case can avoid the inevitable charges of craven protection of interests alone. But the protection and support of true diversity and the vitality of intermediate groups, again a great concern of Tocqueville a hundred years earlier.[28] But Kolnai's defence is more penetrating. First he criticises the 'Federalist Fallacy.' The mere more for decentralisation is not sufficient; if the overall cultural and mental climate reflects the homogeneity of the common man ideology; if the administrative tasks are given over to subsidiary groups while the central consciousness and will retains directives, standards etc., then the federal scheme is of no avail. Further, the intermediate group and the communitarian goals of contemporary political philosophers still emphasise the voluntary, the power free, and the lack of verticality and non-voluntary relationships. I think Kolnai envisions the wider range of pre-liberal culture that was necessary to sustain liberty. Although he did not have much to say about the details, Kolnai did anticipate the possibility of family relationships being undermined by the gender and gay liberation movements. He noted in passing that it is inevitable that egalitarianism would move into this area and thereby 'strike even more fundamentally at the root of the concept of social order' and impose 'artificial similarity upon natural similarity in the place of "artificial" mores shaped in reverent awareness of natural order and elemental differences' (CM 301). The reference to homosexual movement is more brief—but he says that sexual promiscuity of all forms, as well as perverse forms of it,

> symbolise both the absolute sovereignty of man over the universe—the negation of his creaturelines of the limits and laws imposed on him by a concrete order of nature he has not made—and the joyous descent of man to the level of 'blind urges' and physical forces or pressures' (CM 326).

Kolnai's analysis of liberal democracy in terms of the metaphysics of Identity versus Participation is remarkable rich for understanding the 'culture wars' in America and the fundamental fault line which is uncovered therein.[29] Indeed, the role of a central consciousness has been assigned of late to the United States Supreme Court by a group of thinkers who argue for the 'judicial usurpation of democracy.'[30] Justice Kennedy's recent opinion concerning the right to define one's own view of existence and meaning of the universe is a remarkable statement passing over to the metaphysics of Identity and against hierarchy and participation in an objective order of value.

At the end of the day, Kolnai's account places education and religion as the core institutions for sustaining liberty in our western regimes today; they have the 'privilege' so to speak of 'inoculating the national mind with the seeds of objective value-reference, of a vision of things "sub specie aeterni", of intellectual independence and moral backbone' (PL 97). At least for the United States, the educational institutions have abandoned the field to the common man ideology and the metaphysics of Identity. Religion maintains a primal vigor, when it is not given over to the generic new age spiritualities or the therapeutic mentality. Kolnai's vision of a sound democratic régime depends upon a conception of 'liberty under God' (PL 86). Perhaps for Kolnai's political philosophy to be persuasive, a prior change in perspective is needed. It was Chesterton who had a decisive impact on Kolnai's religious thought and sensibility. Perhaps Chesterton is needed to keep alive that vision of the 'ragged rock' of orthodoxy still balancing itself throughout the centuries. Aurel Kolnai saw it and by its light he relentlessly sought to show the imbalances of the present day and what might be their fateful consequences.

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Notes

* The views stated in this article do not reflect the official position of the U.S. Air Force Academy or the U.S. Department of Defense.

1. See George H. Nash, *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America: Since 1945* (New York: Basic Books, 1976).
2. 'The Concept of Hierarchy,' in Aurel Kolnai, *Ethics, Value and Reality,* with introduction by Bernard Williams and David Wiggins (Indianapolis: Hackett Press, 1978), p. 167; he also says 'Phenomena, especially such as play a great and manifold part in man's mental and practical life, after all do exist and cannot be explained away as 'mere appearances' or reduced to more massive and more universally indubitable data of experience', p. 166.
3. 'The Meaning of the Common Man', *Thomist,* (1949), p. 275.
4. *Ethics, Value and Reality,* p. xiii.
5. *War Against the West* (New York: Viking Press, 1939).
6. Interestingly, the harsh judgment is often reserved for fellow Catholic intellectuals, such

as Jacques Maritain, who would sometimes exhibit an excessive zeal for rapprochement with liberalism. See Kolnai's review of Maritain's *Man and the State*, 'The Synthesis of Christ and the Anti-Christ', *Integrity*, V (1951) 4045; and my article exploring these two thinkers entitled 'Approaches to Democratic Equality', in *Freedom in the Modern World*, ed. Michael Torre, (Notre Dame Press, 1989), and 'Maritain and Simon's Use of Thomas Aquinas in the Justification of Democracy,' *The Legacy of Aquinas*, ed. David Gallagher, (Catholic University of America Press, 1993); another of Kolnai's works aimed at Christian liberalism is 'The Cult of the Common Man and the Glory of the Humble,' *Integrity* vol. 6, no. 2 (November 1951): 1-43.

7. *Philosophy*, XXXV, 1960, pp. 234-54.
8. 'The Meaning of the Common Man', *Thomist*, (1949) 272335; 'Privilege and Liberty', *Université Laval Theologique et Philosophique*, V (1949) 66110. The former will be referred to as 'CM' the latter as 'PL.'
9. See 'Privilege and Liberty' p. 66 on 'reactionary aestheticism and fascist hysteria' and p. 99 on Platonist and romantic misconceptions of social hierarchy; as well as 'Moral Theme,' op. cit. on right-wing hypocrisy, inertia, and dangerous 'holism'.
10. 'Common Man,' p. 274.
11. 'I agree with you that there is a natural aristocracy among men. The grounds of this are virtue and talents. Formerly, bodily powers gave place among the *aristoi*. But since the invention of gunpowder has armed the weak as well as the strong with missile death, bodily strength, like beauty, good humour, politeness and other accomplishments, has become but an auxiliary ground for distinction. There is also an artificial aristocracy, founded on wealth and birth without either virtue or talents; for with these it would belong to the first class. The natural aristocracy I consider as the most precious gift of nature, for the instruction, the trusts, and government of society'. Thomas Jefferson, Letter to John Adams, October 28, 1813.
12. 'Privilege,' pp. 66, 86, 88; 'Common Man,' p. 273.
13. ibid.
14. Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, edited by J. P. Mayer, new translation by George Lawrence (New York: Anchor Doubleday, 1969), see Volume One, part I, chapter 3 (p. 57); part II chapter 5 (p. 198) and Volume Two, Part II, chapter 13 (p. 537).
15. ibid. Volume Two, Part IV, chapter 3 (p. 672). Tocqueville discerns the same fundamental metaphysics as Kolnai—see for example his analysis and denunciation of 'pantheism' as the typical democratic religious framework, Volume Two, Part I, chapter 7 (p. 451).
16. Augustine, *Free Choice of Will*; Dante, *Purgatorio*, canto XVI; Hobbes, *Leviathan*.
17. Cf. Tocqueville on two types of passion for equality, op. cit., Volume One, part 1, chapter 3 (p. 57).
18. Leo Strauss, *Natural Right and History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), p. 137.
19. On the issue of religious indifference and toleration, see Kolnai's 'Cult of the Common Man and the Glory of the Humble', *Integrity*, pp. 36-37.
20. 'Utopia and Alienation', *The Utopian Mind and Other Papers* (ed. F. Dunlop, London, Athlone Press, 1995), p.178. I wish to acknowledge my debt to Margaret Calderon Miller and her father Joseph Calderon who, in 1975, kindly introduced me to the writings of Mr Kolnai and provided me with copies of some of his unpublished manuscripts.
21. On the inherent divisions see Michael Novak, *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism*.
22. Descartes' *Discourse on Method*, part VI for example, as interpreted by Richard Kennington in 'Descartes and Mastery of Nature,' in S. F. Spicker, editor. *Organism, Metaphysics and Medicine* (Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Co., 1978), pp. 201-223.
23. 'The Humanitarian Versus the Religious Attitude,' *Thomist* Vol. VII, no. 4, October 1944, pp. 429-457.
24. See *Liberalism at the Crossroads: An Introduction to Contemporary Liberal Theory and its Critics*, edited by John P. Hittinger and Christopher Wolfe. (New Jersey: Rowman and Littlefield, 1993).
25. John P. Hittinger, 'Why Locke Rejected an Ethics of Virtue and Turned to an Ethic of Utility', *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* Vol. 64, 1990, pp. 267-76.
26. *Democracy in America*, Volume Two, part IV, chapter 6, 'What Sort of Despotism Democratic Nations Have to Fear'.
27. Cf. George Grant, *English Speaking Justice* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press) on the role of theological traditions that supplemented the threadbare philosophy of social contract of Hobbes and Locke.
28. Democracy in America, Volume Two, part 2, chapter 5, 'On the use of associations in civil life.'
29. Cf Robert Bork, *Slouching Towards Gomorah*.
30. Richard John Neuhaus, *et al.* 'The End of Democracy?' in *The Judicial Usurpation of Politics*. (Dallas: Spence Publishers, 1995) appeared in *First Things*.

