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IRVING BABBITT (1865-1933)

Continuing our intermittent series of Re-Appraisals, we turn in this issue to Irving Babbitt, who, with his colleague Paul Elmer More, founded and led the New Humanism in America. Their most famous pupil was T.S. Eliot, and it is through Eliot's essays on and obituary of Irving Babbitt that most of those who, on this side of the Atlantic, do know something about him, have learned of him.

For my part, I came across Babbitt and More in Russell Kirk's *The Conservative Mind,* the book that did most to revive serious Conservative thought on both sides of the Atlantic nearly 50 years ago, and especially to revive interest in Babbitt and More.

As Jan Olof Bengtsson mentions in his article in this issue, there is a Swedish tradition of interest in Babbitt which, in the person of Prof. Claes Ryn has recrossed the ocean. Articles in journals such as *Modern Age* and *The Inter-Collegiate Review* often refer to Babbitt, and now the National Humanities Institute in Washington, DC, promotes interest in Babbitt and American New Humanism.

So who was Irving Babbitt and what was New Humanism?

Babbitt was born in Ohio, where he worked on a farm as boy; became a reporter in Cincinnati and a cowboy in Wyoming, and finally became Professor of French Literature at Harvard in 1912, a post until he held until his death (from colitis).

But Babbitt was no narrow specialist and strongly opposed such tendencies in academic life. He ranged across European literature, life and politics, and looked also to the sages of the East, especially Confucius and the Buddha, learning Sanskrit and Pali and publishing a translation of *The Dhammapada,* the central text of Buddhism.

The New Humanism that he and More promoted was engaged on several fronts, principally reductionist denials of the distinctively human powers of decision and will and sentimental, humanitarian beliefs in natural human goodness and changing society or the environment and not oneself (typified by Rousseau). The former removed our power to govern ourselves, especially our ability to say 'No', while the latter saw no need for it. Russell Kirk, following More, several times quoted a footnote in *Literature and the American College* as summing up Babbitt's message:

> The greatest of vices according to Buddha is the lazy yielding to the impulses of temperament (*pamâda*); the greatest virtue (*appamâda*) is the opposite of this, the awakening fromthe sloth and lethargy of the senses, the constant exercise of the active will. The last words of the dying Buddha to his disciples were an exhortation to practise this virtue unremittingly.

The exercise of will, especially in restraint, inner work, duty, the higher self to which we should aspire, the law for man which we should embody—these are the constant themes of Babbitt's writings.

In a sense which most of those who styled themselves as such would probably repudiate, Babbitt was something of a pragmatist. It was actual life, not theory, that mattered to him. The test of any moral theory lies, not in logic, but in the consequences of living according to it— 'By their fruits ye shall know them'. Consequently, as our contributors show, Babbitt would sympathetically cite utterances of others which, in their context, sometimes had a very different significance. Again, it was the practical task of getting men to heed the call to arise to self-discipline that mattered, rather than the elaboration of moral theory.

Babbitt would not count, and perhaps would not have cared to count, as a philosopher in the narrow, modern, technical and academic sense. But he was undoubtedly a 'lover of wisdom'. It has been left to those inspired by him to distinguish, define and refine the ramifications of the wisdom that he sought, found and stated.

Somewhere he quotes Burke on Rousseau, that 'he is a moralist or he is nothing'. After Burke's onslaught, says Babbit, one is tempted to add, 'and he is not a moralist'. Babbitt was a moralist and, as the following pages show, he certainly was not nothing.

Editor

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Most of these books are again in print, especially from Transaction Publishers. Babbitt's two most important and most read ones are *Rousseau and Romanticism* and *Democracy and Leadership.*

Details of studies of Babbitt will be found in the Notes to the following articles and can be obtained from The National Humanities Institution (214 Massachusetts Ave NE, Suite 303, Washington DC, USA; mail@nhumanities.org; www.nhumanities.org) which runs an Irving Babbitt Project and publishes a journal, *Humanitas.*

IRVING BABBITT AND THE ETHICAL DIMENSION OF POLITICS

Michael P. Federici

1 Introduction

Contemporary scholarship and Western culture at large reflect an uncertainty and discomfort with the relationship between politics and morality. The moral character of leaders, some have argued, is less important than their ability to ensure a growing economy or protect national interests abroad. As long as the material needs of the people are being met, why be concerned with the ethical dimension of politics? This view easily degenerates into the idea that economic prosperity and security are the ethical imperative in politics. Reducing the ethical centre of politics to satisfying economic and security needs depreciates from the classical and Christian understanding of politics that includes soul-craft as a primary end of political life. Combined with the movement toward more direct democracy, reducing or transforming the ethical ends of politics creates a theoretical paradigm that undermines the philosophical foundations of constitutional government. Constitutionalism is based on the idea that the raw popular will needs to be filtered through constitutional structures like representation, staggered elections, judicial review, the separation of powers, and checks and balances. The presumption of representative democracy, as James Madison explains it in *Federalist 10,* is that 'the public voice, pronounced by the representatives of the people, will be more consonant to the public good than if pronounced by the people themselves, convened for the purpose' In the context of constitutional government leadership often requires opposition to the prevailing majority will. Knowing how to filter the public views requires a type of character that is attuned to something higher than the self-interest of leaders or the momentary majority will. The end of politics is the common good, the *summum bonum.*

Contemporary political practice obscures the ends of politics. Without a clear understanding of the higher purpose of politics it becomes difficult to judge the quality of leadership. In the modern paradigm, the momentary will of the people has become the measure of the quality of political leadership. Leadership is increasingly measured by public opinion polls and focus groups that reflect the constitutionally unfiltered desires of citizens. This practice is clearly at odds with the very idea of constitutional government. It is especially contrary to the ethical underpinnings of constitutionalism. Specifically, it undermines protections for numerical minorities and checks against majority tyranny.

It isn't as though moral concerns have been removed from politics. It is rather that a new moral understanding of politics has emerged that has replaced the older tradition of classical and Christian political philosophy. In short, humanitarianism has replaced humanism. The former is rooted in a 'positive' view of human nature and a corresponding faith in progress. In either the form of scientism or idealism humanitarianism champions the cause of unfettered rights and freeing human will from the shackles of tradition and outer authority. Morality consists largely of ensuring the material progress of the underprivileged class by redistributing wealth and expanding liberty by judicial edicts and public policy pronouncements. These objectives are to be accomplished not by moral self-improvement but by lawmaking. Humanism, by contrast, recognises that political and social life reflect a quality of will and imagination that correspond to the inner life of individuals. Political and social order are especially reflective of the existential order of political and social leaders. Humanism places emphasis on the formation of ethical character as a prerequisite for political action. Given the defects in human nature progress is uncertain. Good leaders will not always be in charge. The consequences of the transformation of moral understanding from humanism to humanitarianism is that Rousseaustic democracy replaces constitutional democracy[1]. The existence of constitutional government as conceived by the American Framers, for example, is endangered. Constitutional democracy cannot function without the presence of leaders who posses a certain kind of moral character, i.e., character that is shaped by adherence to a quality of will that is attuned to the transcendent. The political structures of constitutional government presuppose a certain character type setting the tone in society and in government.

What adds to the confusion about morality and politics is the perception that ancient and Christian theorists addressed the ethical dimension of politics but the modern and post-modern eras are sufficiently different to make the wisdom of classical and Christian political philosophy irrelevant. The works of Irving Babbitt (1865-1933) provide insights into the ethical dimension of politics in a way that is neither a simple recasting of the classical and Christian tradition nor a wholly modern approach. His understanding of politics and the inner life provides an approach that is morally realistic, attuned to the challenges of modern and post-modern life, and sensitive to the importance of universality.

A Harvard professor of comparative literature, Babbitt's best known books are *Democracy and Leadership* (1924), *Rousseau and Romanticism* (1919), and *Literature and the American College* (1908). He, along with Paul Elmer More, was considered one of the leaders of a school of thought called New Humanism or American Humanism and he engaged in numerous scholarly debates that centred on the ethical nature of man. Among Babbitt's students at Harvard were Walter Lippmann and T.S. Eliot. Although they rarely mention him by name their works demonstrate the influence of Babbitt's ideas. In 1960

Harvard University created the Irving Babbitt Chair of Comparative Literature. In 1984 the National Humanities Institute, based in Washington, D.C., was created to study and disseminate Babbitt's ideas. NHI's journal *Humanitas* regularly publishes articles about and reviews of Babbitt's ideas and works. A significant and growing body of secondary literature on Babbitt testifies to his lasting relevance and contribution. Babbitt's influence has been significant especially given the fact that his ideas tend to rub against the grain of dominant strains of modern and postmodern thinking. He was criticized by a broad range of intellectuals and social critics including Sinclair Lewis, Ernest Hemingway, and Allen Tate. In particular Babbitt's understanding of politics and the ethical life was met with stringent opposition. His arguments and his opponents' criticisms provide insights into recent debates about the role of morality in politics.

2 Irving Babbitt and his critics

In his essay on 'Self-Reliance' Emerson wrote that 'To be great is to be misunderstood'. To judge by Emersonian standards Irving Babbitt was the epitome of greatness. His New Humanism encountered a barrage of criticism in the late 1920's and 1930's that was directed from a variety of intellectual, philosophical, and religious perspectives. However diverse Babbitt's critics may have been, most of them held in common a confused understanding of his humanism. While this fact is generally recognised by most of Babbitt's proponents, the reasons why his humanism were so widely misunderstood remain somewhat of a mystery. Certain aspects of Babbitt's thought have been studied with the purpose of addressing his critics, as was done, for example, by George Panichas in his article 'Babbitt and Religion'[2]. However, a more comprehensive analysis of Babbitt's critics and an explanation for the generally shoddy treatment he received has yet to appear in print. David Hoeveler's The New Humanism (1977) attempts to define broadly the New Humanism and its adherents through 1940. Yet, Hoeveler's book is burdened with subtleties differentiating the various humanists. While it does give a perspective on the depth of the debate over the New Humanism, it is limited in its contribution to answering the question why Babbitt in particular was poorly understood.

A more clear understanding of the reasons why Babbitt was so injudiciously treated and misinterpreted is warranted by the recent revival of interest in his work and the growing need to address the ethical dimension of politics. The scholarship of George A. Panichas and Claes G. Ryn, among others, marks the re-emergence of Babbitt as one of America's leading intellectual critics of the twentieth century.[3] The renaissance of Babbitt's humanism must anticipate the criticisms that are likely to be levelled against it. If the new proponents of humanism are to be successful in continuing Babbitt's critical mission, which includes clarifying the ethical nature of politics, they must be keenly aware of the reasons humanism was surrounded with misinterpretation and vituperation in the 1920's and 1930s. In addition, the term 'humanism' implies anti-theism. Otherwise sympathetic readers, especially those who have a religious orientation, are prone to misunderstand Babbitt's ideas if the meaning of New Humanism is not clearly differentiated from what is often referred to as secular humanism. Unless the renewal of New Humanism correctly anticipates the climate of opinion it must confront, the debate over humanism will be plagued with the same problems the initial debate incurred. A first step in raising the level of discourse is to retrace the confusion, misunderstanding, and hostility that has characterized the debate over humanism since the early part of the century.

This essay is a critical survey of Babbitt's humanism and its critics. The scope of the debate over humanism and the number of participants do not make possible a comprehensive analysis in limited space. Nor do all the criticisms of Babbitt warrant comment given their polemical nature. Thus, I will focus on critics and arguments that are representative of the attack on Babbitt and helpful in highlighting the reasons why he was misunderstood. The analysis will also be directed at clarifying Babbitt's view of the ethical life and its importance for political order. The essay is divided into three sections. The first will provide a brief sketch of Babbitt's humanism. The second section will comment on Babbitt's critics and present five common misconceptions of humanism. The last section will offer some remarks on why Babbitt was misinterpreted and how much of the blame can be attributed to his methodology and terminology.

3. The humanism of Irving Babbitt

The modern period according to Babbitt has been characterized by a revolt against traditional authority and the truths of the ethical life. By traditional authority he meant the church and its dogmas, doctrines, and revelations. In the past these sources provided moral standards for ethical conduct in areas of life such as politics, aesthetics, economics, and education. They shaped the substance of civilization. The rise of modern science and its corresponding ideology, scientific naturalism, as well as the rise of romanticism and its corresponding ideology, romantic naturalism, marks a revolt against outer authority in the name of autonomous secular reason and autonomous secular imagination respectively. These ideological influences represent a view of human nature and politics that is incompatible with constitutional government. The incompatibility is due to the contrary perceptions of human nature and leadership. For Babbitt leadership begins with a disposition of the soul that is disciplined in accordance with what he calls the 'inner check' The properly ordered soul exudes what Burke referred to as the 'spirt of religion' and the 'spirit of a gentlemen' The modern naturalist substitutes sham

spirituality for genuine moral character. Scientific naturalism and romantic naturalism were, in Babbitt's view, pseudo-religious movements that replaced genuine ethical virtue with humanitarian crusading. The most obvious trait of naturalistic humanitarianism was its spiritual indolence, which Babbitt defined as 'a disinclination to oppose to one's expansive desires any will to refrain' and then 'to shift the blame on something or somebody else for the unpleasant consequences'[4]. For this reason Babbitt considered much of naturalistic sentiment detrimental to genuine spiritual activity, political order, and civilization generally. He believed humanitarianism undermined the classical and Christian understanding of human nature and moral action. The older tradition was premised on a dualistic philosophy of man, i.e., man has both higher and lower inclinations. Because man has dual potentialities for good and evil actions his lower passions should be checked by a higher will. This restraining power in man is the inner check. It functions as a discriminating force that enables man to control or direct the inner flux of passion and desire. Thus, the quality of human conduct is not arbitrarily determined by circumstances or environmental forces outside human control but by the deliberate and discriminate exertion of will.

Ethical dualism was the central feature of Babbitt's humanism and the point of contrast with naturalism. He considered Rousseau to be an instrumental figure in the rise of modernity because he represents a revolt against ethical dualism. 'The old dualism', Babbitt explained, 'put the conflict between good and evil in the breast of the individual. . . with Rousseau this conflict is transferred from the individual to society'[5]. In *Literature and the American College* Babbitt remarked that what Rousseau called virtue was not what was traditionally meant by the term. For Rousseau,

> Virtue is no longer to be the veto power of the personality, a bit and a bridle to be applied to one's impulses, and so imposing a difficult struggle. These impulses, Rousseau asserts, are good, and so a man has only to let himself go. Instead of the still small voice that is heard in solitude and urges to self-discipline, virtue is to become a form of enthusiasm. . . He will hear of no norm of conduct that is set above individual feeling.[6]

In the romantic scheme once man is declared naturally good and society is remade accordingly, there is little reason to doubt the moral purity of his desires and passions. Babbitt, on the other hand, believed ethical conduct was the result of strenuous inner discipline and the inculcation of sound moral habit. Rousseau by contrast remarks in his *Reveries of the Solitary Walker*, 'I give way to the impulse of the moment . . . . As long as I act freely I am good and do nothing but good . .'[7]

Babbitt warned that the inversion and decay of standards, caused by a rejection of traditional authority could not be restored by an appeal to religious dogma or outer authority. He was keenly aware that the restoration of ethical insight was not simply a matter of returning to the past. Instead he believed that the naturalists were best refuted by turning against them 'their own principles' Thus, Babbitt himself claimed to be 'thoroughly modern' and he welcomed 'the efforts of the man of science . . . to put the natural law [of physical nature] on a positive and critical basis'. The tenets of his humanism were not based on metaphysics or revelation but on human experience. Referring to himself as an 'ethical positivist' Babbitt attempted to affirm the truths of the inner life on the basis of the 'immediate data of consciousness'. This 'swift flanking movement on the behaviourists and other naturalistic psychologists' would, he hoped, prove that naturalism is not true to its claim to be experimental. The naturalist, Babbitt argued, was incomplete in that he refused to accept the truths of the inner life as 'facts of experience'. The loss of standards has resulted because naturalism, in refusing to deal with the human moral law, has reduced reality to the ephemeral and transitory flux of the physical natural law. 'What prevails in the region of the [physical] natural law', Babbitt explained, 'is endless change and relativity; therefore the naturalist positivist attacks all the traditional creeds and dogmas for the very reason that they aspire to fixity' The reduction of reality to immanent 'facts' has meant the loss of transcendent moral standards that are associated with the immutable, permanent oneness of life. Babbitt poses the challenge to modern reductionists that 'The constant element in life is, no less than the element of novelty and change, a matter of observation and experience'. The affirmation of 'the constant element in life' on a positive and critical basis was for Babbitt the most urgent need of the modern age.[8]

Babbitt's criticism of naturalism was that it emphasized man's natural goodness at the expense of his moral weakness. His view of human nature was not Hobbesian ; he did not believe that man is simply evil. Man is a 'paradoxical creature', Babbitt argued; he experiences in his inner life the presence of both a higher, or ethical, will and a lower, or 'ordinary' self. The higher will pulls man in the direction of the abiding and permanent things in life, whereas the lower will, in opposition to the higher, appeals to the ephemeral and transitory flux of life. The higher will pulls man to a 'common centre' i.e., what Aristotle called '*homonoia*' (like-mindedness). While Aristotle tends to conceive of this ethical centre as reason, Babbitt views it as a quality of will. The more man disciplines his life in accordance with his higher self, the more he participates in what is ultimately normative, what Plato called the 'Agathon' (the good). Predominance of the lower will, by contrast, while it may bring momentary pleasure, results in despair, restlessness, and anxiety. The ethical life demands concentration on this most fundamental inner tension between opposing forces. To the naturalist who 'declared that everything expansive in human nature is divine', Babbitt responded:

'I do not hesitate to affirm that what is specifically human in man and ultimately divine is a certain quality of will, a will that is felt in its relation to his ordinary self as a will to refrain'[9].

The humanism of Irving Babbitt represents, in part, a re-articulation of the ancient and medieval understanding of human nature. Yet it deviates from the older tradition in its emphasis on imagination and depreciation of reason. 'Man, a being ever changing and living in a world of change', Babbitt explained, is 'cut off from immediate access to anything abiding and therefore worthy to be called real, and condemned to live in an element of fiction or illusion. Yet civilization must rest on the recognition of something abiding. It follows that the truths on the survival of which civilization depends cannot be conveyed to man directly but only through imaginative symbols'[10] Because he placed such importance on imagination Babbitt believed that art and literature were vital to man's perception of the permanent things. Moreover, the imagination, like will, has both a higher and a lower quality. Higher imagination, or what Burke called moral imagination, puts man in contact with the true, the good, and the beautiful as they are symbolically represented in great works of art and literature. Moral imagination absorbs the 'wholeness' of life, it draws attention to the centrifugal element in life. By contrast, the idyllic or romantic imagination is 'not drawn back to any ethical centre and so is free to wander wild in its own empire of chimeras' The idyllic imagination is one-sided in that it indulges in the playful and pleasingly emotional experience of life as an escape from the serious and decorous side of life. While such art has at best a merely recreational value, Babbitt argued that it has in the modern period been given primacy over ethically centred art. 'With the elimination of the ethical element from the soul of art', Babbitt asserted, 'the result is an imagination that is free to wander wild with the emancipated emotions'[11]. The intoxication with the idyllic and the romantic has meant the disappearance of art that represents the imaginative wholeness and centre of life. Instead of drawing men to an ethical centre, romantic art is a diversion from ethical introspection.

Babbitt's humanistic approach was an attempt to confront the modern crisis on its own terms. He adopted the terminology of his opponents, the scientific and romantic naturalists, yet his methodology was profoundly unmodern in that he concentrated on a more comprehensive spectrum of experience. Moreover, his emphasis on restraint and ethical discipline was unmodern as well. Thus, while Babbitt hoped to broaden the modern debate by affirming the experiential existence of an ethical veto power in man, his positive and critical humanism was maligned and misunderstood by a broad range of critics. But why was Babbitt's humanism so poorly understood, and why did the debate over humanism often degenerate into a polemical tirade?

4 Five misconceptions of Babbitt's humanism

It is apparent from a review of Babbitt's critics that a significant number of people felt compelled to take a stance on humanism. A list of critics includes such names as T.S. Eliot, H.L. Mencken, Allen Tate, Edmund Wilson, Henry Hazlitt, and Ernest Hemingway. Their references to Babbitt's humanism range from jesting remarks to serious analysis. Most all of Babbitt's critics have in common a confused understanding of his philosophy of humanism. In many instances the confusion is accompanied by polemics. Accounting for the source of confusion and polemics is difficult, given the diversity of individuals that can be considered critics of Babbitt. The mere number of critics demands that an analysis of humanism's critics be limited to those who serve to highlight the reasons why Babbitt was misunderstood. For the purpose of systematic analysis five common misconceptions of Babbitt's humanism can be identified and explained.