SELF-REFERENCE AND THE LOSS OF MEANING

Some Comments on Polanyi's Notion of Indwelling*

Georg H. Neuweg

1 On the difficulties in specifying the boundaries of the self

It is not a simple task to make explicit the profundity of metaphors, especially the profundity of the metaphor of indwelling, and even less simple when dealing with the way Michael Polanyi uses this term. In the first instance, in using this metaphor one questions the existence of distinct boundaries between subject and object, between the self and the world outside, and therefore some sort of subject-object-dualism, which seems to be self-evident to most people. According to this dualism, the world is something external, faced by and different from the subject. Moreover, speaking about indwelling or incorporation raises the difficulty of separating body and mind and subordinating the first to the second; it questions the equally common[1] body-mind dualism[2] and—to use Gilbert Ryle's (1949) term—the 'intellectualist legend'. According to this doctrine the mind governs the body like a 'ghost in the machine' (Ryle 1949, p. 13), giving directions as if it were an engine-driver, whether consciously or unconsciously. Whenever the body shows behaviour of some kind, there is a corresponding 'something' which the mind possesses and processes: knowledge. Action is the result of thinking; a rule or a plan is recited in order to transform these instructions into bodily motions. Because of this kind of inner planning, action can be said to be 'intelligent'. And in general the unique dignity of man is due to his gift for 'theory', intelligent practice being its stepchild[3]. But not only is mind said to be the true home of the self, of knowledge and of command over the body; the mind is also able to—and, as is often added, should—reflect on itself, transforming itself into an object of thought.

These ideas are for their part metaphors or deduced from metaphors, of course. What other metaphors could we set up against them and what do we stand to gain?

Let us address some questions to the subject-object dualist[4]: Where exactly do you suppose your 'self' to be located? Where do you set up the frontier between 'you' and the 'world'? How would you define your 'self'? Spontaneously, most people might answer that the skin is the borderline between the self and its surroundings, defining the self by means of a physically determined understanding of the body (although at the same time they might admit that the 'real' self cannot be located in space at all).

But we may rapidly begin to doubt the validity of the skin as the border between the self and the world if we turn to the classical problem of distal reference dealt with by the theory of perception (cf. Prinz et al. 1995). If 'we' look at a 'flower', why do we then see a flower, although its perception is entirely due to proximal stimuli on our sense organs and the resulting central processes in the brain? Why do the patterns of stimuli on the retina, signals in the sensory nerves and the activated central structures belong to 'us', whereas the flower—far away from the skin-border just supposed to be the body's boundary—belongs to the 'world'? Why do we just see the *flower* as an object distinct from us and none of the links between 'us' and the flower, though they are spatially nearer to us?

What makes it possible for 'me' to watch my own hand, making it into an external object? Isn't it true that I can *decide* whether it should be part of 'me' or part of the 'world' at this very moment? Why does the way in which I am aware of 'my' hand change according to whether I am *using* or I am *watching* it? And if the sole of our shoe touches the floor, why do we then say that *we* touched the floor instead of saying we touched the shoe and the shoe touched the floor? Because an item of clothing is part of the body of its wearer and not part of the environment; it is 'a second skin', as Gibson (1979, p. 43) puts it. But why do we find this a meaningful way of talking?

Where is the borderline of the self for a blind man using a stick to find his way? Whereas the stick is something external for the seeing man, it is part of the blind man's self. He does not feel that the stick's handle touches his palm. What he feels is the tip of the stick touching objects, just as if *his hand* were touching the objects.

> The blind man's stick has ceased to be an object for him, and is no longer perceived for itself; its point has become an area of sensitivity, extending the scope and active radius of touch, and providing a parallel to sight' (Merleau-Ponty, 1945, p. 143)

—as every kind of tool turns into 'a sentient extension of our body' (TD, p. 16) if we extend our body to include it. The world of objects then recedes, beginning no longer with the skin of the hand but with the tip of the object we use as a tool, and, to the same extent, our body is extended. 'To get used to a hat, a car or a stick is to be

transplanted into them, or conversely, to incorporate them into the bulk of our own body' (Merleau-Ponty 1945, p. 143). Surgeons using probes, dentists using drills, pilots flying—they all extend their bodies this way. 'This *capacity*', writes Gibson (1979, p. 43),

> *to attach something to the body* suggests that the border between the living being and its environment is not to be found on the surface of its skin but might shift, or, more generally, that the absolute duality of 'objective' and 'subjective' is false.

So why are retinal patterns part of the self, but flowers part of the world outside? How is it that tools, clothing and even our own limbs may be part of the self at one time, but strange to us at another time? Obviously the border of the self cannot be determined systematically by means of the criterion of the skin. If the duality of 'objective' and 'subjective' is relative because of our ability to dwell in objects, how then to determine the self?

2 The structure of indwelling

Michael Polanyi answers this way: The self ends where the things cease to be *instruments* for dealing with the world and begin to become *objects* of our attention and thereby external objects. In the first instance, it is of course our body in the narrowest sense, which is the instrument for dealing with the world. But there would be little meaning in speaking about indwelling if one could not shift the border. Whereas our body is the only thing in the world, 'which we normally never experience as an object, but experience always in terms of the world to which we are attending from our body' (TD, p. 16), with all other things we have, in principle, the choice of using them as incorporated tools, or observing them as something opposed to and distinct from us.

Interiorisation then means shifting the border of the self away from the subject and into the world, *alienation* on the other hand is the shift of the border towards the subject. *Body* in the metaphorical sense is everything we are not aware of in itself, because we use it as a tool in order to grasp or achieve something else we are interested in. *World* is what we attend to, what we are aware of in the common sense of the word.

Let us follow Polanyi's analysis of the process of indwelling with regard to the functional, the phenomenal and the semantic aspect of tacit knowing. What does it mean to live in one's own body?

Firstly, there is a *functional dimension*. Our body functions as a key to get in touch with something else. We always direct our attention *from* somatic processes *to* external objects; these processes have a vectorial function in so far as they point beyond themselves. *Consciousness* is the way we experience our body, the result of a 'from-to-experience'. It is not only consciousness of something, not only directed to something, but also directed away from something else: it has a 'from-to' or 'from-at' structure (LP, p. 29). Because of this directedness we experience the flower not neuronal processes. The body is the platform from which we attend to the world. We cannot make it an object of our attention, since 'object-ness' is determined precisely by the way we experience the processes within our body.

Secondly, the directedness of consciousness determines the quality of the subject's experience (*phenomenal dimension*): if we direct our attention away *from* something, using it as an instrument of our attention and not as its object, it is experienced *as* something else. *In terms of* external objects we are subsidiarily aware of somatic processes. They are experienced *as* external objects, not in themselves; we normally do not attend to our own body nor do we attend to our own mind. We become 'aware of them as the purposes we pursue, or as the objects we attend to' (CUMB, p. 76) and precisely because of that fact we experience our body as our body and not as an external object.

Thirdly, the functional directedness of consciousness from bodily processes to external objects not only leads to their phenomenal transformation but also enriches them with meaning (*semantic dimension*). We *understand* these bodily experiences, because we do not attend to them but to the entities they point to. By directing attention away from them they are endowed with meaning so that they mean these things to us; indeed we know them only in the way the world appears to us. Bodily processes therefore turn out to be pointers to the world and our capacity to construct meaning, metaphorically speaking, appears as the capacity not to look at the pointer but to follow it (KB, p. 181 f.). Meaning manifests itself outside the body, at the same time being rooted within the body. Dwelling in the body is the subject's privilege and the same holds for the phenomenal transformation of bodily sensations into conscious distal objects. The third person looking *at* neural processes would see what the subject would see, were the latter able to alienate them by way of attending *to* them instead of attending *from* them *to* the flower: neural processes without meaning.

What is fixed for us as an elementary relationship between somatics and perception in its functional structure and its phenomenal and semantic consequences, holds for all acts of perceiving and doing—with the important qualification that we have the capability and necessity to learn, and this means that we must try to interiorise what is alien for the time being. And when interiorisation has taken place, we can often take our choice between bodily use and alienation. Whenever we learn, get to know, enlarge our powers of perceiving and acting, we interiorise some-

thing, pour ourselves into it, take hold of it, use it to direct our attention from it to something else or to reach something.

> Whenever we use certain things for attending *from* them to other things, in the way in which we always use our body, these things change their appearance. They appear to us now in terms of the entities to which we are attending *from* them, just as we feel our own body in terms of the things outside to which we are attend ing *from* our body. In this sense we can say that when we make a thing function as the proximal term of tacit knowing, we incorporate it in our body—or extend our body to include it—so that we come to dwell in it (TD, p. 16f.).

Accordingly, we also find the structure described above in the example of interiorising a tool. The blind man does not attend to the sensations in his palm but *from* them *to* the environment he wants to explore. He is not aware of them in themselves but incorporates them as clues, making them part of him and thus endowing them with meaning. The sensations which would be meaningless in their raw nature are transformed into meaningful ones and projected away, felt at some distance from their origin. As a result pressure on palm and stick

> are no longer given; the stick is no longer an object perceived by the blind, but an instrument *with* which he perceives. It is a bodily auxiliary, an extension of the bodily synthesis (Merleau-Ponty 1945, p. 152).

If asked, the blind man would be just as unable to give an algorithm for inferring the characteristics of his path from bodily clues, as is the perceiver who uses processes in his brain to infer that there is a flower. This is a typical feature of all processes of indwelling. The proximal term is known only in so far as it contributes to the quality of the distal term, and the same holds for the process of construction itself.

The study of the structure of indwelling becomes even more impressive if we turn to *Gestalt* perception. We do not recognise the whole by looking *at* the details. If we do, they are perceived as something external opposed to us. The decisive point is to use the details as instruments for grasping something new, rather than to focus on the individual elements. Understanding the pattern means incorporating the details, lending a specific direction to one's attention, attending not to the details but from them to the bigger picture, which is their meaning. If we succeed, the details change their phenomenal appearance and acquire new meaning—up to the point where we finally know them only in so far as they contribute to the shaping of the total picture.

In the acquisition of a skill, e. g. that of dancing, we can experience the meaning of indwelling in a less metaphorical sense. It is, as Merleau-Ponty (1945, pp. 140, 143) puts it, the body which 'understands' in the acquisition of a habit. As long as we strive hard to attend to the details of the muscular operations involved, they remain external to us in a very peculiar way. Should they operate successfully we have to attend *away* from them to their joint meaning, the motional *Gestalt*. Then they appear phenomenally different to us. But it does not seem that with increasing practice we recite rules or plans increasingly quickly and unconsciously in the world of the mind. Rather it seems, 'that we have interiorised the muscular structure of the learning, giving new flexibility and fluency to our behaviour' (Dreyfus 1972, p. 161). In focusing on the joint execution of the elementary motions they seem to get evoked automatically without our consciously focusing on them; we 'rely' upon them, as Polanyi often puts it.

Rules and maxims are often helpful in the process of learning skills, of course. And the external observer might legitimately state that in the end we follow these rules. But it would be an intellectualist fallacy to conclude that the body eventually executes what the mind—consciously or not—prescribes. The rule is no more than a crutch which we throw away when the body has understood, exactly as Searle postulates for the example of skiing (1983, p. 151):

> The advanced skier doesn't follow the rules better, rather he skis in a different sort of way altogether. His movements are flowing and harmonious, whereas the beginning skier, consciously or unconsciously concentrating on rules, makes movements which are jerky, abrupt, and inept.

Polanyi would surely agree that the experienced sportsman does not memorise any rules, not even unconsciously, and Searle is wrong in accusing Polanyi of sharing the traditional cognitivist view which is, as Ryle (1949) has shown, subject to a category mistake. Because of the distinction between successful practice and its reconstruction in terms of rules, precepts are often totally ineffectual in the process of learning. The phenomenon of cycling provides a striking example (cf. PK, p. 49 f., KB, p. 144). When we start learning to ride a bicycle, the bike is experienced as something external to us. We have to learn to use it as we use our body. Training transforms the bike into an extension of our body, so that we finally feel the structure of the road as if our body were in direct contact with it. This learning process cannot be replaced by studying a mathematical formula for maintaining balance—although this sort of rule would describe what we actually do to keep our balance.

> It is characteristic of our body that it submits to operations the particulars of which are virtually unknown to us and that these largely unspecifiable operations cannot be replaced effectively by any focally controlled operations (KB, p. 184).

What about the higher intellectual skills? We can see again that we do not gain control over the world by focusing *on* our own thoughts. The idea of the incorporation of tools can be generalised 'to include the acceptance and use of the intellectual tools offered by an interpretative framework, in particular by the textbooks of science' (M, p. 36 f.). To dwell in moral principles, conceptual tools and theories means that we attend from them to experience, not to know them in themselves, but to *experience* them in the resulting phenomenal and semantical transformations, to which they contribute; in short, we dwell in them as we do in our body.

The transposition of bodily experiences into the perception of things outside turns out to be merely an instance of the transposition of meaning away from us, which we find to some extent in all acts of interiorisation. There are always objects, which at the same time are part of our body in the sense that we use them as we use our body. Man extends his powers of perceiving and acting by enlarging the range of his body. 'Indeed, whenever we experience an external object subsidiarily, we feel it in a way similar to that in which we feel our body. And hence we can say that in this sense all subsidiary elements are *interior to the body* in which we live' (KB, p. 183). At the start things always seem to be strange, we are aware of them as objects. But as we dwell in them they loose their character as external objects and become instruments which we use and experience as tools. They are experienced *as* the external environment we focus on and we are aware of them in terms of their meaning, in terms of what we see through them or do with them, not as entities in themselves.