The five misconceptions of humanism are:

1) Humanism was negative. It argued against everything modern and failed to offer a positive alternative to naturalism.

2) Humanism was Puritanical because it emphasized self-discipline and ethical restraint.

3) It was irrelevant to the modern world because the source of humanism's standards was pre-modern. It was rigid, unimaginative, and thus it inhibited creativity especially with respect to literature and art.

4) Humanism was based on metaphysical concepts that reflected personal beliefs and had no experiential foundation.

5) It was hostile to institutional religion and dogma and Babbitt believed that humanism could function independently of traditional religion.

Many of Babbitt's critics held the view that there could be no positive result from Babbitt's negative approach. Edmund Wilson, contributor to *The Critique of Humanism*, wrote in his essay 'Note on Babbitt and More', 'How can one take seriously a philosophy which enjoins nothing but negative behaviour?'[12] Wilson's understanding of Babbitt's inner check is that it had the sole function of preventing action. This view often exemplified a failure to conceive that what Babbitt meant by the higher will/inner check was not Stoical or ascetical self-denial for its own sake but a power in man to pause and ethically deliberate before acting. He described the inner check as a power 'that is felt [by man] in its relation to his ordinary self as a will to refrain'. By 'ordinary self' Babbitt had in mind the selfish, egocentric inclinations in man, recognising that these lower desires must be checked by a higher will does not rule out that man has dignified and virtuous desires. The point Babbitt wished to make was that ethical action is not spontaneous or instinctive. Whether or not individuals decide to follow their ethical conscience, the fact remains that they pause before acting and 'search their soul' The pause of ethi-

cal deliberation is a prelude to action. As Claes Ryn points out, 'The term [inner check] is employed by him [Babbitt] in opposition to all those who would forget the duality of human nature and identify the moral good with particular human intentions'[13]. Babbitt, it must be remembered, was reacting against romanticism, which asserted that man was naturally good and that his passions and desires should not be subject to the restraining power of ethical conscience. Rousseau expressed this attitude when he remarked:

> I give myself to the impression of the moment without resistance and [even] without scruple; for I am perfectly sure that my heart loves only that which is good. All the evil I ever did in my life was the result of reflection; and the little good I have been able to do was the result of impulse![14]

The inner check was also, some critics charged, a negative answer to the modern question which required a positive response. Lewis Mumford in his essay 'Toward an Organic Humanism', charged Babbitt with reducing the problem of conduct and social organization to merely negative action, i.e., ethical restraint. Babbitt, he argued, reduced good conduct to 'the application of the moral veto or the inner check' and this Mumford believed 'is to lose the significance of ethics itself' because 'if living well were only a matter of restraint and a limitation of "expansiveness" a chronic invalid would be the supreme type of an ethical personality'. Thus, according to Mumford, Babbitt's humanism had nothing to offer society:

> the New Humanists have merely opposed to the weakness and infirmities of our present society a series of anxious negatives just as impotent to produce new values as the optimistic assent of their Mechanist rivals. In short: the New Humanists are empty.[15]

Babbitt was not suggesting that the good man do nothing. His books discuss leaders whose actions are worthy examples of moral leadership. Babbitt cites George Washington, John Marshall, Abraham Lincoln, and Edmund Burke as good leaders and he contrasts their type of leadership with a contrary type represented by William Jennings Bryan, Henry Ford, Jefferson, and Rousseau.

Herbert Read's review of *Democracy and Leadership* recognised Babbitt's 'masterly' diagnosis of modern culture, yet Read concludes, 'He does not succeed in envisaging a means whereby the controls which are operative in the individual can be made valid for social organization'.[16] Babbitt was explicit on the relationship between the inner life and social organization. In *Democracy and Leadership* he wrote:

> Civilization is something that must be deliberately willed; it is not something that gushes up spontaneously from the depths of the unconscious. Furthermore, it is something that must be willed first of all by the individual in his own heart.[17]

In this passage Babbitt is confirming Burke's comment that civilization depends for its survival on the spirit of a gentleman and the spirit of religion. Political and social order are not restored primarily by public policy reforms but by individuals who conform to a higher law above the written law. This is another way of confirming what Plato demonstrates in the *Republic*, that the polis is man written large, i.e., order in the city is intimately bound up with order in the soul. Babbitt undoubtedly recognised that modern society was in need of reform but like Burke and Plato he believed that meaningful and lasting reform must begin in the human heart not a legislative chamber.

A frequent mistake made by critics is to interpret Babbitt's idea of ethical restraint in the superficial manner of referring to it as self imposed physical paralysis. Mumford exemplifies this tendency in the above quoted passage when he remarks that Babbitt's reduction of ethics to restraint implies that the ideal moral type is the 'chronic invalid'. Henry Hazlitt, like Mumford, failed to grasp the meaning of the higher will for a similar reason. 'The phenomenon of house training, common to nearly all adult dogs', Hazlitt explained, 'is itself sufficient to discredit Mr. Babbitt's belief that only man can control his immediate desires'. In his essay on 'Humanism and Value' he refers to a dog's higher will and claims that 'Our "moral" superiority to the animals. . .is by no means thoroughly established'.[18] Such a comment is almost worth dismissing out of hand, yet Hazlitt's argument demonstrates just how confused many of Babbitt's critics were. To speak of a dog's higher will is to attribute a specifically human characteristic to an animal on the grounds that animal and human 'control' are equivalent in kind. The dog, it hardly needs to be mentioned, lacks the quality of symbolic consciousness, if he possess it at all, that would permit him to participate in moral deliberation. Man is able to detach himself from impulse and passion through the medium of reflective consciousness, whereas, in Ryn's words 'the animal lacks, or just has the barest rudiments of, a type of intelligence and imagination which involves detachment from the here and now'.[19] Thus, Hazlitt's reference to a dog's higher will indicates that he was far from comprehending what Babbitt recognised as the most fundamental fact of experience—man's inner check. Hazlitt's confusion also raises the question whether some of Babbitt's critics were unable to understand humanism because they were imaginatively closed to the level of experience to which he appealed. Babbitt anticipated this problem when in the introduction to *Rousseau and Romanticism* he referred to the 'incompleteness' of many modern thinkers. They are incomplete, he argued, because they fail to confront the full range of experience. While it is difficult to decipher with any degree of exactness the reasons why Hazlitt and Mumford misinterpreted Babbitt's term inner check, it is nevertheless reasonably apparent that they were operating under the assumption that the ethical veto was a physical reality that renders the body unable to act. The inner check, however, is not an 'object' nor does it have physical content or tangible substance. It is an

ethical conscience or moral sense which is experienced as a will to refrain, i.e., a veto power that scrutinizes human desire. 'Besides the flux of life', explained Paul Elmer More,

> there is also that within man which displays itself intermittently as an inhibition upon this or that impulse, preventing its prolongation in activity, and making a pause or eddy . . . in the stream. This negation of the flux we call the inner check. It is not the mere blocking of one impulse by another. . .but a restraint upon the flux by a force contrary to it.[20]

Hazlitt's and Mumford's confusion is due in part to the fact that when they refer to physical paralysis they fail to realize that the inner check functions as a precondition to human action. The action itself, be it physically static (negative) or physically dynamic (positive), is the outcome of the working of the inner check.

The second misconception of Babbitt's humanism is closely related to the first. It consists of the argument that Babbitt was a Puritan meaning that he advocated excessive self-restraint and moral extremism. In the words of C. Hartly Grattan, he was one of those 'life-hating' Christians. The source of such criticism is not difficult to identify. Austin Warren, who was sympathetic to Babbitt's humanism, remarked that:

> In consequence of his emphasis on the 'frein vital' and on the evils of most of what, from the late eighteenth century to our own day, has passed for 'progress' Babbitt has passed for a Puritan and a constitutional denier.[21]

Babbitt's humanism, while it stresses inner discipline, is in some respects fundamentally at odds with Puritanism. The Puritan notion of an elect, 'chosen' aristocracy, for example, is in sharp contrast with Babbitt's fondness for Buddha's view that 'In the last analysis a man must. . .save himself'.[22] Many critics assumed that because Babbitt was a Harvard professor, his intellectual background was heavily influenced by New England Puritanism. Yet, Babbitt was of partly Midwestern origin, and in early life he was everything from a cowboy in Wyoming to a reporter in Cincinnati. References to his Puritanism and other name calling, as for example Rebecca West's comment that Babbitt was a 'drill-sergeant' or Allen Tate's claim that he 'recommends the police force' as a solution to the collapse of authority, are attempts to discredit Babbitt by labelling him as a fringe reactionary. The hostility toward Puritanism also indicates the influence of naturalism. If Rousseau's anthropology is accurate, then arguments philosophically grounded in ethical dualism that espouse the need for inner self-discipline are apt to be dismissed as ethical authoritarianism.

The charge that Babbitt was a Puritan fits what Eric Voegelin called 'a tactic of classification' and it indicates an unwillingness to engage in an open dialogue about the truths of the inner life. Here the validity of Babbitt's humanism is dismissed by categorizing it as Puritanical. The negative connotation of the word 'Puritan' diverts attention away from the particular arguments of Babbitt and discredits his humanism in one fell swoop. Edmund Wilson uses this tactic when he writes that the arguments of Babbitt and Paul Elmer More 'are not really conclusions from any sort of evidence, but merely the unexamined prejudices of a Puritan heritage which Babbitt and More have never outgrown'.[23] Thus, to Austin Warren's observation that Babbitt passed for a Puritan because of his emphasis on the will to refrain, it must be added that such name calling is the result of a superficial understanding of humanism and perhaps a closure to rational debate.

The third misconception is that humanism condemned modern culture, especially literature, and that it is didactic when it should be sympathetic and accommodating. The general argument is put forth in David Hoeveler's *The New Humanism*.

> The smug dismissal of the new literary efforts by the two major humanist minds was patently irresponsible. Their culpability was two-fold. Babbitt and More genuinely believed that the Humanist prescription was capable of qualitatively improving American life, even if they never expected a thorough Humanist renovation. There was much in Babbitt's and More's philosophy of art that was valuable, but they rendered it ineffective by failing to apply it to the contemporary literary scene . . . .Secondly, More and Babbitt . . . read the new literature too narrowly . . . . Had the Humanists looked closer they might have found elements there of the spiritual struggle and the search for self-perfection that they themselves endorsed . . . . In the end the battle of the books did successfully elaborate Humanistic values and prejudices, and certainly it demonstrated how remote Babbitt and More were from the cultural directions of American life. But the fact, unfortunately, meant that the battle, for these Humanists, was a lost opportunity to give some substance to the Humanist programme.[24]

Similar charges were made by Wilson, Hazlitt, J.E. Spingarn, and Rebecca West. Babbitt was aware of these criticisms and defended himself against the charge that he was irresponsible in addressing modern culture. Once again, if his position is to be understood, it must be viewed in the proper context. The urgent need of the early twentieth century, Babbitt argued, was to restore sound ethical standards to art, literature, and the whole of culture. In *Rousseau and Romanticism* he explained the reasons for his approach to literary and social criticism.

> I am not trying to give rounded estimates of individuals. . . but trace main currents as part of my search for a set of principles to oppose to naturalism. . .Criticism is such a difficult art because one must not only have principles but must apply them flexbly and intuitively. No one would accuse criticism at present of lacking flexibility. It has grown so flexble in fact as to become invertebrate. One of my reasons

> for practising the present type of criticism is the conviction that because of a lack of principles the type of criticism that aims at rounded estimates of individuals is rapidly ceasing to have any meaning.[25]

In addition to this defence of his critical method Babbitt responded to his critics in an article that appeared in *The Bookman*, entitled 'On Being Creative'. Here he cites examples of the 'lack of principles' in modern criticism. One example is 'Mrs. Mary Colum's assertion that Aristotle's literary taste, as revealed in the *Poetics*, was the kind we associate with the tired business man—the kind that inclines "to good detective stories and melodrama . . ."' Edmund Wilson, Babbitt charged, asserted 'that the characters of Sophocles have no more ethical substance than those of Mr. Eugene O'Neil'. The denial of standards, Babbitt added, 'has amounted to a repudiation of the two chief traditions of the Occident, the classical and the Christian. The 'outstanding trait of the modern era', Babbitt argued, is 'a boundless intoxication with novelty'[26].

The danger presented by the loss of critical standards, Babbitt warned, jeopardizes the existence of sound criticism. Therefore, he stated:

> There is need of a type of critic who will essay the task, especially difficult under existing circumstances, of creating standards. Without standards there can be no centre of judgment to which to refer the mere welter of appearances. Lacking this centre, other forms of creation will become unstructural and so sink to a comparatively low level. As a result of the failure to achieve thus far any such coordinating principle of unity, the whole modern experiment is in danger of assuming the aspect of a return to chaos.[27]

By 'coordinating principle of unity' Babbitt meant a lasting centre of judgment kept alive by sound tradition. The great literary works of the past provide a vast record of the articulated wisdom of the ages. Sound tradition is instrumental in creating standards by which to judge contemporary literature. The trend in modern criticism, however, was to deny tradition a place and substitute the dubious standards of creativity and originality. Babbitt was not arguing that there is no place for creativity and originality in literature but that they must be subservient to what is central to literature, i.e., the articulation of sound ethical tradition. The primary function of these literary traits is to bring a freshness to the wisdom of generations past. While he called for imitation in art and literature he was not referring to a rigid adherence to symmetrical design but an imaginative recreation of the abiding element in history.

Despite Babbitt's explication of his literary and social criticism, his critics misconstrued his purpose. In 1967 Kenneth Frederick Stewart, wrote an article on Babbitt's humanism. He made the common remark that:

> It does seem that in his attacks on contemporary art and literature Babbitt was alienating the very group he should have wooed . . . . But instead of using . . . potential agreement to encourage writers to follow the humanist way, Babbitt stood off and cursed the darkness.[28]

Such criticism fails to comprehend both the nature of the modern crisis and Babbitt's response to it. The disorder of the age, Babbitt realised, was desperate. He believed that the influence of naturalism had served to replace sound tradition, both religious and humanistic, with sham spirituality. Consequently, responding to the disorder of the age was not some political game in which Babbitt could have voiced occasional agreement and in return expected to win over a few disciples to his humanism. While he recognised that social and literary criticism needs to be sympathetic, Babbitt's understanding of the modern problem compelled him to emphasize judgment. 'The truth is' Babbitt explained,

> that the critic worthy of the name must judge; the counter-truth is that he should base his judgment on the widest comprehension and sympathy. The humanistic critic does not cultivate exclusively either. . .but mediates between them. . . .Goethe leaned very strongly to the side of comprehension and sympathy as a corrective to the dogmatic narrowness of many of the critics of his time. The present emergency is the exact opposite of the one that confronted Goethe. Open-mindedness is being glorified in the critic as an end in itself.[29]

To the widespread glorification of 'open-mindedness' Babbitt offered judgment and standards as a corrective to excessive sympathy.

To believe that if Babbitt had been more accommodating he would have avoided much unnecessary criticism ignores both the stark contrast between Babbitt and his critics and the philosophical incompatibility their respective positions represent. Had Babbitt been more sympathetic to modern critics and contemporary literature, he would have compromised his role as a critic of sound standards. In other words, if Babbitt's response to the disorder of the age was to be effective, it had to be combative. Babbitt's dissidence was itself a part of his response to the modern age. His one-sided treatment of Rousseau was justified, because the part of Rousseau that was influential in the political and social milieu of Babbitt's time was itself one-sided. If Babbitt emphasized ethical restraint it was because naturalism, both in its romantic and scientific form, preached excessive moral expansionism. If he argued forcefully for disciplined imagination and sober thinking, it was because sentimental humanitarianism was radically transforming the meaning of virtue into emotional pity and reflection into idyllic dreaming. Moreover, Babbitt was convinced that the only way to correct the modern delirium was by vigorous concentration on the central elements of life.

The fourth misconception of Babbitt's humanism was that it was abstract and that what it called the

higher will was a metaphysical concept and hence unscientific. Yet Babbitt was correct in asserting his humanism was 'modern'. By modern he meant the refusal to take things on authority and readiness to establish truth without the aid of dogma or outer authority. In place of doctrines, revelation, and creeds he appealed to human experience as the evidence for the existence of ethical and moral norms. In claiming that the 'constant element in life' is a 'matter of observation and experience', Babbitt hoped to restore the 'ethical values of civilization'. To many scientific naturalists Babbitt had gone too far once he began talking about ethical values and went beyond the physical natural law to the realm of the moral law. C. Hartly Grattan stated this reservation in his essay 'The New Humanism':

> Agreeing with the Humanists that it is impossible to accept values imposed by external authority or divine revelation, we must go a step beyond the Humanists and demand that the values to which allegiance is finally given, be arrived at according to the scientific method in cooperation with true esthetic appreciation . . . . if we are to have values which are to have any reasonable finality for living, they must be the product of the application of the scientific technic.[30]

For Grattan, only the scientific method can define value. Moreover, Babbitt's ethical positivism did not, in his view, meet the criterion of scientific method because

> Humanistic values are derived from past formulations, and particularly from formulations arrived at in a primitive society where the authors could not conceivably imagine many of the most vital and complex problems of modern living.

By 'primitive' Grattan meant scientifically primitive. Because Babbitt borrows from ancient and medieval authors such as Aristotle and Sophocles, his 'values' reflect their 'primitive' knowledge and scientific ignorance. Grattan concludes that,

> The humanist will. . .is a metaphysical concept not to be defined, measured, or described in terms that are acceptable to the scientific mind . . . . Its action is not causal but arbitrary. It is a figment of the imagination, without validity to any one with an elementary knowledge of modern scientific thought on the subject.[31]

Grattan, a scientific positivist, was at odds with Babbitt on first principles, namely what constitutes experience. He charged that the higher will is 'not causal' and its action is arbitrary. To assert that the action of the higher will is arbitrary is to claim that man has no control over his will. By defining the higher will as a veto power Babbitt was not only arguing that man controls his action (free will) but also that human action is not determined by causality. Grattan's positivism was very different from Babbitt's. For him, scientific method was the measure of whether something fits into 'a unitary system of natural processes' and thus is verifiable in experience. This was exactly the 'incompleteness' of modern positivism that Babbitt alluded to in the introduction to *Rousseau and Romanticism*. By reducing experience to that which is verified by physical natural laws, e.g., the system of 'natural processes' modern positivism neglects all experience that is nondeterministic, for example, human free will. Babbitt's reference to a higher will in man challenges the belief that experience can be reduced to deterministic categories. For all his efforts to put the truths of the inner life on experimental grounds, Babbitt faced the repeated criticism that the higher will was an abstract metaphysical concept, when in fact he claimed that it was a part of the 'immediate data of consciousness'.[32]

The fifth and final misconception of humanism is that it was hostile to traditional religion and that Babbitt believed that humanism could exist independently of religion. The major critics of Babbitt on this point were Allen Tate, T.S. Eliot, and G.K. Chesterton. Allen Tate criticized humanism because it 'is based upon science, which is naturism . . ' The problem with Babbitt was that he had 'not been philosophical enough'. By depending on the methods of science, Tate charged, Babbitt was himself a naturalist, and he concludes that 'Humanism is an attempt to do mechanically—that is, naturalistically—what should be done morally'.[33] This interpretation, which was echoed by Hoeveler, represents a profound confusion regarding Babbitt's position on religion and the experiential reality of the higher will.

> Babbitt, who believed he could best appropriate the Christian outline by demonstrating that Christianity simply gave a supernatural statement to the empirical truth of a positivistic Humanism, was working along the same lines as the romantics, who, dispensing with an overruling God, left only the soul and nature by which to work out the terms of the older Christian program.

In addition, Hoeveler believed that Babbitt's critics were justified in pointing to the 'precariousness' of Babbitt's 'reliance on an inner discipline and a personal authority that sought no support from external creeds or supernatural authority'.[34] Kenneth Frederick Stewart typifies this view of Babbitt when he writes, 'The missing element in his system is a concept of God'.[35] Babbitt's critics repeatedly chastised him for not taking the last step toward religion. Even his close friend Paul Elmer More had reservations concerning the ability of humanism to ground itself sufficiently in transcendent authority. In his article 'A Revival of Humanism' that appeared in the March 1930 *Bookman*, More wrote:

> Will not the humanist, unless he adds to his creed the faith and hope of religion, find himself at last, despite his protests, dragged back into the camp of the naturalist?[36]

The most extensive criticism of Babbitt on the subject of humanism and religion came from his former student T.S. Eliot. Eliot published two articles dealing specifically with the question of humanism and religion. The first, 'Religion Without Humanism' appeared in Norman Foerster's *Humanism and America* (1930), and the second was titled 'The Humanism of Irving Babbitt' which appeared in *The Forum* (1928). In both these essays Eliot centres his criticism of Babbitt on the contention that humanism is futile without religion. He does his former teacher an injustice by misstating Babbitt's position on humanism and religion. He wrongly attributed to Babbitt the view that 'humanism is the *alternative* to religion'. Babbitt's ethical positivism, while it refused to take things on outer authority, was nevertheless theistic. Yet, Eliot believed that Babbitt's methodology 'suppressed the divine'. In fact, he was convinced that Babbitt was trying to 'make humanism . . . work without religion' Eliot argued that:

> the humanistic point of view is auxiliary to and dependent upon the religious point of view. For us, religion is Christianity; and Christianity implies, I think, the conception of the church. . . .Professor Babbitt knows too much he knows too many religions and philosophies, has assimilated their spirit too thoroughly to be able to give himself to any. The result is humanism.[37]

Babbitt's humanism, Eliot charged, could not provide the emotional discipline lacking in the modern world. It could only be provided by institutional religion. Like Chesterton, he attributed to humanism characteristics Babbitt never intended it to have. Chesterton states, 'The question is whether Humanism can perform all the functions of religion'.[38] In his essay 'Humanism: An Essay At Definition' Babbitt responded to the charge that his humanism was incompatible with or an alternative to religion.

> It is a mistake to hold that humanism can take the place of religion. Religion indeed may more readily dispense with humanism than humanism with religion. Humanism gains greatly by having a religious background . . . whereas religion, for the man who has actually renounced the world, may very conceivably be all in all. On the other hand, the man who sets out to live religiously in the secular order without having recourse to the wisdom of the humanist is likely to fall into vicious confusion—notably, into a confusion between the things of God and the things of Caesar.[39]

In part, the confusion surrounding the debate over humanism and religion is due to the fact that Babbitt's message was addressed to the modern audience that refuses to accept the authority of revelation and dogma. His appeal to 'ethical positivism' was couched in terms that were apt to disturb persons oriented toward traditional religion. As is evident from the passage quoted above, Babbitt believed that humanism and religion were intimately bound up with one another.

The problem of humanism and religion highlights the awkward situation Babbitt faced. On the one hand, he was attacked for being a metaphysical philosopher who relied on traditional prejudices and therefore was untrue to the scientific method. On the other hand, critics like Eliot, Chesterton, and Tate accused him of being insufficiently theistic. In Tate's view, Babbitt was a naturalist. In responding to this variegated criticism Babbitt faced the dubious choice that if he compromised his position in one direction, he would infuriate the critics from the other direction. Babbitt stood firmly on the middle ground, not between religion on the one side and nihilism on the other, but between the 'doctrinization' of experience and the rejection of the complete range of experience.

5 Why Babbitt was misunderstood

It is clear from the evidence that Babbitt was to a degree both unfairly criticized and widely misunderstood. It remains to consider why his humanism was surrounded with confusion and vituperation. Passing references have been made in the previous section to reasons why Babbitt was so often misinterpreted. While other factors contributed to the misunderstanding of his humanism, four major influences are listed below.

1) The Social and Intellectual Environment

'The rise of the New Humanism' wrote David Hoeveler, 'takes place against the most profound revolution in American thought and this transformation must be considered the starting point for discussion of the subject'.[40] While he may overstate the case, Hoeveler is correct in pointing to the importance of discussing humanism in the context in which it developed. Positivism, romanticism, Marxism, and pragmatism were all on the rise in the early part of the twentieth century. They significantly affected the intellectual, political, and social ethos of America. In Babbitt's view, naturalism in both its romantic and scientific forms, rejected traditional standards provided by revelation and dogma, and replaced them with humanitarian sentiment. The arguments that ensued were therefore over first principles. Most striking was the contrast between the ethical restraint of humanism and the emotional expansiveness of humanitarianism. In condemning much of naturalism as pseudo-religious Babbitt was calling into question the fundamental framework of modern thought and sensibility. The differences between humanism and humanitarianism were so great that they represented two irreconcilable views of human nature. Thus, the exchange between Babbitt and his critics was not inconsequential. On the outcome of the issues in question depended the political, social, and spiritual order of America. In that sense Babbitt was a 'dissident critic;' he not only disagreed with the intellectual and social status quo of his age but he

was combative in his criticism of it.

2) The Ideological Component

The intellectual and social climate Babbitt confronted was not merely hostile toward his humanism, but it was to a large degree 'closed' to rational debate. Voegelin has argued that Questions of social order can be discussed rationally only if the whole concept of the order of human existence, of which the social order forms a part, is viewed in its entirety and right back to its transcendental origins.[41]

For C. Hartly Grattan only that which can be verified by the scientific method is considered real and therefore on logical grounds open to debate. Although Babbitt professed himself an 'ethical positivist' it is clear that his positivism differed significantly from Grattan's. In fact, in the usual sense of the word, Babbitt was not a positivist at all. For as John H. Hallowell explained,

> The positivist tends to regard all value judgments as expressions simply of subjective individual preference. He denies that value judgments refer to any objective reality, because he cannot scientifically demonstrate the existence of anything like a moral order. . . .And for the transcendent order potentially embodied in reason and conscience, the positivist liberal substituted the conception of an immanent order of nature.[42]

Babbitt's humanism clearly does not meet the modern criterion of positivism, for it recognised the transcendent basis of moral order. Grattan, however, demonstrated just how divergent Babbitt and his critics were. His refusal to accept the experiential reality of the higher will was due to what he characterized as Babbitt's failure to follow the scientific technique.

Frequent polemical references to Babbitt as a Puritan or reactionary further marks the intellectual milieu in which he lived. While his New Humanism was taken seriously enough by many intellectuals to warrant comment, the criticisms often were lacking in substance. This can be attributed in part to the fact that many scholars, and especially literary critics, were so intoxicated with 'open-mindedness' that they were closed to the restoration of judgmental criticism represented by Babbitt's humanism.

3) The Terminological and Substantive Deficiency of Babbitt

Not all the blame for the confusion surrounding the debate over humanism can be attributed to Babbitt's critics. His terminology and methodology contributed to misunderstanding. Babbitt was not a positivist, if by positivism is meant the rejection of transcendent reality. Nor was Babbitt 'modern' or 'experimental' nor did he base his arguments on 'psychological facts'. Although he used this language, it did not adequately articulate the experiential reality he wished to convey. The reader is often confused by his terms because they imply in their modern context and by their semantic origins something radically different than what he intended. For example, he defines 'psychological evidence' to mean 'evidence of the same kind as is supplied by numerous passages of the New Testament, passages that give one the immediate sense of being in the presence of a great religious teacher'.[43] No doubt the New Testament provides a wealth of historical experience that conveys an immediate sense of the engendering experience that was the impetus for its symbolic expression. Yet, 'psychological fact' in the modern context implies, as does positivism, closure to transcendent reality. Confusion is therefore evident between the experiential reality, which he correctly perceived, and the symbolic articulation of the experience, which Babbitt did not adequately communicate. The immanentist connotation of his terminology results in a misinterpretation of his philosophy. Hoeveler, for example, interprets the phrase 'the immediate data of consciousness' to mean that Babbitt 'would suspend all appeal to the transcendental and supernatural'.[44] Yet, he does not suspend all appeal to the transcendent. While Babbitt aims to affirm the higher will on an experimental basis, he does not mean that the higher will is an object of immanent reality or that it is not divinely guided. The higher will, rather, is the point of contact between human and divine; it marks the 'inbetweenness' of human existence, what Plato called the 'metaxy' In the words of James Luther Adams, 'It may be confidently asserted that Professor Babbitt believes in the real presence of something which is in human nature and transcends human nature'.[45] Although his terminology may imply differently, Babbitt was neither a positivist nor an experimentalist in the ordinary meaning of those terms. His humanism presupposes an openness to transcendent reality.

4) The Critical Dissent of Irving Babbitt

Babbitt's critical method caused a degree of confusion. The justification for it was the need for a criticism of sound judgment that could correct the overemphasis on sympathy in modern literary criticism. By 'judgment' Babbitt did not mean didacticism as his critics charged but adherence to ethical standards. Tradition was, for him, a check on the tendency to forego standards for the sake of originality and creativity. Excellent in their appropriate place, originality and creativity were not ends in themselves. To those who attempted to divorce ethics from art and literature Babbitt's criticism was unacceptable. For them art was just as valuable when it was playful as when it conveyed an enduring principle.

The dissent of Babbitt's criticism was more than a disagreement over what constituted good literature or art. His dissent went beyond the bounds of comparative literature and into political, social, and spiritual matters. He was reacting against the disorder of the age, and his judgment was both negative and positive. On the negative side he was critical of the modern disregard for ethical standards and spiritual indolence. He refused to compromise his position, for he believed the most urgent need of sound

criticism was the restoration of standards. On the positive side he attempted to conserve tradition and restore the ethical centre to literature. Like Burke, he believed that man is dependent on the wisdom of past generations. In admiration of Burke he wrote: 'He saw how much of the wisdom of life consists in an imaginative assumption of the experience of the past in such fashion as to bring it to bear as living force upon the present'.[46]

6 The relevance of Irving Babbitt

Recent debates about the ethical dimension of politics have much in common with the debate over New Humanism. Both indicate significant resistance in Western culture to the idea that politics should be ethically grounded in self-restraint. New efforts to re-establish the ethical dimension of politics are apt to be more successful if the experience of Babbitt's New Humanism is carefully studied. Babbitt's ideas address age-old questions about the nature of politics and about human nature. Yet there is a refreshing element of creativity in Babbitt's work. His emphasis on imagination, for example, provides a perspective of life that is modern/post-modern but he uses the insights of modernity to reconstitute the insights of classical and Christian thinkers.

Babbitt's humanism provides a contrast to contemporary views of politics and society that tend to shift the setting for ethical work from the soul to policy making institutions. It is increasingly common that morality ceases to be a matter of personal self-discipline and ordering passions in the soul. The new morality measures goodness in social statistics. Justice becomes a matter of social equality and promoting public policies that uplift the underprivileged. In some instances holding the right policy positions is the measure of morality regardless of personal behaviour There is, no doubt, an element of truth in this idea. Unfortunately it tends to be overstated, exaggerated and a thinly veiled effort to protect political power and influence. The humanism of Irving Babbitt provides insights that help clarify the relationship between moral standards and politics.

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Notes:

1. For the distinction between constitutional democracy and Rousseaustic democracy see Claes G. Ryn, Democracy and the Ethical Life (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1990).
2. George A. Panichas, 'Babbitt and Religion' in Irving Babbitt in Our Time, ed. George A. Panichas and Claes G. Ryn (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1986), 27-49.
3. The Intercollegiate Studies Institute has recently republished Robert M. Cruden's, *The Superfluous Men* (Wilmington, Delaware: ISI Books, 1999) that includes two selections by Babbitt. See also new editions of Babbitt's *Rousseau and Romanticism* (London: Transaction Publishers, 1991; and *Character and Culture: Essays on East and West* (London: Transaction Publishers, 1995).
4. Babbitt, *Character and Culture*, 240.
5. Babbitt, *Democracy and Leadership* (Indianapolis: Liberty Classics, 1979), 99.
6. Babbitt, *Literature and the American College* (Washington, D.C.: National Humanities Institute, 1986), 97.
7. Rousseau, *Reveries of the Solitary Walker* (New York: Penguin Books, 1979), 134, 103.
8. Babbitt, *Rousseau and Romanticism* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1977), 5-9.
9. Babbitt, *Democracy and Leadership*, 27-28.
10. Babbitt, *Rousseau and Romanticism*, 279-280.
11. Ibid., 165-167.
12. C. Hartly Grattan, ed., *The Critique of Humanism* (New York: Brewer and Warren, 1930), 46.
13. Ryn, 'The Humanism of Irving Babbitt Revisited' *Modern Age* (Summer 1977): 253.
14. Rousseau, *Correspondence Gènèrale*, XVII, 2-3. Translated in Ernst Cassirer, *The Question of Jean-Jacques Rousseau* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1963), 127.
15. Lewis Mumford, 'Toward an Organic Humanism' in *The Critique of Humanism*, ed. C. Hartly Grattan (New York: Brewer and Warren, 1930), 351.
16. Herbert Read, review of *Democracy and Leadership*, by Irving Babbitt, in *The Criterion*, October 1924, p. 133.
17. Babbitt, *Democracy and Leadership*, 254. See also p. 226: 'No small issues are involved in the question whether one should start with an expansive eagerness to do something for humanity or with loyalty to one's self. There may be something after all in the Confucian idea that if a man only sets himself right, the rightness will extend to his family first of all, and finally in widening circles to the whole community'
18. Henry Hazlitt, 'Humanism and Value' in *The Critique of Humanism*, 98.
19. Ryn, *Democracy and the Ethical Life*, 39.
20. Paul Elmer More, *The Drift of Romanticism*, *The Shelburne Essays*, no. 8 (New York: Phaeton Press, 1967), 247-248.
21. Austin Warren, 'A Portrait of Irving Babbitt' *The Commonweal* XXIV (26 June 1936), 236.
22. Babbitt, 'Buddha and the Occident' in *The Dhammapada*, trans. With an essay. (New York: New Directions Paperbook, 1965), 88.
23. Edmund Wilson, 'Notes on Babbitt and More' in *The Critique of*

Humanism, 49.
24. J. David Hoeveler , Jr., *New Humanism* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1977), 105-106.
25. Babbitt, *Rousseau and Romanticism*, 10.
26. Babbitt, 'On Being Creative' *The Bookman* LXXIII (April 1931), 113-114.
27. Ibid., 120-121.
28. Kenneth Frederick Stewart, 'The Humanism of Irving Babbitt' *The Intercollegiate Review* 3 (March/April 1967), 168.
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33. Allen Tate, 'The Fallacy of Humanism' in *The Critique of Humanism*, 137-160.
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39. Babbitt, 'Humanism: An Essay at Definition' in *Humanism and America* ed. Norman Foerster (New York: Farrar and Reinehart, 1930), 43-44. See also *Rousseau and Romanticism*, 287: 'The honest thinker, whatever his own preference, must begin by admitting that though religion can get along without humanism, humanism cannot get along without religion'
40. Hoeveler , *New Humanism*, 27, 41. Eric Voegelin, 'On Readiness to Rational Discussion'?? in *Freedom and Serfdom*, ed. Albert Hunold (Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1961), 278.
42. John H. Hallowell, *The Moral Foundation of Democracy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973), 76-77.
43. Babbitt, 'Buddha and the Occident' 69-70.44. Hoeveler ,*New Humanism*, 154.
45. James Luther Adams, review of *On Being Creative* by Irving Babbitt, in *Hound and Horn*, October-December 1932, 192.
46. Babbitt, *Democracy and Leadership*, 127-128.

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Creative or Original? Babbitt and the Temporal World

Randall E. Auxier

1 A bit of a confession

I propose to examine the question of whether Irving Babbitt's form of humanism can be reconciled with present day sensibilities about the place of temporality in human experience, and the effects of evolution and history on human nature. I will require a few paragraphs to explain what I mean by this, and why it is an important question to consider, but I should confess to the reader right away that this is an essay in metaphysics. Almost nothing has been written in the way of investigating Babbitt's metaphysics, and for very good reason. Not only is this sort of speculation contrary to Babbitt's sensibilities and training, but there is little in his writings to give one clear guidance as to what metaphysical ideas he favoured. Claes Ryn has done much to bring into a more systematic order the characteristic epistemological doctrines of Babbitt, and has extended and elaborated those doctrines at length.[1] Where Ryn needed metaphysical grounding to complement Babbitt's epistemology, he went, not to Babbitt, but to the thought of Bendetto Croce to fill out his account. Yet Ryn admits this pairing of Babbitt's epistemology with Croce's dialectical, idealistic metaphysics is not always a comfortable fit, and he mainly effects the synthesis to pursue important present-day aims quite beyond the interpretation of Babbitt. Hence, Ryn is wisely diffident of claiming that his doctrine follows Babbitt. And indeed, any effort to systematize the thought of a humanist ought always to be met with suspicion. But unsystematic epistemology and metaphysics ought to be met with still more. I admit it is fair to question whether one ought to seek in Babbitt's thought a metaphysics, but once one has decided there are good reasons to seek it, one ought at least to be rigorous rather than random in setting it out. If I subjugate living humanism to a dangerously Baconian impulse in what follows, may I at least state my awareness of the dangers, and apologize in advance if I cannot persuade the reader that there are pressing reasons to attempt this. Let me begin, then by offering an account of these reasons.

2 Lunch with Royce

I would like first to engage the reader's historical imagination, for perhaps here there may be found a measure of humane warrant for the approach I will take in this investigation. This point aims to quell the irritated sensibilities of those who think metaphysics barbarous to the core. Josiah Royce, the great idealist and perhaps the most rigorously systematic philosopher in America's history, was Babbitt's neighbour and colleague. Royce's thought happens to be an area in which I have done some extensive research, and the type of metaphysical perspective I take up here is inspired in no small measure by Royce's logic of relations and his philosophy of time. If it helps the reader find sympathy, then, please imagine this as Royce's response to Babbitt over lunch, just after having read Babbitt's essays on originality and creativity. It is a summer afternoon on a perfect day, just Babbitt, Royce, and an excellent red wine, and they are well into their second bottle, as the conversation takes a definite metaphysical turn. You are privy to the conversation from a nearby table, but you are pretending to read the newspaper. Perhaps you may find an opportunity to join the conversation later. With this scenario in mind, I hope my results may contribute something to the on-going discussion of Babbitt, and perhaps deepen that discussion without barbarizing it. The metaphysical views that follow are my own, not Royce's, but recognising that nothing of the sort can be wholly original or wholly possessed, they are consistent with what Royce might have said.

3 Stories of Origins: A Milestone in Philosophical Consciousness

Moving to other reasons why we should believe that Babbitt's metaphysics ought to be brought forward, I have defended elsewhere[2] the idea that a fundamental shift in human thinking, and in the development of human consciousness itself, began making itself manifest in the 18th century–precisely at the time Rousseau was creating the legacy Babbitt so regretted. The full articulation of the dawning shift in the form of human consciousness culminated in the early 19th century with the appearance, among the upper crust intellectuals of Germany, of modern historical consciousness–leading eventually to the increasingly widespread recognition among ordinary people that patterns may be discerned in history and that these patterns create an inertia and context in the present. Increasingly, human self-understanding has fitted itself to the form of historical consciousness that broke into the public awareness with the work of Herder, the later writings of Kant, and those of Hegel, and Schelling. In the middle part of the 19th century, unprecedented popularity and controversy was given to the idea that processes of development and growth, the scientific investigation of which takes a narrative form, were the most fundamental questions one could ask. Charles Lyells *Principles of Geology* (1830-33) substituted a developmental account of earth's history for the static accounts that had been believed for thousands of years, while Alexander von Humboldt literally invented the science of natural history, and Darwin applied the narrative idea of natural history to the story of the formerly 'eternal species.' These ideas

were not new. What was new was that they were being taken seriously as true accounts of the phenomena. For example, the idea of biological evolution had been around at least since the 6th century BC, when Anaximander suggested it. Empedocles developed biological evolution further, and it appeared from time to time throughout Western history,[3] but the *import* of the idea was not recognised until human consciousness became historical.

Where formerly, since Aristotle, scientific and most other inquiries had sought what was eternal and unchanging in things—their essence, their principle, their logos—gradually over the past two to three hundred years we have sought instead their origins and their stories, the true narrative of how things came to be the way they are. Certainly the narrative form of explanation has always been a fundamental aspect of human consciousness, and we need look no further than the most ancient 'explanations' of things that survive today, since mythic form is narrative, without exception. But the modern consciousness of humanity is not only narrative, it is *historical*. Historical consciousness has the effect of re-mythologizing human understanding, with the difference that historical narrative follows both an imaginative and a conceptual logic, where mythic consciousness had followed a predominantly imaginative logic in which reason was either nascent, suppressed, or wholly absent. This is a point that was clear to philosophers of history from Vico to Cassirer, but as the re-mythologizing has progressed into the present, somehow this insight has been largely forgotten. Historical consciousness itself is no recent novelty, of course, since it is clear that Herodotus and Thucydides already possessed a highly developed awareness of the difference between the more general mythic form of narration and the more specific form of the 'historical account.' The issue is not whether historical consciousness was somehow a completely new phenomenon, but rather what functional role it was playing in the quest for truth in the minds of those who lived and live. I submit that today historical consciousness, of a sort I will further elaborate, has replaced almost entirely the appeal to first principles, to eternal, universal truths, as the *dominant* form of human consciousness.