Contrary to the dualistic view we can see now that the self is unable to know itself *as a self*. Whenever it believes it is referring to itself, it is actually referring to itself *as something alien*. 'In so far as it sees or touches the world', writes Merleau-Ponty (1945, p. 92), my body 'can therefore be neither perceived nor touched'—and this is true for everything we have incorporated. The self is not the home of self-consciousness, on the contrary: The self is the one thing we can only experience in the way we perceive the world. We recognise what we are in the way the world appears to us. To this extent there is no and can be no subject separable from the world.

3 A warning against self-reference

We have established that, with the exception of certain somatic processes, we can as a rule decide either to dwell in something and use it as an instrument or to alienate it and transform it into an object. The point is that we *must* decide: it is impossible to attend *to* something and to attend *from* it *to* something else at the same time. Just as we cannot use glasses to look at them, we cannot use interiorised parts of the world to get them into focus: 'We cannot look *at* them since we are looking *with* them', writes Polanyi (M, p. 61).

The interiorised is merged into what we grasp with it, inaccessible in itself and thus not subject to criticism. We cannot therefore as a rule specify the particulars we use to identify another person's face, or what we did exactly as we moved our arm to hit a ball, or what kind of psychological or sociological theory it was, which influenced our behaviour in a particular situation we perceived in its light. And this is what really indicates *intimate* knowledge.

However, man is unique in his ability to alienate things again—and this means: to refer to himself. We speak of self-reference, because whenever we focus on something interiorised, we focus on something which was formerly an unquestioned part of ourselves, exteriorising parts of what *we* were. We are able to change the direction of the from-to-structure, turning our attention away from the world to the hitherto interiorised, and at the same time questioning it. From time to time, this redirection is necessary in order to make sure that our background knowledge is sound. And it is a vital help when we face novelty and radical change, when we are to abandon familiar perspectives. Popper held that the main difference between Einstein and an amoeba lies in Einstein's ability to reflect consciously and critically on his theories, whereas 'the amoeba cannot be critical *vis-à-vis* its expectations or hypotheses; it cannot be critical because it cannot *face* its hypotheses: *they are part of it*' (1972, p. 25, emphasis partly mine).

Therefore we must not underestimate the significance of man's ability to redirect his focus. But the metaphor of indwelling at the same time points up the dangers of alienation, especially for us Polanyians, who have dwelt in the idea of indwelling. There is no other way to get meaning than to attend *away from* something. If this is true, then we destroy meaning in the process of redirecting our attention, as we do in alienating a word by repeating it hundreds of times. 'We . . . *endow a thing with meaning by interiorising it and destroy its meaning by alienating it*', writes Polanyi (KB, p. 146). Meaning has its price: at least for the time being we must a-critically accept as our platform what we have interiorised.

Let us study some simple examples of the destructive impact of self-reference (cf. PK, p. 55 f., KB, p. 146, 213). We can destroy the meaning of a painting when we come too close to it. Nearness alienates the details and destroys their joint meaning. Or think of trying to hammer in a nail. Effective use of the hammer presupposes that we incorporate the impacts made on our palm in order to direct our attention onto the effect on the nail. And if we try to focus on the hammer *as* a hammer we might

well hurt our finger seriously. The piano-player, shifting his attention from the piece of music he intends to play to the motions of his fingers, will immediately paralyse himself, and the tight-rope walker will also lose his balance if he focuses on his attempt to keep it. The impacts of stage fright can be explained with regard to the actor's anxious attention to the instrumental parts of his activity: he destroys their vectorial quality. The speaker who focuses on each word as it comes will lose his thread, because he transforms instruments of attention into objects of attention, and some people who are fond of their own voice (e. g. Hamlet) fail to have their mind on the job precisely because they concentrate on the secondary task of conferring with themselves about their primary task (cf. Ryle 1949, p. 192).

We can sum up therefore, that 'unbridled lucidity can destroy our understanding of complex matters' and that 'the belief, that since particulars are more tangible, their knowledge offers a true conception of things is fundamentally mistaken' (TD, p.18 f.). But this is not a recommendation for carelessness. The athlete concentrates every fibre of his body while approaching the barrier for a high jump, Polanyi reminds us (KB, p. 194)—but he focuses on the barrier, not on himself. To keep one's wits about one therefore implies no dual operation. It does not mean acting and simultaneously thinking about what we are doing. It means: melting into what we do[5]. That is the peculiar paradox: *holding tight requires letting go—the harder we focus on the element in order to get in touch with the whole, the easier it exceeds our control.*

What does this mean for the learning process? Firstly, what we need is *mindfulness*, an attitude, which, like Heidegger, we could call 'Horchsam-Sein'. Volpert (1994, p. 114) describes it as being open to experience, having a sense of what is going to happen to us without using fixed frameworks or interpreting prematurely, obeying the experience rather than commanding it. Secondly, we need *calmness* in our attitude of relying on our power of interiorisation, of concentrating on experience without loosing the self (cf. Volpert 1994, p. 119). But there is also some danger if the will to be mindful gets too intense, if we start to will what cannot be willed. If man approaches 'the development of mindfulness with the greatest ambitions—the ambition to acquire a new skill through determination and effort . . . his mind fixates and races, and mindfulness/awareness is most elusive', warn Varela/Thompson (1991, p. 29). 'Relating directly to the world, *without relating also to the relating*' (Elster 1983, p. 48)—that seems to be the highest art.

Looking at it this way we might go far beyond Polanyi in our warning against self-reference.

Don't forget reason, we are often told, and rightly so. Goals, plans and desired realities have to be projected, means and ways detected. Calculation is required—in order to live better. That is the one side of the truth. In calculating man becomes aware of himself as a thinking subject, distancing himself from the world, from things, from the present, from himself. No longer is there mere unquestioned being. Other things join the party now: the future joins the present, consciousness joins being, evaluation joins the object.

But if past and future gather force to an extent where the present disappears, rationality becomes a precarious principle. That is the other side of the truth. We have to learn from the past, to anticipate the future, and *this* is how we then spend the present. Therefore, we have a need for concentration precisely as the absence of meta-reflection; the non-assessing standpoint as some sort of taking no standpoint at all must be the counterweight to rationality.

It may well be that in directing our attention away from us to the world we will learn that there are 'things that recede before the hand that reaches out for them' (Elster 1983, p. 107), above all the kind of quality we strive for and seek so often by way of reflection: *meaning*. The conscious search for meaning itself might seriously indicate that we have lost that self-transcendence, which—although it gives no answer to the question—makes the question itself disappear.

Perhaps self-reference overtakes us again and again because we want to get things—and ourselves—under control. But the man who wants to record in his diary all he does must fail: the last entry demands notice as a deed in itself. Gilbert Ryle (1949, p. 266) thought that this explains 'the feeling that it is possible to describe and explain fully my last year's or yesterday's self and that your present or bygone self could be fully described and explained by me whereas my present self continually eludes my grasp'. Perhaps it explains even more; namely why we have to attend *from* ourselves *to* the world, why self-reference may lead to an infinite regress. And it tells us why those who live their life are engaged upon a more successful project than those who describe it in their diaries instead.

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Notes:

1. Most people would agree that they have a body, but very few would agree that they are a body
2. For a profound and readable historical and systematic discussion of the body-mind-problem see Wiesendanger (1987).
3. Ryle (1949) treats with irony the implications of body-mind-dualism for the relationship between knowing-that and knowing-how.
4. There would be a further classical query to mind-body dualism: If legs, arms and tongue do what the mind wants them to do, how then to conceptualise the causal impact of the non-material 'substance' the mind is supposed to be on the body's material substance?
5. See Csikszentmihalyi (1990) for a detailed description of a kind of state he calls 'flow'. The amalgamation of action and consciousness, he writes, is 'one of the most universal and typical features of optimal experience' (p. 80).

Continued from p. 25

Bibliographical note:

I append a list of published papers in Ethics written in English, with brief notes on those not referred to in my paper ('EVR' refers to the collection of papers *Ethics, Value and Reality* mentioned in the main bibliography above).

'The Thematic Primacy of Moral Evil', *Philosophical Quarterly*, VI, 1956, pp. 27-42.

'Erroneous Conscience', *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 1957-8, pp. 171-98 (reprinted in EVR).

'A Note on the Meaning of Right and Wrong', in *Scientiis Artisbusque*, Hungarian Academy of Science and Arts, Rome: Herder Pub. Co., 1958, pp. 49-60. (Actually written at Quebec, this paper interestingly contrasts the ethics of duty (Kant) and the ethics of virtue (Aristotle) and'thematic' with 'implicit' morality. See my paper. Unusually, it anticipates some of the themes of 'Moral Truth'.]

'Existence and Ethics', in symposium: 'Existentialism', *Aristotelian Society Supplementary Volume XXXVII.* 1963, pp.27-50 (reprinted in EVR). [A critical survey of existentialist ethics, concentrating on authenticity and alienation.]

'Moral Consensus', *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 1969-70, pp. 93-118 (reprinted in EVR).

'A Defence of Intrinsicalism against Situation Ethics', in *Situationism and the New Morality*, ed. R. L. Cunningham, New York: Appleton-Century-Croots, 1970, pp. 232-71 [An attack on the 'antinomian' Christian view that an ethic of diverse principles ought to give place to an ethic of love.]

'Forgiveness', *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 1973-4, pp.91-106, (reprinted in EVR) [Analysis of the concept, and examination of the 'antinomy' of forgiveness.]

'The Ghost of the Naturalistic Fallacy', *Philosophy*, LV, 1980, pp. 5-16 [Interesting reinterpretation of Moore's so-called 'Naturalistic Fallacy'.]

Ethics, Value and Reality also contains the first two chapters of Kolnai's unfinished book *Morality and Practice*. The first, entitled, 'The Ambiguity of Good', discusses the different types of Good, or Value, and certain attempts, notably Aristotle's to reduce them to a single type. The second, 'The Rise of the Moral Emphasis', is about thematic and implicit, positive and negative, morality, and related questions.

Note: Kolnai also wrote several papers on the logic of practice. *Ethics, Value and Reality* contains 'Deliberation is of Ends' (*Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 1961-2, pp 195-218), a valuable discussion of Aristotle's claim that we deliberate about means, since our 'end' (happiness) is already given

F. R. LEAVIS AND MICHAEL POLANYI ON MEANING

Paul Dean

To offer a quasi-academic discussion of Polanyi's influence on Leavis would be out of place; the very word 'influence' assumes too much. Polanyi came to hand, as an ally, long after Leavis's central convictions had been formed. Nonetheless, when one considers the amount and quality of reference to Polanyi in recent books on Leavis—the glancing mentions in the biographies by Ian MacKillop and G. Singh, the superficial comments of Anne Samson, and the complete omission of Polanyi by Gary Day, who conversely is happy to manufacture 'parallels' between Leavis and Lacan or Derrida—one may well feel a modest note would not be superfluous.[1]

Leavis first encountered Polanyi through *Knowing and Being*, to which he refers in a lecture given in 1969, the year of its publication. When this lecture appeared in book form in *Nor Shall My Sword* (1972), Leavis drew further attention to Polanyi in his introduction. Opening his campaign against Cartesian dualism and the mechanical positivism which denies the unique character of artistic creativity, Leavis quotes from *KB* 195 and 201 to point the reader to Polanyi's 'theory of knowledge (with, of course, ontological implications) that is closely and cogently argued in terms of evidence from a diversity of experimental fields'.[2] Unlike himself, Polanyi can't be accused of literary bias: 'Polanyi's preoccupation with epistemology and ontology is a lively concern for human creative activity and human responsibility'.[3] If Leavis is not often credited with this kind of interest in philosophical questions, that is because he was not interested in displaying erudition for its own sake; these references are practical, a matter of enlisting support from a specialist in another discipline. The enlistment was a tactical one; Leavis quotes only from *KB* (he mentions *PK* but gives no evidence of having read it, although he had of course read Marjorie Grene's *The Knower and the Known*), and then only from the essays in Part Three. Remarkably, even while reprinting in *Nor Shall My Sword* his lecture 'Two Cultures? The Significance of Lord Snow', which occasioned such a furore on its delivery and original publication in 1962, he fails to cite Polanyi's essay 'The Two Cultures', which had been written in 1959 and was reprinted in Part One of *KB*.[4] This provided powerful support for Leavis's criticisms of Snow, and its conclusions— that the 'objectivity' sought by scientists is illusory, and that 'a humanistic revolution' is required, beginning with the eradication of 'the scourge of physicalism' (*KB*, 46)—would surely have appealed to Leavis who, at that time, was working intensively on Blake and Dickens as opponents of scientism.

1 The problem of meaning

It is in *The Living Principle* (1975) that we find Leavis's most extensive use of Polanyi in an epistemological context. The nature of critical judgment—what we are saying when we say 'x means y', and how an interpretation of a work of art can, without being scientifically demonstrable, still be more than simple assertion of opinion—had preoccupied Leavis for over forty years. Polanyi's declaration, 'All knowing is an act of personal judgment' (*KB*, 179), offered a way forward, as did his argument that all meaning is rooted in the person. Leavis was not interested in the kind of semiotic pseudo-sophistication underlying such treatises as C. K. Ogden and I. A. Richards' *The Meaning of Meaning* (1923). He did once write, 'There is, I hope, a chance that I may in this way have advanced the theory, even if I haven't done the theorising'.[5] In *The Living Principle* he addressed the abstract issue more squarely, even admitting that 'an adequate account of how words mean will be a venture into epistemology and have ontological implications that are more than implicit'.[6] Most of his 'advancing', however, had been practical—demonstrations of how to read, in forty years of published criticism, vindicating his conviction that 'the ideal critic is the ideal reader'.[7] Polanyi in 'Sense-Giving and Sense-Reading' reviews various meanings of the concept of 'reading', as part of his explanation of the difference between focal and tacit awareness, and he observes that a printed word is meaningless if we attend only to the individual letters which compose it: what we instinctively do, having learned to read, is to 'look through the word at its meaning' (*KB*, 184). That he would agree with Leavis in seeing such 'meaning' as going far beyond the denotative is suggested by his later claim that

> the conflict between the view that denotative language bears on objects and the classical view, which holds that language bears on conceptions, is resolved here by admitting both possibilities and establishing a continuous transition between the two. (*KB*, 190)

—for how are conceptions constructed if not through the interaction between denotative and connotative meanings? Polanyi had stated, 'An alteration [alternation?] of analysis and integration leads progressively to an ever deeper understanding of a comprehensive

entity' (*KB*, 125), noting the semantic duality—at once abstract and concrete—of the concept of 'grasping' a subject (126). His crucial distinctions between focal and subsidiary awareness, tacit and explicit knowledge, would have been congenial to the Leavis who, over thirty years earlier, had described Shakespeare's 'complexity' in terms of 'something grasped and held, something presented in an ordering of words, and not merely thought of or gestured towards', and had said that 'Shakespeare's marvellous faculty of intense local realisation is a faculty of realising the whole locally'.[8] In the act of analysis, which he defined as 'a process of re-creation in response to the black marks on the pages' (*LP*, 35), Leavis assumes that we attend focally to the words of the text and tacitly to the larger organisation, what Eliot called sensibility, which brought the work into being and underlies it. At the same time, Leavis makes room for the ultimate elusiveness of works of art; the pursuit of total meaning is a chimera. As Polanyi puts it in a fine aphorism, 'The analysis of art can be profoundly revealing, but only if it remains incomplete' (*KB*, 164).