4 Friends of the Eternal Forms

Some people, such as Straussians and other fundamentalists, lament this shift towards historicized consciousness.[4] They are inclined to think of it as a betrayal of Truth, or the Form of the Good, or, in political circles as a 'slouching towards Gomorrah,' of an embracing of nihilism. Let them whine all they like, it does not change the situation. I wish neither to praise nor bury historicism, but wish only at this point to describe it. A major shift in the form of conscious human appropriation of truth is worthy of note. If truth was in former days, the 'saying of the eternal logos,' but it is now a story like Stephen Weinberg tells about 'the first three seconds,' then something worth considering has occurred.

I think, and would like the reader to agree erewhile, that while the Straussians, the Thomists, the religious fundamentalists, and Robert Maynard Hutchins' frightening mid-century collection of reactionaries, all allowed the rise of this new form of consciousness to turn them into so many nostalgic dogmatists, American humanism, exemplified in the thought of Irving Babbitt, fared far better. While the remaining adherents of the former list now belong in a museum, the American humanists live in their own time, having been neither swept blindly into this new form of consciousness, nor made into relics in reaction to it. In large part the measured and wise response in American humanism to the rise of historical consciousness has Irving Babbitt to thank, at least if I am correct in what I will argue.

5 How to be pre-postmodern and post-premodern

Time, evolution and history

Let me first lay out in a sketch the metaphysical basis for the argument I will present. This view is worked out in greater detail elsewhere, but only the basics are needed for my account here, and so a moment's flight into rarified air will, I hope, be tolerated (oxygen masks will automatically drop if there is a sudden change in cabin pressure, and be sure to put your own on first before assisting your students).

Relative Time

Historical consciousness is one kind of temporal consciousness. The full field of temporality, taking in *time*, *evolution* and *history*, is, in my view, a threefold phenomenon. I use these three terms in very specific senses. One may characterize *time* as the brute existence of processes in infinite relation to one another. In 'time,' so considered, there are the temporal *aspects* of past, present and future, but there is no single, universally necessary arrangement of past present and future. Rather, there are infinitely many possible arrangements, each constituting a *frame of reference*. The *common* frame of reference, of course, is the one that defines the past by the Big Bang event, the future, a little less clearly, in terms of an infinite expansion (or perhaps a final re-collapse) of the universe, and the present, still less clearly, as the simultaneity of a (perhaps infinite) collection of internally related events we call 'space.' But one could, with little difficulty, offer alternative frames of reference, defining past, present and future on the basis of other events or relations of events, and these frames need not observe the common frame of reference at all. I can, if I wish, define past in terms of a spacetime event that has not even occurred yet in the common frame of reference, or an event that will never occur in the common frame (i.e., a merely *possible* event), and I can do the same for the present and the futural aspects of time. So long as

I have specified the possible events upon which I wish to build my frame, and I have all three aspects of time so specified, I have the minimum conditions for a frame of reference. The relations that may then be described on the basis of that frame of reference may be more or less useful or interesting, but the point is that the necessary conditions for orderly relations exist in every properly defined frame of reference. 'Time,' in this strict sense, is neither symmetrical nor asymmetrical; there is no 'time's arrow' here. Rather, time is *relative*, i.e., constituted by a totality of possible relations that mutually imply one another for the purposes of any particular description. Here we have the minimum conditions both for metaphysical order and for coherent description, and here metaphysics and epistemology touch without limiting one another, and without necessitating one another. Relative time is susceptible to descriptions of a narrative form, but it is also open to infinitely many other forms of description, such as those that posit a single eternal order (*prescriptive* metaphysics). However, there is no *a priori* reason to privilege any one description over any other on the basis of the nature of time itself. If one chooses to identify relative time with the common frame of reference, as the eternalists all do, one has conflated time with *evolution* (see below), and narrowed one's field of understanding and truth in a way that is not necessitated by the fundamental conditions for order and description, nor by character of time itself. There are many *a posteriori* reasons to privilege the common frame of reference, but these reasons derive from the relations that obtain between time, evolution and history. But *a priori*, in relative time, all possible events stand on an equal footing.

Asymmetrical Evolution

Evolution, the second level in the field of temporality, taken in its cosmic sense (not its biological) sense, is the asymmetrical unfolding of spacetime events in relation to the common frame of reference. Speaking 'evolutionarily,' we should say that once an event has occurred, has become *actual*, it *always will have* occurred, rendering all contrary events 'mere possibilities' from the standpoint of the common frame of reference. From the standpoint of evolution, then, events that have occurred stand in an *external relation* to all subsequent events—meaning that subsequent events would not be precisely as they are had the previous events been otherwise, but the previous events remain what they are without regard to the subsequent events. 'Time's arrow' is here, but misnamed. 'Evolution' in this sense does not imply progress, only asymmetrically ordered change. Evolution alone might never produce anything that was in any way 'better' than what came before. It is linear, but not necessarily progressive. In order to say that there is progress in evolution, we must bring in history, for history is the ground of all evaluative judgments. But it is clear that evolution is a condition for metaphysical descriptions of the common frame of reference. Evolution is not, however, a condition for metaphysical descriptions of time, strictly conceived, except in the tangential sense that all descriptions of which we have experience occur in a historical language (whether natural or formal) that must have itself evolved. If I am correct, even God's language would be subject to evolution and history, as God experiences them, because the total field of temporality is irreducibly tripartite. There really is no temporality that lacks all three levels, time, evolution, and history. I cannot claim there is no *being* that is non-temporal, since all my knowledge claims presuppose temporality, but I can say with confidence that whatever non-temporal existence there may be, it will submit to the conditions of temporality if we choose to describe it, and as a result, no one can even say with precision what 'non-temporal being' even *means*. Hence, for human experience, and divine experience insofar as it can be described, and everything in between (if there is anything in between), being is temporal.

Syncretic History

Finally, then, at the third level in the field of temporality, one finds *history*, which, like evolution, is also asymmetrical due to its dependence upon both the common frame of reference and evolutionary order, but 'history' is not reducible to these other two levels. History is characterized by its *syncretism*, by which I mean two things. First, I mean that history, through a transcendence of mere asymmetrically ordered change, has *meaning*, while evolution and time, taken apart from history, have none. I cannot offer an adequate account of this 'transcendence' here, but this idea is akin to Hegel's concept of *Geist*. It is not, however, the same idea. *Geist* takes in and attempts to unify all three levels, making history the agent of the becoming of the Absolute. It is more accurate to say that history is *an* agent of the self-surpassingness of the divine, the agent through which that self-transcendence has a meaning. Hegel misses something quite crucial to the nature of history in trying to assert its unity with and predominance over time and the principle of growth and development (or evolution). The crucial thing he overlooks is that not all historical meaning is preserved in the unfolding of the cosmos. Clearly I am not limiting the sense of the word 'history' to human history. I include also natural history, and any other interpretation of the field of temporality that depends upon *meaning*. We do not know that human beings are the only historical beings. God might have a history also, or there may be races on distant planets that interpret the meaning of the temporal field, and certainly animal life is not insensitive to the presence of meaning in the temporal field. A mistreated dog takes account in her cowering under the bed of the last kick she received at the hands of her abusive master, conscious of (at some level) the fact that what has happened before may happen again. This involves judgment, however rudimentary, about the meaning of the temporal field, and

hence is historical. However, unlike evolution, where each event makes its permanent contribution to the fabric of the common frame of reference and remains externally related to all subsequent events, history has a freer form of temporal existence. While historical meaning can be genuinely lost –infinitely many meaningful events have occurred the meaning of which no interpreter (with the possible exception of God) will ever know. Some of these meanings are unrecoverable in principle to finite consciousness. But novel historical meaning can be *created*. Through the historical transcendence of the common frame of reference and the evolutionary process, historical consciousness can compare and discover novel relations without restriction, and describe them meaningfully. Not all relations will be deemed valuable (for example, I can think of no pressing reason to ponder the meaning of the relation of my last haircut to the Battle of Waterloo), but some will be adjudged indispensable to self-understanding and the growth of consciousness itself (say, the relationship between the 1918 Treaty of Versailles and the Second World War). So history is syncretic in that it both creates and destroys meanings, but accumulates them in patterns that depend upon but do not simply imitate the relationship between evolution and the common frame of reference.

A Temporal Trinity

Much more can be said, and needs to be said, about the implications of this view of the temporal field, but it cannot be said here. By way of leading the reader towards some fruitful thoughts, I should remark that my view here view takes its point of departure from the categories of Charles Sanders Peirce: Firstness (time on my account), Secondness (evolution on my account) and Thirdness (history on my account), although it reinterprets the exact role and function of those categories. This view is also sensitive to contemporary physics, and can even be reconciled, I believe, with the central insights in the doctrine of the Trinity in Christianity. Hence, I aim to preserve what is true in the eternalist account without betraying what is true in contemporary science. All that, however, is a very long story.

6 Metaphysical historicism

For reasons not easy to understand, the temporal mode of appropriating and explaining human experience has gradually replaced the former, eternalist or atemporal mode over the past three centuries. As a result, what counts as 'knowledge' has shifted from an account of first principles to a kind of historical account. We have become not merely more aware of the role of history in forming our present self-concept, rather, we have become metaphysical historicists. We are persons who cannot well bring ourselves to accept any non-historical account of things as truth. This point is the crucial one for the interpretation of Babbitt I would like to offer. I claim that Babbitt cautiously embraced historical consciousness and its mode of explanation without denying that the former dominant mode of consciousness had a truth of its own, a truth well worth our effort to contemplate. Thus, Babbitt was a temporalist, if I am correct, and in that sense an evolutionist and a historicist, but not a strictly Darwinian evolutionist (which would have given him over to the Baconian extreme), nor a Rortyan historicist (which would have given him over to the Rousseauian extreme). The attempt to make evolution do the work of time just is Baconianism, and the attempt to make history do the work of time and evolution just is Rousseauism. Both commit themselves overly to the primacy or originality and creativity, replacing entirely the idea of the universal with the cult of novelty. But a temporalist can acknowledge the importance of originality and creativity without making a cult of it. The sensible humanist is not susceptible to fads and overstatement, but sees the reasons why they exist, and why the weak-minded are prone to take what is good in these ideas to extremes.

Another reason this claim of metaphysical historicism matters is that it clearly distinguishes Babbitt and subsequent American humanism from the museum pieces being offered by those who still cling to the idea that the old eternalist mode of consciousness has a privileged and exclusive claim to The Truth. A genuine humanist cannot afford to live either in a nostalgic conception of the past or a utopian conception of the future. A humanist must, among other things, live deeply in his or her present. A humanist cannot forsake or ignore a major shift in the human conception of truth, but must confront it as a human being, wrestle with it until all human strength is exhausted, and pass the struggle on to the next generation. The humanist must be both fallible and heroic, seeing in the individual struggle to live well, something enduring (if not necessarily permanent) about humanity itself. Thus, if Babbitt lived in a time when the very ground of truth was shifting, he had to confront the shift and see what was living and what was dead in the present meaning of the past, and read its augury for the future. I aim presently to make the case that Babbitt did precisely this.

7 Metaphysical Questions

No topic that Babbitt addressed at any length touches more intimately upon the fundamental character of temporality than his essays concerning originality and creativity. It is here that he asks whether origins are good or bad, whether creativity and novelty are good or bad, and as one might predict, his method of investigation is historical and descriptive, embodying well one of the three levels of temporality sketched above. Here I would like to take as exemplars two well-known essays, and show how they point to a sort of humanism that is consistent with the metaphysical presuppositions of our current age, as sketched above. The essays are 'On Being Original' from *The Atlantic Monthly* (1906), and 'On Being Crea-

tive' from *The Bookman* (1931).[5] We must ask whether Babbitt's use of historical method follows our account of history above. Where shall we see its syncretism? What of its dependence upon and relation to the asymmetry of evolution and the common frame of reference? Is Babbitt's use and view of history one that requires both situatedness and transcendence in order to generate meaning? Is meaning sometimes lost in history? And most importantly, does human nature 'evolve'? What would it mean to be a humanist who embraces the idea that there is no fixed or permanent human nature? Is it enough to embrace enduring patterns in human nature? When we have answered these questions, we shall have a central piece of Babbitt's metaphysics, and its relation to his epistemology. Therefore, in some ways I aim to complement the work Ryn has already done on Babbitt's epistemology by backing it up with a plausible metaphysics. I do not do this to rescue Babbitt from philosophical obscurity, but because Babbitt still has much to teach the children of the present. The children of the present, however, can no more bring themselves to 'believe' an eternalist than they can bring themselves to believe in polytheism. Both are dead options for modern historical consciousness. Babbitt can only be believable to the present generation if he meant something other than 'eternal' when he spoke of finding what was 'universal' in human nature.

8 Originality in Neoclassicism

Beginning with the essay on originality, we first recognise that Babbitt criticizes both the Romantic enthusiasm for the infinite worth of originality, and the Neoclassical condemnation of it as worthless. Babbitt will accept neither extreme, and seeks to make out the genuine place of originality in humane life. Let us take a moment with Neoclassicism before moving to the more important account of Romanticism.

Neoclassicism, in its fanatical devotion to convention, may seem historical at first glance, but Babbitt reads it otherwise. It substitutes dead formalism (read 'eternalism') for the more appropriate *living* appreciation of the past. The accomplishments of the ancients are to be appreciated, even revered, but not worshipped for Babbitt. Where taste and judgment fall into mere formalism, they become anti-humanistic and, more importantly for our purposes, unhistorical. That is, the Neoclassical fanatic fails to understand that he denies the importance, vitality and worth of his own age by idealizing the past. The living human being becomes less, *a priori*, than the dead ones (who are not so much dead as they are *immortal*, i.e., removed from the field of temporality altogether). Living human beings, no matter how piously they may regard the past, are not permitted to originate forms of expression. Therefore certain epochs of human history become an eternal Now in which all significant things have already happened, and the Neoclassicist becomes a narrow and unwitting eternalist. Not only does this pernicious eternalism murder the humanity of the present and the future, it, somewhat surprisingly, also murders the past. The fanatical Neoclassicist fails to recognise that his own view of things could not easily have been *true* during the privileged epochs in which the ancient forms (apparently) originated. He certainly would have been obliged, had he lived and held his view in ancient times, to reject the originality of Plato and Aristotle as surely as he rejects the originality of Beethoven. So either the Neolclassical view of the universal worth of conventional forms was *not always* true (and is hence an 'original' doctrine in the very sense he condemns), or it was *always* true and historical personages were not *really* the originators of conventional forms. Since the first option must be rejected out of hand, the second must be defended by the Neoclassicist. It may be claimed, for example, that the true forms of human expression were delivered from the heavens themselves, where they had been waiting with the gods for the right moment to be delivered as a dispensation to the pious Greeks, evermore to be imitated by succeeding human beings. But even in this whimsical account of 'origins' there is a fatal flaw, since it seems to suggest the possibility of new and later dispensations by the gods to later epochs. The only way to head off that possibility is to argue (or believe unconsciously) that later people are not sufficiently deserving or pious to be favoured in this way, or that the gods are dead. Rejecting the latter, the Neoclassicist becomes committed to a view that takes the Greeks out of history and places them in a kind of Neverland out of the reach of all time, evolution and history. He thereby denies any genuine historical connection between the Greeks, their forms, and the people of the present and future whom he holds under the obligation to imitate those forms. For the sake of denying the worth of originality, then, the Neoclassicist undermines with metaphysics his own theory of valuation, for he must argue at some level that there is a connection between his own time and the Greeks, for otherwise, there is no reason for people of his own time to imitate the Greeks rather than innovate, or call upon the gods and muses for new forms of expression.

To this monstrosity, Babbitt opposes his notion of seeking what is universal in human experience, but without hypostatizing the universality. He reminds us that Mnemosyne, memory, is the mother of the Muses (OBO 244-245), and that among those Muses, Clio is not to be despised. We shall take this up further when we have said a word about Romanticism.

9 Originality in Romanticism

The trouble with the Romantic idealization of originality is that it fails to cultivate the universal at all, even inconsistently (as with Neoclassicism), and therefore eventually loses the ability to distinguish what is 'original' (in the valuable sense) from what is simply freakish or odd. This inability to distinguish what is weird from what is original arises from an ab-

sence of common standards. Here even the admirable Emerson is held under considerable suspicion for his view of originality, due to the 'unbounded deference with which it fills him for the untrained individual' (OBO, 225). One suspects that Babbitt has in mind here especially Emerson's essay on 'Self-reliance.' But one can hardly charge Emerson with a generalised failure to appreciate what is universal in human nature, as Babbitt knows. When it comes to the point of stating what, at bottom, is wrong with the Romantic idealization of originality, Babbitt makes a surprising (and for our purposes quite telling) case that Romanticism's crippling weakness is not that it sets out to destroy the eternal forms, but rather that it fails to appreciate history.

Romanticism encourages each person to live 'as if none had lived before him' (OBO 223).

> The man who breaks with the past in this way will think he is original when he is in reality merely ignorant and presumptuous. He is apt to imagine himself about a century ahead of his age when he is at least four or five centuries behind it (OBO 230-231).

In this regard we may begin to understand why Babbitt gives us a somewhat surprising moment. The moment confronts us when Babbitt approvingly cites Nietzsche, not for his later contempt of Romanticism, but from what is generally regarded as Nietzsche's most Romantic work, *The Birth of Tragedy*. Here Babbitt recognises Nietzsche's distinction between the Apollonian and the Dionysian urges as valuable (OBC 10-11). While some critics of the present are likely to blame Nietzsche for having pressed the cult of genius to an all-time solipsistic high-water mark, Babbitt recognises in Nietzsche a man who, above all, was not ignorant of the past. It was Nietzsche's historical sense that turned him against nihilism, formalism, and Romanticism, and while one cannot call him a humanist, one is obliged to recognise that he avoids the standard traps.

The unhistorical character of Romanticism leads it into a bad metaphysics, one in which the individual, unhistorical self is thought to create its own reality. The individual self, then, becomes a metaphysical atom from which all worth and value is created. That may sound, initially, like an extremely pure form of humanism, and indeed, Babbitt sees the seeds of this metaphysical atomism in the late Renaissance, wherefrom modern humanism also arose. But there is a fundamental flaw in the social atomism of the Romantic view of the all-creating self. It derives from Aristotle's insight that to live alone is to be a beast or a god.[6] The Romantic viewpoint produced many beasts, a few gods, but no human beings. Whatever a community may be, for them, it can never be more than the all-encompassing consent of so many uncreated social atoms. But this is precisely the reverse of the case, considered historically. Historically speaking, it is far more accurate to say that whatever an individual may be, including her originality and creativity, it is possible only upon the basis of an historical community. The paradox at the bottom of Romanticism is that the individual must be an uncreated creator. For the Romantic to admit that his own creativity and originality come from some prior source (in time, evolution or history) is to undermine the authority he alleges for his own creations, for it introduces an external standard by which those creations may be judged (e.g., is this particular creation more or less like its source?). But for the Romantic, every creation and every form of expression must be *sui generis*, valuable because it is different from all else, because no standard above its own being can be applied to it. Hence, the Romantic also becomes an unwitting eternalist, but perhaps even worse off than the Neoclassicist. At least the Neoclassicist asserts a more or less unitary eternity that holds together, somehow. The Romantic has infinitely many eternities, all entirely sufficient unto themselves with no binding relations. The former gives rise to an oppressive community, but the latter can be the basis for no community at all.

In Babbitt's words, then,

> Both extremes fail equally of being humane. For, to revert to our fundamental principle, the humanist must combine opposite extremes and occupy all the space between them' (OBO 232-233).

The allusion to a Heraclitean view of the union of opposites should be noted, since Heraclitus is the patron saint of temporal philosophy. And it is not enough to have spoken of the extremes, as we now have, trying to save what is true in them, without speaking of 'all the space between them.' What, then, is Babbitt's account of the space between them? What is his own view of originality and creativity? We move now to this question.