2 The Third Realm

The meanings of the work, established in critical discussion between readers (initially individual readers, but over time a community of readers), exist in what Leavis called the Third Realm:

> A poem is 'there', a meaning is 'there', but not in space; the 'there' is a way of saying that, though not in space, it is 'concrete'—that is, not something merely, in a postulating or theoretical way, thought of. The antithesis, 'public' in the ordinary sense, and merely 'private', isn't exhaustive. The poem we acceptingly discuss—the 'acceptingly' meaning that we agree that there is an impressive created thing (not just the black marks on paper) between us—is neither. I coined the phrase 'the third realm' to designate the order of being—I say naturally, 'the order of reality'—to which the poem belongs. A poem is nothing apart from its meaning, and meanings belong to the third realm. (*LP*, 62)

The temptation to construct a solemn theoretical parallel between the Third Realm and Karl Popper's World 3 must be resisted,[9] for Leavis is not using his phrase with 'scientific' precision; he even goes so far as to say, much later, that the Third Realm is 'spiritual' (*LP*, 179). Rather he is gesturing towards a reality of critical activity. We bring the text alive in our discussions, and it exists, released from its passiveness as a printed document, created to an extent by our analysis of it. 'To an extent' because Leavis would never agree with literary theorists that we are in effect the authors of the text and that it can mean anything we want it to. Nor would he agree with their assumptions that language is an arbitrary system of signs and that words relate only to themselves. Nor would Polanyi, who remarks (surely with a tinge of irony) that 'The brilliant advances of modern linguistics in phonology and generative grammar have cast no new light on the strange fact that language means something' (*KB*, 192). There is an external world, which we can hardly begin to grasp without language, and words are not free-standing agents but have histories and lives like everything else. The facile quasi-philosophical ploy of saying that it would be quite easy to call a cat a dog and vice-versa if we all agreed to do so, is nonsense, because the words 'cat' and 'dog' have over centuries acquired identities as linguistic entities which cannot be abolished by whim, even collective whim. To ignore the connotative dimension of meaning is absurd, and in fact impossible. Leavis and Polanyi point to this in their emphasis on the role of continuity and tradition in the transmission of English as a language. At the same time, language exists only in and through its users, who are the preservers as well as the developers of meaning. As Polanyi says, 'our knowledge of life is a sharing of life' (*KB*, 150-1).

Language for Polanyi is a means of interiorising the self: our attempt to formulate our experiences verbally is simultaneously a resting-point, the completion of one stage of understanding, and the incitement to further understanding (and hence further experience) through progressive refinement of our formulations. (Ben Jonson's 'Language most shows a man: speak that I may see thee' comes irresistibly to mind here.) 'Our capacity to endow language with meaning', he writes, 'must be recognised as a particular instance of our sense-giving powers' (*KB*, 193).

3 A Polanyian criticism

Polanyi ventured into literary criticism only in his last, least satisfactory, book, *Meaning*, which as far as we know Leavis never saw. Here he relies heavily on the theories of I. A. Richards and Max Black about metaphor. He sees the relation between disparate terms, which is at the heart of metaphor, as a key to 'the literary incoherence that bitterly protests the state of man in our day', 'this expression of fragmentation, which refuses to accord any meaning to our modern world' (*M*, 77). As comments on the work of Pound and Eliot, whom he quotes, these phrases are breathtakingly inadequate. Accepting Richards's separation of metaphor into tenor and vehicle, Polanyi has no difficulty in showing in the case of lines from *Richard II*, or from *Sonnet* 18, that 'translation' of metaphor into non-metaphorical language produces only banality. The inference that such 'translation' is a waste of time is one which we can only deduce that he makes, but for Leavis it was axiomatic. Comparing Blake's 'The Sick Rose' with Shelley's 'Music, when soft voices die', Leavis easily shows that 'there is [...] much more solid ground for attributing "thought" to

this wholly non-ratiocinative and apparently slight poem [Blake's] than to that ostensibly syllogistic, metaphysical piece of Shelley's' (*LP*, 92). Blake's poem thinks in our presence, making us think with it; Shelley offers the conclusions of thought for acceptance, not discussion, and his poem is dead where Blake's is alive. In Polanyian terms, Blake makes us attend through the rose and the worm to the complex of human feelings—a spectrum, not a focussed beam of white light—to which they point. In his analysis of *Four Quartets* in *The Living Principle*, Leavis adeptly separates passages where Eliot offers only 'ratiocinative procedures' from those in which he is really thinking through, rather than just in, words.

Leavis's supreme instance of a poet whose fusion of form and content is inextricable is Shakespeare. Neo-classical assumptions (language as 'the dress of thought' with all the arid dualism that entails—a position to which Polanyi in *M* appears surprisingly close) can't begin to be adequate to our experience of reading a Shakespeare play. *Macbeth* was an instance to which Leavis repeatedly turned, and in *LP* his comments on the texture of its imagery contrast sharply with Polanyi's reductive conception of metaphor. One of Leavis's finest, most Polanyian, statements about Shakespeare's thought came in an essay of 1933 on Joyce. It nods towards Eliot's brilliant sentence about the words of Shakespeare, Donne and other great seventeenth-century writers having 'a network of tentacular roots reaching down to the deepest terrors and desires':

> One insists, it can hardly be insisted too much, that the study of a Shakespeare play must start with the words; but it was not there that Shakespeare—the great Shakespeare—started: the words matter because they lead down to what they came from. [...] That is Shakespeare's greatness: the complete subjection—subjugation—of the medium to the uncompromising complex and delicate need that uses it. Those miraculous intricacies of expression could have come only to one whose medium was for him strictly a medium; an object of interest only as something that, under the creative compulsion, identified itself with what insisted on being expressed.[10]

'That Shakespeare so obviously can't have first stated his thought explicitly, "clearly" and "logically" in prose, and then turned it into dramatic poetry doesn't make it any the less thought' (*LP*, 97). The age of Dryden, Johnson, Locke and Descartes was blankly incapable of understanding this point, bent as it was upon destroying the organic character of human existence by exalting reason and logic into supreme powers of the mind at the expense of instinct, irrationality and the subconscious. Leavis's famous comparison of Antony and Cleopatra with Dryden's travesty of it *All for Love* (*LP*, 144-54) makes the point unanswerably. In our own time, Wittgenstein's expositors, the practitioners of 'linguistic philosophy', are Leavis's targets: 'the conception of language implicit in that "linguistic" is of no interest at all to the intelligent student of English—no interest and no use' (*LP*, 101).[11]

It is relevant to note that the index to *KB* contains no reference to Wittgenstein and that only two brief (but annihilating) pages are devoted to him in *PK* (113-4), where Polanyi insists that 'disagreements on the nature of things cannot be expressed as disagreements about the existing use of words' and 'The purpose of the philosophic pretence of being merely concerned with grammar is to contemplate and analyse reality, while denying the act of doing so'. 'Analysis' in the Wittgensteinian sense—and in the related sense of J. L. Austin, who, revealingly, has been taken up by literary critics in much the same way as Wittgenstein has—is a dead-end: in responding to the multivalent suggestions of Shakespeare's imagery, Leavis says, 'We respond to the actual diversity in a tacit way as we re-create within ourselves the totality of the communication' (*LP*, 103).

4 The case of Eliot

The creative writer has a special place, and responsibility, in Leavis's thought as the person who puts us in touch with pre-conscious life and also urges us on towards 'the as yet unrealised, the achieved discovery of which demands creative effort' (*LP*, 44). Major art demands as much a re-definition of 'thought' as of 'language': thought is heuristic, inexplicit in important ways (perhaps analogous to Polanyi's 'tacit'), and resistant to abstraction or universalising. 'Wisdom we may call a higher plausibility, profoundly judicious and responsible. For in this realm of thought there is nothing certain or provable, and no finality' (*LP*, 69).

The last part of *LP*, an analysis of *Four Quartets* (155-264) and Leavis's final verdict on a poet with whom he had been grappling for nearly fifty years, bears with special intensity on the question of the relationship between thought and language in a work of art. Such weaknesses as Leavis finds in the *Quartets* are traceable to lingering Cartesian habits of mind—an opposition of flesh to spirit, of eternity to time, of reality to illusion—and, ultimately, to Eliot's religious convictions (from which Leavis dissents unequivocally, with 'a profoundly convinced "No"', *LP*, 191). Eliot feels compelled to set his 'merely' human creativity at nought while shirking the obvious objection that it's only through that creativity that he has come to make his denial of it. To be confident of one's art is not, in the case of genius, to be arrogant: on the contrary, it is to be humble, in the knowledge that one is the servant of one's gift. That kind of humility, in Leavis's judgement, Eliot lacked. Moreover, Eliot's asceticism—Leavis repeatedly calls it nihilism (*LP*, 203, 215)—his distaste for

and disgust at the physical, implicitly rejects the Polanyian account of the mind-body relationship: 'But for the fact that minds are the minds of bodies there could have been no poem—there could have been no meaning and no communication' (*LP*, 179).

The way in which Eliot brings out the word 'Incarnation' in such a triumphant fashion ('The hint half guessed, the gift half understood, is Incarnation', *The Dry Salvages*, line 215) is in this context extraordinary, for the burden of the poem has been that flesh is an unreality, not that it is redeemable, still less that it has been redeemed. As Leavis says, 'the reality that Eliot seeks to apprehend being spiritual, he assumes that the spiritual must be thought of as the absolutely "other"—the antithetically and excludingly non-human' (*LP*, 203). Eliot's repeated invocations of a 'pattern' of significance, outside of time, at the 'still point of the turning world', to which all temporal events contribute, is condemned by Leavis as meaningless, and contrasted with Polanyi's use of 'pattern' (e.g. *KB*, 152—to which Yeats's 'How can we know the dancer from the dance?' and the whole stanza leading up to it in 'Among School Children' are far more congenial). Leavis makes an unintentional verbal slip when he writes, in opposition to Eliot's denial of life as manifested in creative art: 'There indisputably is life now, and creative life, and in the person of T. S. Eliot it writes *Four Quartets* . . .' (*LP*, 232). This is infelicitious because if Eliot had not written *Four Quartets* there is no reason to suppose that anyone else would have done (whereas —could one say?—someone else might have discovered the Theory of Relativity if Einstein had happened to miss it). 'In the person of T. S. Eliot it writes . . .' is an astonishingly impersonal statement (as though Eliot were simply a conduit) coming from Leavis, who indeed goes on to assert that 'life is "there" only in the individual life' (*LP*, 234), summarising Polanyi: 'without the individual person, who as such has a body and a unique personal history, there could be neither knowledge nor the *ahnung* [anticipatory apprehension] that leads to it' (*LP*, 234).

5 The role of religion

Leavis, we have seen, rejects Eliot's Christian answer to the questions he asks himself. But Leavis at the same time insists that 'unless it has a religious quality the sense of human responsibility can't be adequate to the plight of the world that so desperately needs it—won't, in fact, be what is needed' (*LP*, 236). He thinks of Polanyi's work as having a religious dimension, and conjectures that Polanyi would not object to this. Such a position is startling, given Leavis's upbringing in the traditions of high-minded rationalism and his well-reported hostility to institutionalised religion.[12] 'Religion' in the Leavisian sense is caught by a sentence he was fond of quoting from *The Rainbow*: 'he knew he did not belong to himself'[13] (echoed in *LP*, 238). Religion, that is, involves, as a minimum, the acknowledgement that neither the individual nor the universe is self-explanatory or self-sufficient: something external is needed to give them meaning. It is tempting to see Leavis's insistence on the validity of (non-doctrinal) 'religion' as a lingering Victorian element in his character, associated with morality in Arnoldian fashion. That suspicion is strengthened by this way of putting the point: 'there is no acceptable religious position that is not a reinforcement of human responsibility' (*LP*, 236). 'Acceptable' to him, one assumes. He quotes Polanyi on 'responsibility'; interestingly, the sentence in question begins 'All thought is incarnate . . .' (*KB*, 134). The kind of incarnate thought Polanyi and Leavis are defending is not what Eliot meant by 'Incarnation' (the use of the initial capital meant to prescribe a hushed reverence in the reader). 'When we come to the theological affirmation', Leavis writes, assuming his readers' agreement, 'we have to recognise that the emphatically firm explicitness is, for us, not acceptable' (*LP*, 249).

As for Polanyi, one has to say that his dealing with religion in *Meaning* is staggeringly naive (the book was written, with assistance, in his extreme old age). As soon as we read 'Religion, we can see, is a sprawling work of the imagination' (*M*, 152) we know that something has gone badly wrong; and the example Polanyi chooses, of the institution of Holy Communion at the Last Supper, is presented in such terms—'a myth describing how this ceremony was "once upon a time" ordained by a god', 'In Holy Communion the myth, of course, is the story of the Last Supper' (*M*, 153)—as to compel the conclusion that the writer is moving in realms for which he is simply unqualified. The bland confidence with which the question of the historicity of the New Testament narrative is—not disposed of, for it is never even raised—is painful to see in someone of Polanyi's intelligence. His later reference to the 'metaphoric meaning of the satisfaction of a spiritual hunger and a replenishing of the spiritual life' (*M*, 153), which uses 'metaphoric' to describe something which in theological terms is also literal, is a further disabling error, an instance of dualsim which seems to have escaped him.

6 Conclusions

I have hoped only to raise issues for discussion and development. It seems to me that, if one takes Leavis's references to Polanyi seriously, as professional philosophers on the whole have not done,[14] one will begin to notice, as one passes from Leavis to Polanyi and back again, less obvious correspondences

of thought than at first appear. They concur in holding that meaning is, in all branches of intellectual life, human-created, human-centered, and in important ways indefinable; they see it as a collaborative process, dependent on tradition, cumulative understanding, and shared preoccupations; they are both opposed to Cartesian separation of mind from body or thought from language. They both defend a variety of incarnational philosophy in relation to thought. Neither, for different reasons, can carry such a position to the point of a dogmatic religious affirmation, but the work of both has a religious quality.