10 The Space Between the Opposites

Unsurprisingly, creativity and originality for Babbitt are precisely a union of opposites. He says:

> Genuine originality is so immensely difficult because it imposes the task of achieving work that is of general human truth and at the same time intensely individual. Perhaps the best examples of this union of qualities are found in Greek. The original man for the Greek was the one who could create in the very act of imitating the past. (OBO 233)

Placed in overtly temporal terms, originality of a valuable sort is uncommon, even rare, and difficult, for it must answer equally to the past and the present, and only by doing both does it transcend past and present and reach towards the future. The past is arduous to master, and here lies one side of the challenge, but the present, while not difficult to master, is quite resistant to the effort to create enduring value. The form of enduring value comes from the past, but only with mastery is it comprehended, and such mastery threatens to remove one from the present. In this context, Babbitt reminds us of Goethe's disturbing remark that he would never have writ-

ten a line if, as a young man, he had known the classics (OBO 231). As I contemplate how much poorer my own life would be had Goethe's exaggeration been true, I notice that some of the uses of the transcendent power of historical imagination are more chastening than others. And I shall resolve not to become the sort of antiquarian Nietzsche so justly abused.

This is the difficulty of assimilating the past, but the present hides an even greater snare, for few among us are really ever lost to the lure of the past. The present, however, is vital with possibilities, so many possibilities that choosing among them the enduringly valuable ones is a challenge to which few are equal. It is hard to live in the present with an adequate sense of one's place in history, and debt thereto. The phrase 'historical distance' describes a genuine phenomenon, but on occasion one is allowed to witness events that are very likely to be defining moments, and although one cannot say with certainty how they will shape the future, one nevertheless encounters historical transcendence in these moments. One ought not look overly hard nor wait overly long for such moments however, since lesser instances of historical transcendence are available on a daily basis. One needs simply to recognise how one's present condition embodies an enduring truth about things humans. Babbitt's true temporalism shows through quite plainly when, in speaking of the task of assimilating the past, he uses Spinoza, arguably the most eternal of the eternalists to make this very point:

> Spinoza says that a man should keep constantly before his eyes a sort of exemplar of human nature (*idea hominus, tamquam naturæ humanæ exemplar*). He should, in other words, have a humane standard to which he may defer, and which will not proscribe originality, but will help him to discriminate between what is original and what is merely freakish and abnormal in himself and others. (OBO 243-244).

It would really be a task to imagine anything further from Spinoza's actual view than Babbitt's interpretation of this statement. He simply converted one of Spinoza's eternal modes into a historical standard of common sense, and adding metaphysical insult to injury, suggested that a living individual was *free* to follow it or not, that one *may* (and hence may *not*) defer to this standard (quite in contrast to Spinoza's uncompromising determinism). The *coup de grace* is then dealt in suggesting that this power enables one to be open to what is genuinely original. For Spinoza, nothing is original in that sense. There is only one cause and it causes all that is, including itself, and only it (i.e., God) is original, and even it is not free. Spinoza asserts that all relations are internal to this one substance and time is therefore not real, while Babbitt has just implied that human beings are related both internally and externally to their temporality, which makes them capable of genuine creation. Whether Babbitt is consciously misusing Spinoza, here I cannot guess, but Babbitt was an excellent reader, and it is hard to imagine that the explicit doctrines of Spinoza were lost entirely on him. It is also hard to believe that Babbitt chose to cite Spinoza here because it just happened to come to his mind as he wrote. Babbitt was a much more careful writer than that. But there is another explanation. In much the way we are surprised to see Nietzsche used approvingly, Rousseau occasionally praised, or even Shelley admired (OBO 241), the truth in Spinoza needs also to be placed before the reader. The man was no charalatan. In many ways, Spinoza is as extreme in his Parmenidean eternalism as Rousseau is in his Democritean eternalism. Babbitt was not one to throw away a truth, no matter how distorted it had become by being pushed to one of the extremes. The truth in Spinoza's exemplars is not in their alleged eternal essence, but in their humane value. After all, one needs standards to live well. Spinoza saw that. One does not need these standards to be eternal unless one wishes to be a god rather than a human being. But that is another matter.

What other constructive statements can we find in Babbitt to help us fill in the space between the extremes? Babbitt also offers the following observation: 'Genuine originality . . . is a hardy growth, and usually gains more than it loses by striking a deep root into the literature of the past' (OBO 230). In this statement, Babbitt comes as close as he ever does to the sense of 'evolution' I set out above. He invokes the image of a sturdy tree that grows from the ground of history into the sky of the future. Yes, the tree eventually dies, but at least it does not think itself to be either the earth itself or the sky itself. It lives between the two, and in so doing imitates *in its own way* countless trees before it. It is neither passive to the soil nor to the light, but takes from light and soil what it is a tree's lot to take. The earth cannot do what the tree does, nor can the sky, and in that regard the tree is entirely its own, but it is after all, a tree, vulnerable to the lightning from above and the root rot from below.

The image of growth is significant in relation to time, evolution and history, however, because it acknowledges a principle of asymmetry. Genuine originality is an asymmetrical, cumulative growth process, manifest in human culture in the process of education. No civilisation lasts forever, but no civilisation can exist at all except on the basis of cumulative growth. Parts of present history, indeed most of it, must be left behind in order to carry a civilisation historically forward, and hence education becomes a historical symbol of the evolution of a culture. But each deed done, whether it is remembered and symbolized or not, always will have been done. It becomes part of the being of a culture, and of the universe. From the standpoint of evolution, no deed is wholly in vain Whether any particular deed will come to be symbolized and its meaning taken up into the general culture, one cannot know in advance. Many great deeds are not symbolized, and come to be lost in history's syncretism. But the genuinely origi-

nal act embodies something universal in a unique way. One need not worry about how to make one's individual relation to the universal 'unique,' for evolution has seen to that already. You could not with any amount effort succeed in making yourself identical to another time and place–your 'uniquity' (OBC 6) is your temporal birthright. Your universality, on the other hand, will require an effort, if it is to be original.

11 Human nature evolving

At this juncture a critic may want to say, 'but Babbitt's view of human nature, while it is historical, does not allow for its evolution –it is always the same, for the Greeks, for the Asiatics, and even for the cave dwellers' (see OBO 231). Here I must confess that Babbitt clearly stresses more the enduring aspects of human nature than the changing ones, and is given to using the language of permanence when he discusses it. Babbitt's historicalsense does soften the effects of this apparent concession to Platonism, but does he really allow for an evolving human nature? In this regard I have been led to an odd fact about Babbitt's life and career. I had read quite a lot of Babbitt before I found out he had done a translation of *The Dhammapada*. I was utterly stunned. I thought surely it must be not Irving Babbitt, but another man of that name. It would be like discovering Stalin had spent his last years translating Adam Smith into Russian. One grows suspicious. Was Babbitt simply being thorough in learning the views of his opposition? *The Dhammapada*, for all its wisdom, expresses a viewpoint so removed from Babbitt's habitualtype of Western humanism that it was impossible to believe he would have devoted himself to the incredibly time-consuming task of translating it. But my suspicions were wrong. I had badly underestimated Babbitt. He translated *The Dhammapada* not to learn the viewpoint of a foe, but simply to learn the things that are human. Like Terrence, Babbitt is saying '*Homo sum; humani nil a me alienum puto.*' Babbitt recognised in the Western view of human nature a pernicious conceit of the sort Vico used to call 'the conceit of nations' –the tendency to judge the customs and beliefs of other times and people by the standards of one's own.[7] And fortunately, it is in this 'labor of love' that we may catch a glance of the true breadth of Babbitt's view of human nature.[8] Here we can at least make the beginnings of a case for the idea that he did not by any means reify the Western concept of the eternal soul. A passage from his essay 'Buddha and the Occident' is worth quoting at some length:

> Though particular utterances of the Buddha . . . may offer little difficulty, it must be admitted that his teaching is not easy for the Westerner to grasp in its total spirit. Even the person who affirms an underlying unity in human nature and is more interested in this unity than its picturesque modifications in time and space, should at least be able to see the point of view of the scholar who affirmed that he had turned to the study of Buddhismin order that he might enjoy 'the strangeness of the intellectual landscape.' A chief reason for this strangeness is that the doctrine of the Buddha cuts across certain oppositions that have been established in Western thought since the Greeks, and have come to seem almost inevitable. There has, for example, fromthe time of Heraclitus and Parmenides been an opposition between the partisans of the One and the partisans of the Many, between those who see in life only change and relativity and those who in some form or other affirm an abiding unity. The Platonic affirmation in particular of a world of ideas that transcends the fluxso combined with Christianity that it has come to be almost inseparable fromour notion of religion. Religion, as we understand it, seems to require faith in a spiritual essence or soul that is sharply set apart fromthe transitory, and in a God who is conceived as the supreme 'idea' or entity. Buddha denies the soul in the Platonic sense and does not grant any place in his discipline to the idea of God. Superficially he seems to be on the side of all the 'flowing' philosophers from Heraclitus to Bergson. The schoolmen of the Middle Ages would have accounted him an uncompromising nominalist. . . . Buddha is so disconcerting to us because doctrinally he recalls the most extreme of our Occidental philosophers of the flux, and at the same time, by the type of life at which he aims, reminds us rather of the Platonist and the Christian.[9]

Here we find that Babbitt's grasp of human nature is quite a lot broader than a reading of his popular criticism suggests. He embraces neither the strictly temporalist account of human nature, nor the strictly eternalist account. The philosophers of flux have always been around, and if they are having finally a day in the sun in the West, that too is human. But Babbitt does not confuse *accounts* of human nature with human nature itself. The former vary a great deal, although not all are equally to be believed, but that latter, human nature itself, remains always to some degree beyond our grasp. We are neither wholly unintelligible to ourselves, nor wholly transparent, for Babbitt, and anyone who tells us that we are one or the other has mistaken himself for a beast or a god, and probably ought to be left alone. I cannot show, then, that Babbitt is a thorough-going temporalist, although I can show he is not a thorough-going eternalist. There is no reason for Babbitt, or anyone else, to embrace temporalism as the inevitable truth about things. The reason to come to terms with temporalism is because it has become an integral part, and if I am right, the larger part, of the dominant form of human consciousness in the present. This is the world we find ourselves in, and it would be wise to find a way to live well in it, for one will be hard-pressed to live well in this one while one is wishing for another. Babbitt does not believe he will get much access to *eternal* truths, nor would he know what to do with any if he had them. He settles, like a human being, for *enduring* truths, since that is what human beings can understand and use to the end of living well the humane life. Enduring truths can be originated and created by human beings, and in this regard Babbitt certainly follows Vico's *verum factum* principle—the true is the made, and we *can* understand what we make. But not very much

that we make warrants the effort of understanding, and life is very short. Therefore, it is a mistake to read Babbitt's vigorous defence of the universal as a Western myopia or a reification of the soul. The better interpretation is to see Babbitt as living in and with the tradition that gave him his historical meaning, and contributing what a single man could to its betterment in the course of a life. Fortunately, that activity included reaching beyond his own tradition and into all things human.

12 Creativity and originality: Calling for the guest bill

I have been concentrating on originality, and little has been said so far about creativity proper according to Babbitt's view. I cannot analyze it extensively, as I have done with originality, but perhaps a sufficient groundwork has been laid for me to offer the following observation: Babbitt has a tendency to use the term 'creativity' in association with the power of human imagination. When he speaks of originality, however, he is more apt to speak of it in reference to universally enduring aspects of human existence he takes to be real—not in the sense of eternal essences, but in the sense of lasting concrete actualities. If this observation is followed out, we might safely recommend that, for Babbitt, 'originality' has to do with matters of being, while 'creativity' refers most often to the relationship between being and knowing. Much has been written about Babbitt's view of imagination, and indeed, Babbitt himself wrote much more extensively on creativity than on originality. Again Claes Ryn's systematization of Babbitt's view of imagination is of great help here.[10] We may also call to our aid Croce and Vico for a fuller epistemological account of the relation between imagination and being. In general we would find accounts here that are at least not alien to Babbitt's viewpoint. But I have focused on originality in this essay precisely because I think it points us to the most metaphysical aspect of Babbitt's world-view. Whether Babbitt himself looked explicitly upon the relation of creativity and originality in this way I seriously doubt, but his habit of using these terms in these ways would not have been missed by Royce, in their (now rather long) lunch conversation. Perhaps Royce would make a remark on this very point, and you, listening in at the next table would finally chime in 'Oh, I see.' At least, that is what I would say, were I the eavesdropper, adding 'I think this is true of your ideas, Professor Babbitt, even if you never noticed.' I fear Professor Babbitt would choose that moment to call for his bill and a carriage, but, hopefully, leaving you and me with Professor Royce to explore the further implications. But perhaps you will prefer to leave with Professor Babbitt, so I will not keep you much longer. But indulge me with just a word further while we wait for your bill.

I earnestly desire to make myself clear about what I think I have and have not accomplished here. There is another story to be told that would connect Babbitt's critique of scientism to the humane science of common sense, and about the metaphysics that story presupposes. Here I have connected Babbitt's humanism only to the historical level of the field of temporality, and showed some of its relations to the evolutionary level. I am confident the second undertaking could be accomplished, but it would require a greater departure from Babbitt's actual writings, and it would be even more abstract and metaphysical (and to that extent more barbarous) than this essay has been. That project is of value, however, for while the present essay offers ways to synthesize Babbitt's metaphysical assumptions about the meaning of history with the social epistemologies of later kindred writers like Claes Ryn, it has not yet provided a way to conjoin this type of social epistemology and social psychology with the scientific or rational side of truth. That conjunction is needed for a complete account of human knowing in its relation to the natural world. *Given* a certain view of human nature as historical and evolving, with enduringly universal characteristics, one may now offer provisional conclusions about the historical and enduring value of things human according to Babbitt. But complete a view of human nature must include a cosmology at some point, a full account of the why's and wherefore's of *der Stellung des Menschen im Kosmos*, to use Scheler's felicitous phrase. I have not done that here.

Having made my partial case for a balanced temporalist metaphysics in Babbitt's thought, as I hope I *have* now done, we should be chastened to remember that Babbitt's lifelong battle with scientism and emotionalism, both types of 'enthusiasm' in his view, was not in any way a condemnation of science as a *human* undertaking, nor of the importance of emotion in humane living. He objected only to the way that these moments in human experience, when taken to extremes, distort our lives and our thinking, leading us to value transient things above their genuine worth, and to devalue things that are of more enduring worth. Babbitt explicitly acknowledged that Rousseau saw something true—that Rousseau had the right questions, but the wrong answers. There is much to be said for having the right questions.[11] The same may be said of Bacon, and hopefully someone will eventually say that in greater detail. Obviously Babbitt's thoughts on creativity and originality cannot be taken to exhaust his metaphysical presuppositions, although I believe these thoughts do *characterize* his metaphysical posture. Professor Royce and I will take up those other questions when you have gone. But if enough has been said to begin the process of thinking, then I will have accomplished enough for one essay.

I see you have paid your bill and your carriage has arrived. But I cannot let you leave until I confess that I think Professor Babbitt is more creative than original, more imaginative than profound, but I confess that I posed you with a false dilemma in my title. No one could be original or

creative without some measure of the other. Professor Royce here is not nearly as imaginative, but he is far more original, in the best sense. So if, in a quiet moment, I remind Royce that he serves us and himself best when he is writing metaphysics, not novels, perhaps you can congratulate Professor Babbitt for his wisdom in writing mainly criticism and leaving the metaphysics to Royce.

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Notes:

1. Claes Ryn, Will, Imagination and Reason: *Babbitt, Croce and the Problem of Reality, new* ed. (New Brunswick, NJ and London: Transaction Publishers, 1997). See also Ryn's article 'Babbitt and the Problem of Reality,' Modern Age 28 (Spring/Summer 1984) 156-168.
2. See my article 'Bowne on Time, Evolution and History,' *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, 12/3 (1998), 181-203. The full-length treatment of this subject is yet to be completed, but exists in a book manuscript tentatively entitled *Time, Evolution and History: An Essay on the Development of Philosophical Consciousness*.
3. This was already well known among scholars in Babbitt's time. See Henry Fairfield Osborn, *From the Greeks to Darwin: An Outline of the Development of the Evolution Idea* (New York: Macmillan, 1908).
4. See for example, Carl R. Page, *History and the Betrayal of Philosophy* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993). Page and other followers of Leo Strauss are not wholly to be despised for their lamentations. Something has indeed been lost and something has been betrayed that was of great value, but these complaints effect nothing other than the expression of a pathetic nostalgia. One is tempted to slap them heartily on the back and remark 'buck up man, get hold of yourself; the world waits only upon the living.'
5. I will be citing these essays parenthetically as OBO and OBC, and using the page numbers from the reprinted versions: 'On Being Creative' from *Literature and the American College: Essays in Defense of the Humanities* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1908), 215-245; and 'On Being Creative' from *On Being Creative and Other Essays* (New York: Biblo and Tannen, 1968), 1-33.
6. Aristotle, *Politics*, 1253a 28-30.
7. See Babbitt's essay 'Buddha and the Occident' in the NDP edition cited below, 66-68.
8. *The Dhammapada, Translated from the Pali with an Essay on Buddha and the Occident by Irving Babbitt* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1936). I take the phrase 'labour of love' from the back cover of the New Directions Paperback Edition of 1965.
9. Babbitt, 'Buddha and the Occident,' 76-78.
10. Also worth consulting is the excellent discussion of Ryn's *Will, Imagination and Reason* by George A Panichas in *The Critical Legacy of Irving Babbitt* (Wilmington, DE: ISI Books, 1999), 149-163. While Panichas is quite right to praise this book, I cannot wholly agree with his statement that 'No scholar in the future will now be hampered by an inadequate assessment of Babbitt's philosophical explorations' (152). The trouble here is twofold. First, Ryn really did offer his assessment of Babbitt as a philosopher with an eye to a larger aim—articulating an epistemological basis for his own value-centered historicism. Second, and as a result of this first fact, Ryn left aside, deliberately, numerous important questions about Babbitt as a philosopher, especially questions of formal epistemology and metaphysics. If Panichas were right, I would have had nothing to say for the last fifteen or twenty pages, for Ryn would have said it already. But I think I have found much to say, and left much more unsaid. The *truly* adequate assessment of Babbitt as a philosopher awaits another scholar who has the leisure to compose a rather long book upon the topic. That 'scholar' will not be me, for I lack the leisure.
11. See Babbitt, *Democracy and Leadership* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co, 1924), 2.

IRVING BABBITT AND PERSONAL INDIVIDUALITY

Jan Olof Bengtsson

1. The question of personal individuality

Irving Babbitt's criticism of romanticism covers many aspects, but I will focus here only on one of them: Babbitt's view of personal individuality and individualism in the romantic movement in a broad sense. As a contrast, Babbitt's understanding of true classicism, as opposed to what he calls pseudo-classicism, and the alternative view of individuality which it offers, will also be presented.[1] Finally, the distinction between 'higher' and 'lower' romanticism, established by the Swedish philosopher Folke Leander (1910-1981) in the connection of a discussion of Babbitt, but inspired by the Swedish tradition of personal idealism, will be introduced and expanded upon. It will be shown to supply an understanding of personal individuality which is compatible with Babbitt's general analysis of romanticism and classicism, but which goes beyond Babbitt in its philosophical defence of such individuality. I will argue that the question and the different appreciations of pesonal individuality are of considerable importance for the way we understand modernity and strive to overcome its problems.

Individuality is of the essence of modernity in a broad sense, from the late Middle Ages or from the Renaissance to Babbitt's age and our own, and the question of individuality in Babbitt's work, embedded as it is in the broader cultural and philosophical analysis, needs to be more clearly discerned and emphasized. Today, in the ongoing reappraisal of Babbitt, it is as yet not sufficiently elucidated. The ability to discern nuances and partial truths in modernity is one of the characteristics of Babbitt's analysis. However, the question of individuality as such does not always receive a sufficient philosophical treatment. Since there is such a desperate need for the Babbittian analysis in the present modern or post-modern condition of Western, and, increasingly, global society, a failure of reception due to a felt lack of a proper appreciation of individuality would be lamentable indeed. We therefore have to ask ourselves what kind of individuality is compatible with the cultural criticism of Babbitt, and how its philosophical exposition fits into his overall humanistic view. The question of personal individuality must, I believe, be acknowledged as the decisive question in the present search for an ethically and culturally viable future for Western civilization, inextricably bound up with our effort to sort out the tenable aspects of modernity, liberalism, and democracy. Turning to the works of thinkers like Babbitt, as we necessarily must, they therefore have to be read with special regard to this question.

However, the question of individuality is not only a specifically modern one. A strong case can be made that classical antiquity also has its own philosophical form for understanding and defending individuality, not only politically, but also metaphysically. This latter aspect of classical individualism, the understanding of *eudaimonism*, not in terms of superficial human happiness, but in terms of the Socratic *daimon*, has been rediscovered and eloquently defended by David L Norton in *Personal Destinies: A Philosophy of Ethical Individualism* (1976). Its basis is the understanding of the individual soul and its destiny, which in the philosophy of Plato is often overshadowed by his doctrine of supraindividual forms. Basically, it is a kind of spiritual individualism, but it has obvious consequences for the concrete shape of the worldly, human life of the individual. As Norton shows, the understanding that the soul or the true identity of the person is a unique individual with a unique destiny has moral consequences quite different from the one-sided generalism and emphasis on the Whole in the form of the state or on the universal Good commonly associated with classical political philosophy.

Historically more obvious is the fact that Christianity not only introduced a new and higher appreciation of individual providence and hence of individual man or the individual soul, but also established as the supreme reality, above the general forms which are norms and guidelines for the super-rational insight of classical reason and for classical decorum, the Personal God. The individual character of the God of the Bible probably partly explains why the patristic use of the term 'person', applied to God, would gradually come to be understood as representing a distinct, individual reality. By the Christian Platonists the world of forms was subordinated to God as the contents of His own Thought. Individual man, or the individual soul, by acknowledging and contemplating what was beyond and above itself, recognised in that transcendent reality the basis not only for the general but for the individual as well: the impersonal norms, whose reflexions were seen as the phenomenal world of sense, was finally found to be spread within a totality which was ultimately itself individual and personal, albeit in a way finite reason could never fully comprehend.

In antiquity, this new understanding reaches its clearest theoretical expression in the thought of St. Augustine. For St. Augustine, the unique relation in love between the individual soul and God is the very essence of religion and the supreme reality of life. During the course of the Middle Ages, however, for various reasons the new understanding of individuality tended to become lost both in the organization of the Church and in

scholastic conceptual realism. The onesided universalism of classical philosophy thus, *mutatis mutandis*, reasserted itself at the expense of individuality. With its tendency to deny universality and essentialism altogether, the nominalist reaction of the late Middle Ages no doubt went much too far, but with regard to the key issue of individuality, it was to a large extent inevitable. Going back to St. Augustine, the new philosophy, and its predecessor and inspirator St. Francis, contributed a necessary corrective to a Christian philosophy which had lost the crucial insights of spiritual individuality of early Christian theology. The question was raised, with a new degree of philosophical clarity, how generality and universality, ethical, aesthetical, and other, coexisted, in God as well as in his creation, with the concrete, individually differentiated manifold.

The individuality of the human person established both by Socratic eudaimonism and by early Christianity was primarily of a spiritual kind, and at least some of the late medieval currents can be said to simply re-establish and philosophically defend these older insights. Therefore, it must probably be said that the decisive break, the establishment of the distinctly modern understanding of profane individuality, occurs only with Thomas Hobbes. Since Hobbes, individuality has been interpreted in a way that is fundamentally at odds with all the classical and Christian views, even when John Locke softened the harshness of its materialism. The atomistic liberalism, based on the driving force of human self-interest and utility, that is still being expounded and developed on the basis of the ideas of these thinkers, represents an individualism which I believe for various more or less obvious reasons which I cannot enumerate here in any detail is today theoretically and morally bankrupt. We have to look elsewhere for a sound philosophical defence of individuality.

With Rousseau, the sentimental strand of the enlightenment turned into the romanticism so formidably analyzed by Babbitt. But even before the onset of romantic excess, Rousseauian ideas were also ethically straightened up by Kant, but the German idealists tended to subordinate the individual to the Whole in the form of Mankind, of the State, of Nature, or of the Absolute. As far as historicism was an integral part of the new idealism, it certainly brought a new and deeper understanding of individuality on the historical and phenomenal level. Hegel's understanding of the 'concrete universal' and to some extent of the 'concrete personality' certainly belongs to the central insights of modern philosophy. But at the same time, the understanding of the deeper, metaphysical status of individuality characterizing Socratic eudaimonism and Augustinian Christianity was undercut by monistic pantheism.

Only with the special development of modern idealism that goes under the name of *personal idealism*, was an understanding approaching Socratic eudaimonism and Augustinian individualism again developed. This tradition, emerging in the course of the nineteenth century in opposition to the absolute, monistic idealism culminating in the philosophy of Hegel, sought to defend the metaphysical status of the individual, and to anchor its spiritual being in the manifold of unique relationships to the absolute understood as the personal God, the supreme personal individual. In order to find support for their criticism of modern German idealism, some of the personal idealists returned not only to classical theism, but also to Plato. For not only did they rediscover in his works the individualistic Socratic understanding of the *daimon*, but ambiguities could be detected in Plato's understanding of the forms, of the demiurge, of the idea of the Good.[2]

At least in some important respects, the metaphysical anti-individualism of German idealism was related to strong currents within the romantic movement, where the excessive individualism and exaltation of the ego was never far away from a self-destructive drive for extinction in the impersonal All or Void of Nature or Nirvana. The personal idealists set their faces against monistic pantheism of both the romantic and the idealistic variety. Naturally, their defence of the individual person could therefore not be the same as that of the romantic dreamers. The classical normativity was certainly not reconstructed in its entirety, and some of the personal idealists united their stricter metaphysical understanding with strong elements of the idealist version of historical progress towards what Eric Voegelin has analyzed as the 'immanentized eschathon'—Plato's and St. Augustine's transcendence was lost in secular humanism. Although they upheld the front against materialism and utilitarianism, such versions of personal idealism tended to degenerate, not least in America, into the sentimentalism and democratism so eloquently criticized by Babbitt. Babbitt saw clearer than most the superficiality of the historical progressivism associated with some forms of modern idealism and historicism, and the lessons of Babbitt were insufficiently absorbed by some of the personal idealists. But it may also well be the case that the deeper lessons of the more sober and rigorous of the personal idealists were not sufficiently absorbed by Babbitt. At least some of the personal idealists were well on the way to finding the synthesis of classicism—both in its metaphysical and humanistic aspects—and the new defence of individuality, which, I believe, was the most important result of the romantic movement in a broad sense. In my opinion, one of the problems with Babbitt's philosophy is that he is in fact quite explicitly sceptical towards the kind of personalism that we find in the traditions I have here outlined.[3]

2. Babbitt and modernity

The synthesis of Babbittian humanism

and this kind of personalism is an area of philosophical thought not yet satisfactorily explored. In the face of the disastrous experiences of collectivism in the twentieth century, and in the face of a new, anarchical, nihilistic individualism in the post-modern age and of threatening globalised mass-culture, the questions of individuality and freedom need to be rethought in the light of the more demanding, but also more rewarding, cultural, ethical, and spiritual traditions of mankind: the classical and Christian, and, to the extent that we are able to follow Babbitt in this, also the great Oriental ones. We have to find our way to another understanding of individuality, different from most of the specifically modern ones. And to the extent that modernity has developed an enriched understanding of individuality, this has to be brought into closer contact with the classical and Christian traditions. In our effort to overcome the monstrosities of the lower, natural self of modern, secular individualism, we must not give up the higher self, our spiritual individuality.

Babbitt's factual use of the term '(the) individual' is most often to be found in connection with the defence of modern man's experimentally finding the ethical order within himself, and in the freely appropriated traditions of ethical humanism, as opposed both to the supra-individual Church and to the rigid fixity of pseudo-classicism which both supply that order ready-made from outside.[4] Closely related to this use is the one we find in passages which describe the traditional dualism in 'the individual' between a higher and a lower self, often in contradistinction to the modern Rousseauistic dualism between the original goodness of the individual and the evils of corrupt society.[5]

But as to the duality in the human individual, we find on closer inspection that it is only the lower, 'natural' self that is individual in the sense of unique and singular—and that this self is to be subordinated to a higher self, which is strictly universal:

> Socrates and the Rousseauists (who are in this respect like some of the sophists) are both moving away from convention but in opposite directions. What the romanticist opposes to convention is his 'genius', that is his unique and private self. What Socrates opposes to convention is his universal and ethical self'.[6]

> By the denial of the dualism of the spirit, Rousseau discredited [the] inner working, so that inwardness has come to seem synonymous with mere subjectivity; and to be subjective in the Rousseauistic sense is to be diffusive, to lack purpose and concentration. To lose one's self in a shoreless sea of revery.[7]

As I will show more clearly, Babbitt does not here set some distinctive value of the unique individual subject in and of itself against the objective impersonality of the externally imposed order. Rather, he indicates only that, in the absence of the older authorities, it is the individual himself who, in the 'critical spirit', must now find the same objective and impersonal moral insights within himself and in the traditions freely appropriated. But as we shall see, the prime function of this order, even as experimentally ascertained, tends to become mainly to limit and curb the fact and the consequences of modern individualism in the sense of the ascribing of an absolute value to unique individuality as such.

Babbitt's 'complete positivism', a kind of higher empiricism, implies a strong confidence in the modern individual and a partial endorsement of the historical development. In his historical expositions, Babbitt discerns an element of necessity in the development from the proto-romantic reaction of the early renaissance against medieval uniformity in favour of individual originality, over the reaction of French classicism against the early renaissance, to the reaction against French classicism in romanticism proper or neo-romanticism.[8] But in Babbitt's view, this development fails to achieve synthesis or balance. Much less than the reaction of French classicism, the latest phase in Babbitt's time, represented by a new collectivism reacting against liberal individualism, was not, of course, a return to true classicism. The new collective was rather made up of normless individuals and wholly lacked moral normativity. The problem, according to Babbitt, is not the rise of the individualistic, in the sense of the critical, spirit in itself, but that this break assumed a naturalistic rather than a humanistic (or religious) character.[9] Supporting modernity in this qualified respect, Babbitt finds the whole phenomenon of 'sound individualism', the positive and critical spirit which independently attains ethical universality, clearly prefigured in the 'true classicism' of antiquity.[10]

3. Classicism as anti-individualism

In true classicism, according to Babbitt, it is the imagination that discerns the general and universal in the concrete manifold of the empirical material. Genius did not, as for the romantics, consist in expressions of uniqueness; nor was genius denied in favour of a rigid model established by abstract reason. Rather it was found in imaginative perception and creative emulation of the universal. Babbitt seems to recognise that in reality, the general is inseparable from the individual, not only in external objects, but also in the personal human subject. But although he allows an individual aspect of the use of perceptive and creative imagination, he does not sufficiently pay attention to or elucidate the positive value of individuality as such, of the uniqueness which always is there together with the more or less complete or exact manifestation of the general—that aspect of individuality which goes beyond the one that is the precondition for the classicist's liking of this individuality, namely the mere fact of its being subordinated to the objective norms.

Babbitt accuses the Rousseauist of repudiating 'the very idea of an ethical centre along with the special

forms in which it had got itself embedded', of refusing to accept a humanistic or religious 'unifying and centralising principle' opposing 'expansive impulse'. The Rousseauist is incapable of discrimination between the intuitively grasped ethical norm of the true classicist and the mechanical imitation of the pseudo-classicist. For him, the principle of variation is alone vital:

> One's genius and originality are in pretty direct ratio to one's eccentricity in the literal meaning of the word; and he is therefore ready to affirm his singularity or difference in the face of whatever happens to be established.[11]

Even if Babbitt, in passages such as these, allows that also 'the principle of variation' has some value, it is not explained how and why. Rather, the question of the relation of difference and unicity to oneness and generality is immediately reduced to the polarity of excentricity–centrality, whereby the first pole is dismissed and difference as such played down. Babbitt here neglects that variation which in its very differentiality and unicity is in accord with the ethical centre, as well as the whole issue of the status of the general not only on the human level, where, according to personal idealism, it is manifest only in indissoluble unity with the differentiated manifold and separate only as abstracted by us, but also on the absolute level, where it is co-existent with the individuality of God. Sometimes a too clear-cut choice between the primacy of ethical 'likeness' and of unethical 'difference' seems to be presented.[12] But as we shall see, formulations like these are simplified in comparison with other passages in Babbitt's writings.

Babbitt's aversion to individual unicity is to a large extent explained by the fact that unicity in Rousseau and the romantics is characterized by one-sidedly apprehended qualities: it is preponderantly the unicity of undisciplined feeling, reducing the roles of will and reason. But it is also the studied excentric quaintness of aesthetic romanticism that repels Babbitt: the original is reduced to the simply strange. But this dislike for romanticism—and for scientism, the other strand of the naturalistic movement which joins romanticism in its new individualism of scientific and technical specialisation[13]—tends to obscure the question of individuality as such. Often there seems to be the classicist norms on the one side, and on the other only dissolution, decadent romanticism, a pathological individualism where the distinctiveness of originality is never far from the complete loss of character in the sub-rational oneness of pantheistic dreaming. But then individuality is lost in either direction. Babbitt is so absorbed in the criticism of the impressionistic romantic's refusal to accept the general norms provided by universal experience as expressed in the classics, the 'concrete *idea hominis*' which they provide,[14] that the value of individuality is sometimes lost altogether. Classical literature, Babbitt writes, through appealing to our 'higher reason and imagination', 'afford us an avenue of escape from ourselves', enables us 'to become participants in the universal life'. It leads the student 'out and away from himself'. The classical spirit in its purest form 'feels itself consecrated to the service of a high, impersonal reason', which not only is the source of the sentiment of 'restraint and discipline', 'proportion and pervading law', but even leads us,

> although along a different path, to the same goal as religion, to a union ever more intimate with
> 'our only true, deep-buried selves',
> being one with which we are one with the whole world.[15]

The lofty ethical spirit easily recognisable in such passages cannot avert the impression that individuality itself is lost to a degree that seems almost comparable to the pantheistic morass in which the romantic individualist only seemingly paradoxically loses himself. Also in other places Babbitt almost appears to be prepared to take the extinction of individuality to the extremes of mystical, monistic union. Such union, not allowing a higher, individual self above the natural, individual self, is of course fatal to personal, religious life of, for example, St. Augustine's kind. 'True decorum' as well as the '"reason" of a Plato or an Aristotle' according to Babbitt, contains an element of 'super-rational perception', which satisfies the need of human nature to 'lose itself in a larger whole'.[16] We clearly discern the extent of generalism and impersonalism in Babbitt's classicism. Certainly 'human nature' needs to look up to something set above itself, but does it therefore need to *lose itself* in it? The impersonalism of generalist classicism is taken to the extremes of something that comes very close to the impersonalism of monistic mysticism, regardless of the absence of theological references. It is not the Rousseauistic 'shoreless sea of revery', but nonetheless, the self is lost.

Against pantheism, personal idealism put a sharp emphasis, not least ethically, on the person and its autonomy, freedom, and responsibility. Personal idealism sought to re-establish a metaphysical sanction for personal individuality. In other forms the new idealistic philosophy would prove to be closely related to generalism as well as to a monistic and impersonalistic understanding of the Whole and, to the extent that it was recognised, of transcendence, thereby joining the similar currents in romanticism proper. Babbitt was as sceptical against German idealism as he was against the reduction of higher consciousness to mere self-consciousness in the Cartesian rationalism that accompanied modern pseudo-classicism, but at least through Emerson he was himself to a certain extent influenced by it.

Neither for Babbitt the classicist nor for the main current of romantic idealism is the higher self individual. As Babbitt sees it, it is only by taking to the universalising path of classicism, by, so to speak, rising above his individuality altogether, that man attains to his true self.

Individuality, representing his ordinary, natural, temperamental or private self, must be transcended. The true self is rather one that we all have in common. The 'eccentric individualist' refuses to accept ethical control in the name of the need to 'be himself'. But since man is a dual being, 'being himself' can refer either to the ordinary, unique and separate self or to 'the self that he possesses in common with other men', which is 'set above his ordinary self' but not therefore 'necessarily set above his total personality'. And to be himself in this latter sense requires ethical discipline—the higher self is 'at the opposite pole' from the self of the 'original geniuses' of romanticism, the self extolled in the principle of Ibsen: '"This above all,—to thine own self be true"'.[17]

As unity is for Babbitt also the absolute and diversity is the relative,[18] so to escape from the solitude of the differentiated, relative self, the ego, is to escape from the less permanent to the more permanent.[19] We are growing more one with ourselves and moving towards community with those undergoing the same discipline, towards the Confucian '"universal centre"'.[20] Against this higher unity stands only 'the expansive outward striving of temperament', a situation which demands 'conversion':

> We must pull back our temperaments with reference to the model that we are imitating, just as, in Aristotle's phrase, one might pull back and straighten out a crooked stick.[21]

> The humanist maintains that man attains to the truth of his nature only by imposing decorum upon his ordinary self. The Rousseauist maintains that man attains to this truth only by the free expansion of his ordinary self.'[22]

Blinded by the decadence of romanticism, Babbitt too often seems to grant no higher place to individuality along with the universal values. In a typical passage, he speaks of the original genius

> to whom it was a tame and uninteresting thing to be simply human and who, disdaining to seem to others a being of the same clay as themselves, wished to be in their eyes either an angel or a demon—above all a demon.[23]

But the unique individuality of the angel is never really considered as such. The problem is basically that there seems to be lacking in Babbitt's philosophy a clear understanding of the ontological subject of the angel as well as of the demon. The demon is moving away from the universal self in the direction of peripheral abnormality and unreality. The angel is moving away from its individual self and becoming one with others on a higher level. But what is the self? The question arises whether demonic qualities as well as higher, classical norms, do not in reality have to be upheld by a distinct subject which is uniquely and individually personal. For Babbitt, in a very considerable number of texts, the subject of both qualities tends to be ignored.

4. The proper place of individuality in humanism

Certainly Babbitt accepted what he called 'sound individuality', in analogy with his acceptance of the right kind of autonomy, of ethically restricted liberalism, democracy, and even romanticism.[24] And we find many places where Babbitt seems to endorse individuality even in the sense that I am here after, a concrete individual uniqueness possessing a value in itself and joined to the universal normativity.

Commenting on pseudo-classicism, Babbitt writes that it is possible to 'insist on selection and discipline without at the same time being so distrustful of individualism'.[25] For Babbitt, the essence of true classicism and humanism is mediation by imagination inspired by ethical will. And mediation is between the general and the individual:

> There is the One, says Plato, and there is the Many. 'Show me the man who can combine the One with the Many and I will follow in his footsteps, even as in those of a God.'[26]

According to Aristotle's concept of imitation, one penetrates 'through all the welter of the actual. . . to the real and so succeeds without ceasing to be individual in suggesting the universal.' In Aristotle, as opposed to both pseudo-classicism and romanticism, there is no clear-cut opposition between judgment or good sense, on the one hand, and imagination on the other, and it is this higher and richer faculty of imaginative reason which allows the successful mediation that we find primarily in the Greeks. In the treatise *On the Sublime* by the author known as Longinus, Babbitt also finds all the qualities praised by modern romantics, such as genius and inspiration, but redeemed from the corruption and degradation of excess. In the process of mediation, individuality is balanced by universality, but preserved. The higher intuition which accomplishes the mediation allows that the golden mean may vary according individual differences—it is not mechanical as in pseudo-classicism.[27]

The anti-individualistic quotations in the previous section are balanced—or perhaps sometimes contradicted—also by statements where Babbitt makes clear that for him not only excessive pluralism but also excessive monism is non-humanistic. Babbitt thus recognises 'individual inclination', and 'a free play of one's individual faculties.'[28] It is not the individualist as such, only the 'eccentric individualist', that is condemned, not originality as such, only 'a premature originality', 'over-anxiety to be original', or 'mere freakishness'.[29] Too much emphasis on tradition is harmful if it makes originality impossible; but 'genuine originality' is allowed, although it is 'a hardy growth, and usually gains more than it loses by striking deep root into the literature of the past.' 'The appeal of literature to the individual intellect and sensibility' is said to have 'a large and legitimate place'; it is only when the individual emancipates himself 'entirely' from general standards that it degenerates into 'impressionism and dilettante-

ism'. The 'extreme of self-effacement' in pseudo-classicism, its 'tendency to proscribe all localism, all sharp emphasis on . . . individual. . . traits', is condemned.[30] In a central passage, Babbitt writes that

> Many of our contemporary writers are as plainly in an extreme as the most extreme of the neo-classicists. They think that to be original they need merely to arrive at self-expression without any effort to be representative. The neo-classicist, on the other hand, strove so hard to be representative that he often lost the personal flavor entirely and fell into colorless abstraction. Both extremes fail equally of being humane. For, to revert to our fundamental principle, the humanist must combine opposite extremes and occupy all the space between them. Genuine originality is so immensely difficult because it imposes the task of achieving work that is of general human truth and at the same time intensely individual. Perhaps the best examples of this union of qualities are found in Greek. The original man for the Greek was the one who could create in the very act of imitating the past. Greek literature at its best is to a remarkable degree a creative imitation of Homer.[31]

Here, individuality, even 'intense' individuality, seems to be unequivocally approved as of equal importance with universality—but already in the next sentence, when Babbitt explains that 'the modern does not, like the Greek, hope to become original by assimilating tradition, but rather by ignoring it', it is hard to see how originality *as such* can be achieved by merely *assimilating* tradition.