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Notes

1. References are to Ian MacKillop, *F. R. Leavis: a Life in Criticism* (London: Allen Lane/ The Penguin Press, 1995); G. Singh, *F. R. Leavis: a Literary Biography* (London: Duckworth, 1995); Anne Samson, *F. R. Leavis* (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1992); and Gary Day, *Re-Reading Leavis: 'Culture' and Literary Criticism* (London: Macmillan, 1996).
2. *Nor Shall My Sword* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1972), p.21.
3. ibid., p.23.
4. Nor did Snow refer to Polanyi's essay when he reviewed the controversy in 1963 (C. P. Snow, *'The Two Cultures' and 'A Second Look'*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964).
5. *The Common Pursuit* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1952: Peregrine ed. 1962), p.216.
6. *The Living Principle* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1977), p.229. Subsequent references to this book, abbreviated *LP*, are inserted in my text.
7. *The Common Pursuit*, p.212.
8. (1936: Peregrine ed., 1964), p.56.
9. Popper himself makes the connection (*Objective Knowledge*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972, p.73n.) but Leavis discounted it in a letter to Michael Black in 1974 (quoted in *The Leavises*, ed. Denys Thompson, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984, 95), and indeed, the possibility will not long survive a perusal of Popper's book. He dismisses as a subjective fantasy the idea that 'a book is nothing without a reader: only if it is understood does it really become a book; otherwise it is just paper with black spots on it' (op. cit., p.115)—virtually Leavis's formulation—and asserts the objectivity and impersonality of World 3 in a fashion which Leavis would have found repugnant.
10. 'Joyce and "The Revolution of the Word"', reprinted in *The Critic as Anti-Philosopher*, ed. G. Singh (London: Chatto and Windus, 1982), pp.121-2. The last phrase always reminds me of Rilke, whom Leavis had, of course, read, *pace* the critics who sneer at his 'provincialism' (see *English Literature in our Time and the University*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969, p.188).
11. Of course, this was not Leavis's last word on Wittgenstein. There may still be some people who haven't read one of his greatest essays, 'Memories of Wittgenstein', reprinted in *The Critic as Anti-Philosopher*.
12. There was a bizarre episode shortly before Leavis's death when a former pupil, who had become a Roman Catholic monk, asked if he could visit Leavis to offer spiritual counsel. Mrs Leavis reluctantly agreed, and 'paid the price of a very bad night' (MacKillop, F. R. Leavis, p.408). The question of Leavis and religion is not satisfactorily addressed by any writer I have seen.
13. *The Rainbow* (London: Heinemann, 1915: Penguin ed., 1949), p.40. In the context of the present essay one might ponder the conversation between Will and Anna about 'meaning', especially in religion, in chapter 6 (Penguin ed., pp.160-2).
14. Michael Tanner's reaction to *LP* was the only one to which Leavis thought it worth replying (in 'Mutually Necessary', reprinted in *The Critic as Anti-Philosopher*); and even Tanner more or less dismissed Polanyi as a negligible figure, attributing Leavis's endorsement of him to the gullibility of a non-specialist over-impressed by a chance encounter with a kindred spirit.

Dorothy Emmet
Philosophers and Friends: Reminiscences of Seventy Years in Philosophy
Macmillan, London, 1996; xiv 130pp.; ISBN 0-333-67013-2. £35 hbk.

This is an interesting, unusual and slim volume. Dorothy Emmet now in her nineties, disclaims any attempt to write an autobiography or an intellectual apologia. She has chosen to write about those whom she knew and who made a personal impact upon her including some not generally accounted as philosophers She writes with perception and kindliness and there also many amusing anecdotes. The chapter headings indicate the major characters: H. A. Prichard and R. G. Collingwood; A. D. Lindsay; A.N. Whitehead; John Macmurray and Reinhold Niebuhr; Samuel Alexander; Michael Polanyi; Alasdair MacIntyre and Max Gluckman; Richard Braithwaite and Margaret Masterman. There are, however, many others who may he described as having 'walk-on parts': philosophers such as Ludwig Wittgenstein and Karl Popper; politicians such as Mahatma Gandhi, Eamonn De Valera, George Thomas and Roy Jenkins; theologians such as William Temple, Paul Tillich and Nicholas Berdyaev. All are viewed with a kindly, yet critical, eye and interwoven into the author's continuing intellectual pilgrimage.

I enjoyed her story of how she invited Michael Polanyi to share a meal with her during a wartime Sunday when rationing was tight and how this co-incided with his desire to dedicate *Science, Faith and Society* to her. Her comment that some of the followers of Polanyi's philosophy can show an attitude that is more akin to preaching than to arguing is one that should commend itself to readers of *Appraisal*. This short book displays the characteristics of a skilled teacher in that the reader is continually prompted to reflect and to question. The concluding chapter, 'Retrospect and Prospect', containing reflections on political and religious interests, is particularly noteworthy. At 27p. per page, it is not cheap and purchasers will be few, but I hope that some discerning librarians will purchase it and their readers will be rewarded.

Brian G. Gowenlock

Kevin Mott-Thornton
Common Faith: Education, Spirituality and the State
Ashgate, Guildford, 1998; ix + 217 pp.; ISBN 1 84014 321 5. £35 hbk.

The signal merit of the central portions of Kevin Mott-Thorton's book is its exposure and criticism, with detailed attention to a wide range of sources, of some of the entrenched assumptions and consequent recommendations for policy, of the many sub-forms of 'liberalism' that dominate contemporary thought and educational policy. Here he valuably unravels the ways in which metaphysical assumptions (or, rather, the assumption that one can avoid metaphysical beliefs), epistemological ones, political collectivism, and the identification of schooling with state-schooling, have been combined, along with the deceptive claim that all these are 'procedural' and never substantive positions. Space allows me only to commend him for his careful logic and willingness to swim against the tide.

That critical section is topped and tailed by the author's more positive proposals, and there I find the book to be less satisfactory, mostly because he has not, I think, sufficiently liberated himself from contemporary illiberal 'liberalism'. On the one hand, the notion of 'spirituality' which he commends contains little normally associated with that term. He tries to free Dewey's 'common faith' from Dewey's scientistic assumptions, yet comes up (p. 69) only with beliefs and cognitive frameworks related to oneself, others and the world. Important as they are, and as it is to stress them against the disguised Positivism of the rest of 'philosophy of education', they do not constitute 'spirituality', which is a heightened inner discipline of the self orientated towards that which truly transcends oneself and the world. Here he runs up against the fact that 'Spirituality', like other abstractions such as Art and Language, does not exist and so cannot be developed in the child. Only concrete traditions of spirituality exist and can be developed, and his approach is therefore liable to evaporate either into a plea for a more generous teaching of literature and writing (needed though that may be) or a re-inforcement for the replacement of RE by 'religious studies' in which specimens of 'world religions' are presented as so many museum pieces to be gawped at or cafeteria menu to picked from, in order to protect him from 'indoctrination' and so preserve his precious 'autonomy' (i.e. to be a clone of his Secularist teachers).

Similarly I find that, for all his exposure of the 'monism' of contemporary liberalism (i.e. compulsory uniformity in the form and and content of education), and his own preference for a 'pluralism' that would allow for real local diversity within a state-financed national system of schooling, a position curiously labelled 'Conservative', with its obviously anti-British and anti-Christian implications (real 'pluralism' means pluralism in *all* areas of life, e.g. plural marriage laws). For, it seems, he still identifies education with schooling, and the ordinary day school and its lessons are not adequate for anything that can properly be called spiritual development

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