Self-expression is clearly granted its due place, and the inevitability of the uniqueness of individuality, also with regard to human personality, is accepted and sometimes explained at some length. All things, as well as all men, are at the same time 'ineffably different' and 'ineffably alike'; 'each man has his idiosyncracy', 'his own uniqueness, or 'genius'', and the word character 'may refer either to the idiosyncratic or to the universal human element in a man's dual nature', a distinction similar to 'the French distinction between the *sens propre* and the *sens commun*.'[32]

The problem is that even when Babbitt acknowledges individualised plurality, that plurality has only the most precarious ontological status in the passing flux of phenomenal existence. The necessary balance between unity and plurality is for Babbitt a balance between on the one hand 'communion with absolute being, and . . . the obligation to higher standards that this insight brings', and on the other hand but 'a passing phase of the everlasting flux and relativity of nature'. What balances between these is the human mind; Babbitt goes on to say that there are

> moments when, with Emerson, it should feel itself 'alone with the gods alone'; and moments when, with Sainte-Beuve, it should look upon itself as only the 'most fugitive of illusions in the bosom of the infinite illusion'. If man's nobility lies in his kinship to the One, he is at the same time a phenomenon among other phenomena, and only at his risk and peril neglects his phenomenal self. The humane poise of his faculties suffers equally from an excess of naturalism and an excess of supernaturalism.[33]

Although mediation is the ideal and the two are always inextricably mixed in experience, these seem to be the only ingredient factors: personal individuality as merely fugitive illusion, phenomenon, and naturalistic, and impersonal Oneness as alone divine, noble, and supernatural. Also in the central passage where Babbitt describes the dialectical relation between oneness and diversity, individuality is still referred solely to the passing realm of change: The paradox of life

> does not give up here an element of oneness, and there an element of change, but a oneness that is always changing. This implication of unity in diversity is the scandal of reason, and philosophers have, for the most part, ever since the Greeks, been seeking with the aid of reason to abstract the unity from the diversity, or else, by similar rationalizing processes, to stress the diversity at the expense of the unity—But the complete positivist will insist that wisdom is found in mediation between the constant and the variable factors in human experience.'[34]

Claes G Ryn's completion or explication, in *Will, Imagination and Reason* (1986), of this Babbittian understanding by means of Hegel's logic and idea of the 'concrete universal', especially as developed by Benedetto Croce, is obviously most relevant. But then again the ontological status of individuality remains as ambiguous as in Hegel. The whole mediated synthesis profoundly and truthfully expresses man's experience in the partial existence in phenomenal illusion, or the ideal of that existence, but it expresses nothing more. Babbitt seems to recognise only a perishable individuality, and only that part of the 'total personality', which without any distinction is one with the One, is permanent. The humanistic mediation between individual diversity and universal unity is described in complementary terms, such as those of absolute and relative, permanence and change, and also of the centripetal and centrifugal powers of personality.[35] But it is precisely these complementary categories which reveal the precarious status that individuality must be said to ultimately have in the thought of Babbitt.

I believe that there are strong theoretical and moral objections against the view expressed in such passages as represent, on the ontological level, what is often identified as the classical Platonic one. Leaving aside all the differences which are of course decisive, and to the unambiguous credit of Babbitt, it must, I believe, be said that they maintain too much of the one-sided classical generalism which through all of the dialectic of the cultural history of the West still shaped not only the ultimate principles of the organic Whole in Hegel's pantheistic idealism, but the collective Whole of his materialist disciple, Karl Marx, for whom the essence of man is his true collectivity alone. Leaving this metaphysical level, it is certainly possible to appreciate some of

Babbitt's pronouncements on 'sound individuality', but there can in my view be little doubt that they stand in need of being strengthened by a deeper metaphysical underpinning, which also gives to the concept of ethical individuality a fuller meaning.

5. Individuality as the concrete

One aspect of Babbitt's partial endorsement of individuality is his emphasis on the concrete, especially in the manifestation of virtue and of the Good in the concrete human being. Tocqueville's statement that the final test of democracy will be its power to produce and encourage the superior individual is quoted with approval.[36] Of course, despite Hegel's efforts, it is impossible to find an exhaustive philosophical formula for the concrete union of individuality and generality, if for no other reason that language in itself uses only general terms: even the expression 'unique individuality' is a general expression indicating the existence of qualities which it is strictly impossible fully to express in language. Babbitt is therefore certainly basically right when after attempting at least a roughly adequate explanation in general philosophical terms of the characteristics of concrete union, he explains that this is not comprehensible in terms of reason alone, and instead refers to will and experience as the final arbiter. In Babbitt's view, by the fundamentally 'Asiatic' solution of will and experience, opposed to the intellectualism of the Greeks,

> the gap between a wisdomthat is abstract and general and the individual and particular is bridged over at last; the Word is made flesh. The human craving for the concrete is satisfied at the essential point. The truth of the incarnation, to put the matter on purely psychological grounds, is one that we have all experienced in a less superlative form: the final reply to all the doubts that torment the human heart is not some theory of conduct, however perfect, but the man of character. Pontius Pilate spoke as a European when he inquired, 'What is truth?' On another occasion Christ gave the Asiatic reply: 'I am the way, the truth, and the life.' In this emphasis on personality Christianity is confirmed by the most positive observation.[37]

What counts practically, Babbitt writes, is '

> not justice in the abstract, but the just man. The just man is he whose various capacities (including the intellect) are acting in right relation to one another under the hegemony of the higher will—Human nature, and this is its most encouraging trait, is sensitive to a right example.

He goes on to explain that

> The unit to which all things must finally be referred is not the state or humanity or any other abstraction, but the man of character. Compared with this ultimate human reality, every other reality is only a shadow in the mist.[38]

These deeply true passages, which we find at the end of his last major work, *Democracy and Leadership*, and which thus very much appear as a main conclusion and summation of his thinking, are perhaps the ones where Babbitt comes closest to the emphasis on the concrete that is so fundamental in personal idealism.[39] The problem is that Babbitt's and even Hegel's philosophical formulation, in general terms, of the nature of the concrete union of individuality and universality, sometimes tends to unduly play down individuality as such: the philosophical formula could still be improved. The universal values need to become incarnate in the concrete man, but the individuality of that concrete man is still not emphasized as of sufficient importance in itself, but too much as merely the necessary focus of the manifestation of universal values. The superior individual is the test of democracy, but it is not the individuality of this individual that is the test, but only the superiority which consists in his manifestation in the non-individual values. The main reason why it is possible to level this criticism against Babbitt's mediation and Hegel's synthesis is that despite the value explicitly placed on individuality, especially in the kind of Hegelian formulations where the degree of universality is said to increase proportionally to the degree of individuality, is that the non-phenomenal, spiritual reality of individuality characteristic of the world-view of Socrates and of early Christianity is lost.

Also when he discusses such topics as beauty and style, Babbitt conveys the sense in which these phenomena really consist of successful mediation, the harmony or order in which the unifying principle and the many parts are equally important.[40] But again, the question arises whether it is really, when these qualities are present in the human person, primarily a matter of the mediation between a universal principle and the manifold of individual parts, and not rather of a totality which is as such individual, although mysteriously in its own concrete reality manifesting the universal values. Is it true that the structural element in the human person can arise only from subordination of the individual uniqueness to some larger whole, even if that whole exercises its control through will? I do not think so. A trans-individual structural principle of universal normativity is certainly one of the elements of style, as also in beauty there enters always something of its origin which is transcendent at least of human personality or of the individual human soul. But in the case of style as in the case of beauty in individual personality, there is in my opinion also something of the individual uniqueness itself which gives to the whole the distinct rhythm and tone which holds together the subordinate parts, and which is more than a changing, phenomenal illusion. When Babbitt notices Flaubert's impression of George Sand—'"What amazes and delights me is the strength of your whole personality"'[49]—I believe that the whole in question is the whole of unique individuality, taking up in itself universal values,

and not the larger whole of some supra-individual structuring principle, to which uniqueness is subordinated. It is a fine distinction, but philosophically, I believe that ultimately it is a decisive one. In rare cases, we glimpse in such expressions of personal individuality something rooted in eternity, in the supreme reality.

6. 'Higher' and 'Lower' Romanticism

The Swedish philosopher Folke Leander and his disciple, Claes G. Ryn, have focused on aspects of modern historicism and idealism possibly compatible with the classical, ethical humanism of Babbitt, but overlooked by himself. [50] Although these issues have been developed at considerable length by Leander and Ryn, the question of personal individuality in Babbittian humanism has not yet been fully investigated from the perspective and the position here defended. By his distinction, in the short work entitled *Romantik och moral (Romanticism and Morality),* between 'higher' and 'lower' romanticism, with his formulations about individuality in connection with it, and with his concomitant political conclusions, Leander, however, is on the right track: 'A one-sided emphasis on the truths seen by the critics of romanticism', Leander writes, 'must . . . lead to a kind of reactionary conservatism'. Leander sets out to establish 'certain complementary counter-truths', to provide 'a counter-criticism against a too one-sided conception':

> I will make a division between higher and lower forms of romanticism, of which the latter are a kind of parodies on the former. The anti-romantic criticism is relevant only for the lower romanticism, not for the higher, which seems to me to be an integral part of all that is best in the modern world since the Renaissance.[51]

Ryn's employment of Hegel's and Croce's philosophy as an explanation and development of Babbittian humanism, which was originally developed in close cooperation with Leander, has already been mentioned; I will concentrate here on Leander, since some of his formulations clearly point in the direction of the position of personal idealism.

Leander's defence of 'higher' romanticism is influenced by his main philosophical inspiration along with Babbitt, namely Benedetto Croce, but parts of the conceptual content is without equivalents also in Croce. Babbitt does not at all to the same extent acknowledge that there is such a thing as a higher romanticism, and Croce's Hegelianism precludes his acceptance of modern idealism in its personalist form. But Leander, in the concept of 'higher' romanticism, includes many of the essential aspects of the personal idealism that was closely linked to the traditions of self-cultivation and freedom under moral responsibility. Leander explicitly evokes one of the leading Swedish personal idealists, Erik Gustaf Geijer:

> In poetry as well as in life every man should—to use the expression of Almqvist [a typical romantic poet]—'follow the law of his own nature'. But the ambiguity of this expression is easily exposed: it can have a deeper meaning, but it can also mean mere impulsiveness. In a deeper meaning it is necessarily true, that the poet must be himself, that Bellman is Bellman [a leading Swedish poet in the era of Gustavus III] and Anacreon Anacreon; it is also true, as Geijer emphasized, that every man must find himself and realise his own distinctive potentialities. But this idea of originality degenerates, if at the same time the role of effort and work is minimised. The result will be a programmatic cult of the arbitrary, of whim, and of the mere outer gestures of geniality.[52]

The typical romantic poet could, according to Leander, defend himself against moral criticism by 'withdrawing to the deeper meaning' of the phrase about following the law of one's own nature, writing true words about the emancipation from pseudo-classicism and all the vices of the society in which it flourished. Unfortunately, the spirit of a noble and virtuous liberalism is seldom to be found in the romantic poets themselves. The formulations of true insight are really only a defence against this criticism. As soon as they start preaching their real message, the words about following the law of one's own nature acquire a different meaning. A similar moral ambiguity is to be found also in other typical romantic expressions such as those about 'individual self-determination', 'self-realisation', or 'self-actualiasation.'[53]

Leander's way of understanding this moral ambiguity can be interpreted as meaning that there is, so to speak, a neutral romanticism, a romanticism which is not yet either higher or lower, which has not yet taken either the one or the other direction, but which sooner or later will have to do so. The meaning of this kind of undecided romanticism can also be understood as the defence of the *personality* or the *subject* itself—in *this* connection the difference between these two concepts is not important—in its distinctively *individual* character. This new emphasis on the value of the individual was historically one of the most important aspects of romanticism. And this distinct ontological category of individual personality, this subject not only for the excess of originality or for the formless degeneration of lower romanticism, but also for the convergence, in higher romanticism, towards the objective ethical norms of classicism, is missing in Babbitt.

A parallel with St. Augustine is not out of place here, although his spiritual depth was certainly greater: St. Augustine clearly understood that there is a self, a true spiritual identity of man, which can lose itself in the sensual excesses of the natural man, or find itself through spiritual discipline and communion with God. But the self, the subject, is there as an ontological entity, just as its one fundamental drive, *amor*, only through the history of individual spiritual destiny bifurcates into *cupiditas* and *caritas*. The ego can 'incurve' itself in sinful egotism (*incurvatio in se*), or it can open itself

to God. Aristotle's words, quoted by Babbitt, of straightening the crooked stick come to mind.[54] But the difference is that for St. Augustine, when the ugly crookedness of sin is straightened out, individuality is not lost, but preserved. Only in the opening to God are the beautiful shapes of higher individuality free to blossom.

The concept of higher romanticism, and the metaphysical defence of individuality in personal idealism, makes it clear that romanticism was not only an unsuccessful, if necessary, reaction of individualism against pseudo-classicism. It also added something new—or rediscovered something quite old—of genuine value that is possible to separate from the pathological excesses, and that goes beyond even the truth of true classicism. These concepts throw new light on Babbitt's statements on individuality, sometimes just illuminating, but sometimes also supplementing them.

Higher romanticism upholds an ideal of personality different from that of true classicism, such as Babbitt defends it, in that it unambiguously extols individual unicity as a value in itself. It discards lower romanticism by accepting, and, in the ideal paradigm of self-cultivation, converging towards the ethical and axiological universality of classicism. Yet it remains romanticism in that it differs from the one-sided generalism of pseudo-classicism, and also in going beyond the insufficient acceptance of individuality in Babbitt's true classicism by accepting a unique core of the human subject not only on the natural, phenomenal and historical but also on the supernatural, strictly transcendent and spiritual level.

Even the Rousseauistic romanticism criticized by Babbitt contributed something to this new understanding. One of the exemplars of higher romanticism, according to Leander, is Goethe—just as Babbitt contrasts Victor Hugo, the romantic original genius 'to the end', with Goethe, who 'attained humane restraint after having begun as a Rousseauist.'[55] This is somewhat problematic insofar as we find in Goethe also strong elements of pantheism and naturalism which are difficult to reconcile with the emphasis on freedom which Leander in other places regards as of the essence of higher romanticism. Of course, ontological ambiguities abound also in Rousseau. Leaving aside, at least momentarily, the question of what is of matter and what is of spirit, we have to recognise that to the ideal of personality of higher romanticism belongs at least one moment in Rousseau's thinking, namely the tendency in his defence of authenticity against outer social convention to acknowledge a 'natural' core, spiritual and/or material, which constitutes the true identity of the individual, and which is to be actualised.

For Socrates, it was self-evident that the precondition for self-actualising *anamnesis* was the common, objective and universal ethical discipline. Without it, true and higher individuality could not emerge. In romanticism, the ethical prerequisites were often lacking: the actualisation was brought about by unrestrained, spontaneous expression. But they were not always lacking. In some forms, romanticism itself rediscovered and expressed anew the truths of higher individualism which are always coupled with the ethical standards of true classicism. While accepting much of Babbitt's criticism of Rousseau, in some regards the 'higher romantic', as Leander presents him in *Romantik och moral*, would therefore find this criticism incomplete and misleading:

> He is ready to shatter all the forms of civilized life in favor of something that never existed, of a state of nature that is only the projection of his own temperament and its dominant desires upon the void. His programme amounts in practice to the indulgence of infinite indeterminate desire, to an endless and aimless vagabondage of the emotions with the imagination as their free accomplice.
>
> This longing . . . to get back to the primitive and naïve and unconscious .. to shake off the trammels of tradition and reason in favor of free and passionate self-expression, underlies . . . the conception of original genius which itself underlies the whole modern movement.[56]

Granted that this is an accurate desciption of Rousseau, it is most definitely not tenable as a verdict on the varieties of higher romanticism and personal idealism that absorbed at least some of the ideas of Rousseau, and which purified them by bringing them into contact with the sources of higher individualism. The result was an understanding of the 'natural' individual core as corresponding, after having been distilled from the amorphous matter of mere individuality set free by romanticism in general and indiscriminately accepted by lower romanticism, in its actualised self-expression with the civilisational norms and values of classicism and tradition. The spirit in which the moral order was understood was now in some respects different from that of antiquity, but objectivity was not lost in the transition to interiority. The natural core is not some emptiness or something non-existent, but an essential, living, concrete, uniquely individual and personal reality, which is as important as the common, general, ethical norms. Against Babbitt, the defender of higher romanticism would readily acknowledge that at least some of the inspiration for this understanding in modern times comes from Rousseau. True, Babbitt in some places does grant partial truths in Rousseau,[57] but as far as I can see these are not the truths of individuality in this sense.

To the extent that romantic self-expression is ethically restrained and the process disciplined and ennobled to self-cultivation, it converges not only with classicism in the sense of impersonal norms, but also with the classical teaching on the actualisation of the daimon of the soul. It is important to understand that this teaching has some of its deepest roots in antiquity, in the very thinkers that epitomize Babbitt's true classicism:

emphasizing ethical universality alone, it is easy to overlook Socratic 'eudaimonism' and its manifestations and parallells in Greek thought and drama. Of course, the fundamental sources of the personalist teaching of higher romanticism are not to be found in Rousseau, where it is never more than an occasional tendency. Also within the horizon of modernity in a broad sense, we find more important roots in some aspects of Leibnitz' theory of the monads and in the forms of Christianity that maintain and cultivate the Augustinian insights.

In *Romantik och moral,* Leander is, as we have seen, not blind to the fact that many of the foremost romantics waver in their position between higher and lower romanticism. This ambiguity has often facilitated interpretations which are misleading and untrue. To try to transform Nietzsche's teaching, for example, into 'a beautiful and humane gospel' is 'a frank denial that there is such a thing as a misdirected passion for freedom'. Rousseau has been presented as a 'Socratic moralist', and it would not be hard to prove as much, in a superficial way, about certain romantic poets. But although such interpretations can find support in certain formulations,

> the motive force and the centre of gravity of their work is in the lower meaning of the words about following the law of one's nature. In both, the meaning vaguely oscillates between the higher and the lower, and this is what explains that Rousseau could have such influence on persons like Kant and Geijer.[58]

Higher romanticism shares with Babbitt only the criticism of lower romanticism. According to Rousseau, man realizes his true nature by direct, formless expression of his ordinary, instinctual self. For higher romanticism, as for the Babbittian classicist, man attains his true nature only through the ethical discipline which alone can cultivate a rounded and proportional harmony and conquer the onesidedness and primitivity of what Rousseau calls nature, but which the higher romantic or the Babbittian classicist is prone rather to regard as unnatural, or at least as not yet true nature. Man's true nature is certainly his higher self. But that nature is not only the general human normativity, the *idea hominis*, the self that the individual has in common with other men, not even when understood as the highest ethical ideal. His real nature, his higher self, is *also* a unique self, an individual nature, a real personal kernel, continually and gradually disclosed, released, distilled, revealed, chiselled.

Leander's understanding of the moral ambivalence of romanticism thus opens a space for the higher understanding of individuality and personality and for their decisive importance:

> Individuality, starved in the era of pseudo-classicism, reasserted itself with explosive power in Rousseau—an explosion which also had its historical justification.[59]

However, even in Leander there is a certain hesitation or even a contradiction as to individuality as such. In one passage, Leander does not unambiguously regard individuality in itself as of value or even as 'neutral', but again approaches Babbitt's position. Discussing the continuation and expansion of romanticism, Leander writes that

> in our time we above all have to distinguish between two kinds of autonomy or self-determination: a higher and a lower one. While earlier the need to assert the right of individuality to free expansion was intensely felt, it has become the task of later generations better to distinguish between a sound and an unsound individualism. Individuality, the passions, nature—such was then the cry—should not be repressed and tied to the Procrustean bed of convention, because they are the *preconditions* for all that is good and noble in humanity. Today, it is much more urgent to emphasize that they are *only* the preconditions for the good, only the rebel material, out of which something is to be made, and which always offers *resistance* to the realization of values.'[60]

Individuality remains the 'precondition', but it is *always* rebellious, it *always* offers resistance. There is here no emphasis on individuality as such—Leander only accepts the possibility to form something of value out of its rebellious material.

But later Leander states that

> the romantic insight that the greatness of every man is his individuality, and that the supreme general humanity is also the highest development of one's uniqueness—this is a precious heritage, for us and for coming generations. The anti-romantic criticism, which I have here developed, is not aimed at this insight.[61]

The general qualities still hold a prominent place, but the statement that 'the greatness of every man is his individuality' goes beyond the understanding of individuality *as precondition alone*, as *only* the site for the manifestation of general values. When Leander deals with higher romanticism in itself, it becomes clear that its meaning is the simultaneous realisation in the individual personality of his own individuality and of the classicist norms:

> The deepest thought of Romanticism is the *full and self-determined development:* this is the deeper meaning of the idea of organicism as well as of the idea of the genius, of the idea of the distinctiveness and free development of peoples as well as of the protest against all kinds of outer restrictions and conventions—Higher romanticism is the imperishable property of mankind, its most mature expression in thought and in poetry.[62]

Although Goethe liberated himself from the romanticism of his youth and ultimately reached the platform of classicism, nevertheless he remained a romantic 'in the higher sense'. And although Hegel rejected the 'lower expressions' of romanticism with crushing satire, still he was 'the greatest philosopher of romanticism'. The true idealists in poetry and philosophy attain to 'the true

classicity in their view of life, that is the most noble fruit of romanticism'. The sincerity of their religion as well as their rational, critical faculties, prevent them from being drawn to the pathological sides of romanticism.[63] The higher romanticism of such idealists is, according to Leander, 'one with the religion of freedom: the gospel of full and self-determined development.' The ideal of the hero that we find in Tegnér, the greatest Swedish poet of the first half of the nineteenth century, 'is a celebration of the right of individuality to free expansion'. For Tegnér the aristocrat it is mainly the great men who have 'a mission, a calling to fullfill', for Geijer the more democratically minded it is expected of every man that he 'finds out and realises' this mission and calling. Leander now makes the central daimonic connection of personal idealism: 'by finding himself and becoming itself, the individual also finds his calling.'[64] The famous—and slightly paradoxical—words of Geijer in his *Memoirs* are quoted:

> 'There is a basic thought in all of my life, which emerges ever more clearly, and which is not my own work—because it has led me and directed me to this very day. If I were to give it a name, it is none other than the much disputed *principle of personality*, whose prophet I have become almost against my own will. I mean thereby that I have kept at a distance and discarded everything that could have hindered and impeded the development of my own innermost nature.'
>
> And:
>
> 'It is my firmconviction, that there does not exist a single man, who cannot do *anything* better than all the others. And there is not a single one, fromwhomI consider it impossible to learn.'[65]

Leander then makes some observations of his own, in which the influence from Croce is traceable, although the idea of *personality* which Leander here defends is not derived from Croce, but directly belongs to the tradition of personal idealism from which Leander himself exemplifies. According to Leander, the last of the sentences quoted from Geijer has

> deep-reaching philosophical consequences, that only in our own century have become fully understood in Benedetto Croce's identification of history and philosophy. If the Eternal is revealed in every man in a new and unique way, then we ought to study the world of man and of history in order to reach an ever deeper and richer insight into the Eternal. World history is the self-disclosure of the Eternal, and it is only through this self-disclosure that we can know it.[66]

Reading passages such as this one today, we cannot avoid questioning them in so far as they imply a metaphysical idea of historical progress, even of the Hegelian kind, and a neglect of other sources of insight into the Eternal. To that extent, they represent a problematic aspect of secular modernity. But there can be little doubt that Leander is here mainly interested in individuality as such, in an aspect of modernity which, I believe, it is possible to separate from more problematic ones. For Leander immediately continues in the following way:

> This sense of the value of the individual was unknown to the classicismof the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. There was an ideal of general humanity, which was opposed to the free development of the individual, and one could not see that the highest development of personal unicity at the same time is the highest human generality, the highest participation in the Eternal. In fact, the great man is at the same time intensely personal and intensely general. One attains general humanity by in a deeper sense being oneself. And we can know the generally valuable, the Eternal, only in its individual, historical manifestations.[67]

It is, however, only Hegel's 'concrete universal', at least as it has been explained and modified by Croce, that Leander here defends, a notion which still lacks metaphysical sanctions for personal individuality. And as we have already seen, in some passages he seems to relapse from personal idealism in the direction of the Babbittian understanding of individuality as of value mainly as the mere locus of the manifestation of general classicist norms:

> For the nobler kind of romanticism, the individual potentialities are only the material to be cultivated, and out of which something of general human value shall be made.[68]

But the criticism of lower romanticism is, as we have seen, certainly combined with the defence of higher romanticism understood in the terms of individual personality. The Crocean view of history is said to have

> its parodic counterpart in lower romanticism, which intoxicates itself in the manifold of history, change and relativity without a thought for the higher, general values that are therein revealed. In vulgar romanticismthe streamof history became a drug, just as its cult of originality became a parody of the true idea of personality.[69]

And I trust that to the extent that he points in the direction of personal idealism, Leander's use of the category of individual personality sets his position apart not only from that of Babbitt, but also from that of Croce.

7. True Liberalism

To higher romanticism corresponds, according to Leander, a 'true' liberalism: in the whole development of Geijer is clearly discernible, according to Leander,

> the identity of higher romanticismwith liberalismin its best forms---the deeper motive of truth in romanticismcomes into its own in the Geijerian variety of liberalism, because this motive is the demand of the individual for free and organic development of personality, unrestricted by outer conventions and rules. If the idea of the organismis given a complete and uncompromising form, its liberal implications will become evident; it will then be equivalent with the right to free and self-determined development.[70]

Babbitt would undoubtedly be as sceptical against this as he was against Ibsen's exhortation, 'This above all,—to thine own self be true'. But for Leander, allthis is inseparable

from the ethical discipline, the formation of character, the training of the will, the schooling of the imagination, by which the higher self is distinguished from the lower. It is the law of our higher nature alone which is to be given freedom. Leander here really expresses himself, in the footsteps of Babbitt, in a tradition of conservatism which is basically Burkean. It is a 'truly liberal' conservatism which accepts at least historical individuality. But the metaphysical deepening of the concept of personality belongs to the tradition of Swedish personal idealism with its specific blend of Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Leibniz, Kant, aspects of post-Kantian idealism, and Christian Theism in general and its Augustinian strand in particular, a synthesis of thought which we do not yet find in Burke. Leander, however, does not follow this tradition in the farther reaches of metaphysics. Expanding on true liberalism, he limits himself to the ethical dimension. Freedom, in all meanings of the word, is opposed to outer compulsion, such as external dictates restricting freedom or thought or belief, rules forced upon the poet, political tyranny, arbitrary rules for economic life. But 'at least as important', according to Leander, are the 'deeper meanings' of the word. All true freedom must also be

> freedom from inner compulsion, from the lower within man that is determined by nature, that counteracts and hampers his sound development. Freedom is freedom for the best in each to come fully into its own. Higher romanticism being one with liberalism does not mean that everything that goes under the name of liberalism should be accepted without discernment. Only where the ethical meaning of the concept of freedom has been fully acknowledged, only there do we find true liberalism—and it is rare. [71]

Between higher romanticism, true liberalism and personal idealism there is thus a close connection, indeed an identity: it is only a matter of different aspects of the same world-view. True liberalism was what Leander set against the 'reactionary conservatism' which he considered the inevitable consequence of some of the anti-romantic criticism. But here, it cannot have been Babbitt that he had in mind, although the absence in Babbitt of Crocean and personal idealism and of the understanding of higher romanticism inspired by them may bring him somewhat closer to some such conservatism. If Babbitt does not explicitly and in philosophically clear form discern a higher romanticism and a positive value and metaphysical status of individuality as such, at least he makes the distinction between different kinds of liberalism: one of the central chapters in *Democracy and Leadership* carries the title 'True and False Liberals'.

The ongoing reappraisal of Irving Babbitt, in the perspective of the more general criticism of the errors of modernity and liberalism on a global scale, indicates that with time, Babbitt may be counted as one of the key thinkers of modernity. Babbitt points ahead to a 'true modernity', capable sufficiently to absorb the ethical and spiritual essence of the great traditions of humanity, while at the same time retaining its own partial truths and achievements. At the heart of modernity in its different aspects lies the question of individuality. Babbitt points out its abnormalities, its deformations, its dangers. He was certainly right that in his days there was a deeper need of understanding the problems of individuality than of understanding its possibilities. But the twentieth century has been shaped by the perverted naturalistic and collectivist reaction against the too shallow individualism of romantic as well as enlightenment liberalism. Babbitt saw it coming, he analyzed it, he understood it. But he could not possibly foretell the extent of its horrors. Together with the latest antithesis in the form of the pseudo-individualism of relativistic and even nihilistic post-modernism in a global mass-culture, they signify the dissolution and the end of the failed dialectic of modernity. We therefore stand in desperate need of a defence of personal individuality on a higher or a deeper level as a central part of the creative renewal of classical humanism and spiritual traditionalism that is the only alternative.

According to personal idealism, not only the universal but also the individual is anchored in the absolute. The difference from Hegel is therefore that individuality not only manifests the universal, but, with its metaphysical status, is itself of absolute value. Opposing Hegelianism, the personal idealists sought to unite the new individualism with the ethical objectivism and metaphysical dimension of the classical and Christian traditions. From the very beginning, their ethics therefore stands in fundamental opposition to 'lower' romanticism, although in some forms it soon became watered down by the superficial and sentimental progressivist currents of modernity. To the extent that this took place, it is the individualism of the personal idealists that needs to be corrected through the sobering criticism provided by Babbittian classicism.

In the face of some expressions of the new phase of the history of romantic extremism known as post-modernism, in some forms dovetailed with libertarianism, we need more than ever to consider Babbitt's warnings and understand the meaning of true classicism as he defines it in a broad, ecumenical way, pointing to parallels in the traditions of the East. But the preceding excesses of anti-individualism also indicate that we have to go beyond Babbitt in the understanding of the meaning of sound individuality and of its philosophical defence. The direction in which we have to look for this is, however, the same as the one in which Babbitt sought his answers—it is basically a historical and conservative one, emphasizing complementary aspects of the wisdom of the great traditions of humanity which Babbitt so eloquently brought back to life and set before the modern individual as an ideal in the truest sense. Only by honouring this ideal in its entirety will modern man justify his freedom, and develop the

individuality that is alone worthy of being preserved.

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Notes

1 I use the following editions of and abbreviations for Babbitt's works: *Literature and the American College* (LC), National Humanities Institute, Washington, D. C., 1986 (originally published in 1908), with an Introduction by Russell Kirk; *Rousseau and Romanticism* (RR), Transaction Publishers, New Brunswick and London, 1991 (originally published in 1919), with an Introduction by Claes G Ryn; *Democracy and Leadership* (DL), Liberty Press, Indianapolis, 1979 (originally published in 1924), with a Foreword by Russell Kirk; and *Character and Culture: Essays on East and West* (CC), Transaction Publishers, New Brunswick and London, 1995 (originally published in 1940 under the title *The Spanish Character and Other Essays),* with an Introduction by Claes G Ryn.

2 In my forthcoming thesis, I present the Swedish tradition of personal idealism, but partial equivalents are to be found in England, the United States, Germany, France, and other countries.

3 E. g. DL, 197

4 LC, 79, 124; RR, lxxii, 29-31, 166-167, DL 262, 343; CC, 233-234

5 E. g. DL 223, 316; CC, 79, 228, 245

6 RR, 245; cf 41

7 RR pp 330-331; cf DL, 172

8 Babbitt notes also the elements of popular romanesque culture in the Middle Ages.

9 DL, 59

10 See e. g. RR, 244-245, 247; DL, 52, 55, 58

11 RR, 53

12 RR, 50

13 RR, 58, 64

14 LC, 175

15 LC, 163-164

16 RR, 166

17 RR, 330

18 LC, 83f

19 RR, 347-348

20 DL, 247, cf 335

21 RR, 329; cf DL, 303

22 RR, 128

23 RR, 317

24 DL, 322, 326-327

25 LC, 79

26 LC, 84

27 RR, 14, 17, 19, 37-38, 173

28 LC, 85, 110, 121

29 RR, 67, 329; LC, 141, 195

30 LC, 136, 172, 193-194

31 LC, 195

32 RR, 46-47

33 LC, 85

34 DL, 170

35 CC, 32-33

36 LC, 127

37 DL, 197

38 DL, 334-336

39 See e. g. Borden Parker Bowne's *Personalism* (1908), especially the chapter 'The Failure of Impersonalism'.

40 CC, 132, 170-171

49 CC, 139

50 A student of Ernst Cassirer's at the University of Gothenburg, Leander wrote a thesis on anti-romantic criticism in the works of Babbitt, Paul Elmer More, and Ernest Seillière, which was praised in the United States by Arthur Lovejoy as 'a learned and *gedankenreich* volume' and by Austin Warren, as late as 1956, as 'the most philosophically able work' on the New Humanism. During a stay in the United States, Leander wrote *The Philosophy of John Dewey* (1939), which was praised by Dewey himself despite containing strong criticism against its object of study. Apart from the short study *Nya synpunkter på romantiken (New Perspectives on Romanticism)* (1944), republished in 1980 as *Romantik och moral (Romanticism and Morality)*, which I will use here, Leander's publications in Swedish include *Erfarenhetsbegreppet från estetikens synpunkter (The Concept of Experience in the Perspective of Aesthetics)* (1941), *Några språkteoretiska grundfrågor (Some Basic Questions in the Theory of Language)* (1943), and *Estetik och kunskapsteori. Croce, Cassirer, Dewey (Aesthetics and Epistemology: Croce, Cassirer, Dewey)* (1950). In German he published *Lessing als ästhetischer Denker (Lessing as Philosopher of Aesthetics)* (1942). In 1949 he contributed an article to the volume on Cassirer *(The Philosophy of Ernst Cassirer)* in the *Library of Living Philosophers* series. At a late stage of his career, Leander returned to Babbitt and More in a slim English volume published in London entitled *The Inner Check*, 1974. Leander's disciple Claes G Ryn has richly expounded and applied the philosophical analysis of Leander, especially his interpretation and development of Babbitt, in *Democracy and the Ethical Life* (1978), *Will, Imagination and Reason* (1986), and *The New Jacobinism: Can Democracy Survive?* (1991). More information on Leander is found in the Preface to *Will, Imagination and Reason* and in Ryn's introduction to *Romantik och moral*; in this edition is also published a bibliography of Leander's works.

51 *Op cit*, 22. English translations from *Romantik och moral* are my own.

52 *Op cit*, 72

53 *Op cit*, 72-73

54 As do also Kant's words, 'the crooked timber of mankind'.

55 LC, 195

56 RR, 79-80

57 E. g. LC, 176, 208-209

58 *Op cit*, 73-74

59 *Op cit*, 81-82

60 *Op cit*, 81

61 *Op cit*, 82

62 *Op cit*, 74

63 *Op cit*, 75

64 *Op cit*, 75-76

65 *Op cit*, 76. Geijer's *Memoirs* are available in an English translation, but here I use my own translation.

66 *Op cit*, 77

67 *Ibid*

68 *Op cit*, 77-78

69 *Op cit*, 77

70 *Op cit*, 79

71 *Op cit*, 79-80

THE COGNITIVE FUNCTIONS OF EMOTION

R.T. Allen

1 Antipathy towards emotions

It is widely assumed that emotions are inevitably irrational in themselves and their effects. They are 'mists on our mental windscreens' [1] and can only distort our cognitive and other undertakings. Research, experiments and all investigations should be conducted dispassionately and not corrupted by the emotional involvement of the enquirer. Knowledge is genuine only insofar as it is a function of the object and can only be distorted by the influence of the knower's emotions. Emotions are subjective colourings of experience which interfere with our apprehensions of the world.

In opposition to these assumptions I shall argue that, although some emotional experiences are irrational in themselves and their effects and do distort our knowing and our action, nevertheless emotional involvement is necessary to knowing and action, just as fuel and steering are to motor vehicles. Dirty fuel and defective steering upset the performances of motor vehicles, but that fact does not mean that clean fuel and correct steering are unnecessary. Consequently, I shall take the facts of failures and distortions for granted and shall focus on the constructive and necessary roles of emotions with respect to knowing [2].

I have elsewhere shown how certain emotional experiences are required for the governance of action [3]. In brief, experiences of felt attraction or aversion issue in motivating emotions which initiate and guide courses of action by forming and then modifying, as and when necessary, the specific intentions embodied in them. A course of action is terminated either by a felt experience of satisfaction, which shows that it has succeeded, or by one of dissatisfaction, which shows that it has failed, along with either one of despair regarding the possibility of success, which shows that a second attempt is also likely to fail, or one of hope of success in a second attempt. Without these experiences, action would not be initiated, sustained, terminated nor renewed. I now propose to survey the functions which emotions constructively fulfil in the gaining and holding of knowledge.

2. Emotion and scientific knowledge.

I shall begin with what may seem to be the most unpromising form of knowledge—that of the natural sciences—which has often been supposed to be wholly impersonal and 'objective'. In his *Personal Knowledge*, Michael Polanyi effectively demolished that assumption and showed that there is a necessarily passionate involvement of the person in his knowing. In Chapter 6 of that book, Polanyi showed how scientific discovery manifests a pattern of governance by emotion very similar to that later worked out by Strasser with regard to action generally. I shall now summarise Polanyi's argument.

Polanyi aimed to show that 'scientific passions are no mere psychological by-product, but have a logical function which contributes an indispensible element to science' 5. They have three functions in discovery: *selective*, *heuristic* and *persuasive*.

The *selective* function has two aspects: to signal that a discovery is intellectually precious and that it is precious to science. The former aspect is, in effect, the primary experience which gives rise to all intellectual enquiries—the felt conviction of their value which selects them as worthy of pursuit. It is this which is Polanyi's over-all concern. Science along with the other great articulate systems of civilisation, such as religion and law, evokes and imposes and claims to be right those emotions which sustain and appraise it and appraise its theories for their intellectual beauty as a token of contact with reality [5]. Presented, we may say, as a mere body of objective fact, all that science can evoke is a 'So what?' or a 'justification' in terms of its technological utility, which would crimp and stunt it.

The second aspect of the selective function corresponds to the notion of a motivating emotion, for it gives the underlying desire to discover the truth about nature a specific direction. Out of all the facts which are known or knowable, only a few are of scientific interest. The appreciation of this interest, which relies on a sense of intellectual beauty, cannot be dispassionately defined, as neither can the beauty of works of art nor the excellence of noble actions [6]. Without selection and guidance by emotional appraisal of the scientific value of what is known or appears likely to be discovered, enquiry would 'inevitably spread out into a desert of trivialities'. What is needed is a general vision of reality which yields a scale of interest and plausibility, so that important conceptions can be upheld as intrinsically plausible even when there is evidence against them at the moment, and others can be rejected as specious even though there may be some evidence for them [7]. A scientist, in selecting a problem to be pursued, requires a sense, a feeling, for problems which are likely to be soluble, soluble by him with the resources and time available, and to be of some wider value and significance for science [8]. There is no set of formulae or rules for this. Only what is routine and thus easily anticipatable and of low interest, we may add, can be attained by the scientist without emotional involvement in what he is doing. As for what constitutes scientific value, Polanyi suggests three joint factors, unevenly distributed over the natural sciences: certainty or accuracy, systematic relevance or profundity, and intrinsic interest 10. Sensitivity to such values, and their presence,

absence and degree in problems, theories and results, is necessary to their scientific evaluation as worth investigating further and to deciding if results are acceptable or unacceptable. It is required to terminate or provoke to further enquiry, as well as to turn a general interest in scientific research into a specific intention to take up and prosecute a particular problem or line of enquiry.

The *heuristic* function is that of sustaining the effort to discover by intimating specific discoveries, yet to be made, and sustaining the pursuit of them over a long period. Major discoveries which change the interpretative framework of science cannot be made by the routine use of the existing framework. Those who make them have to cross a logical gap between present conceptions and new ones, the problem and its solution, which involves a change in their whole way of seeing things, and they can do this only

> by relying on the unspecifiable impulse of our heuristic passion . . . . Like all ventures in which we comprehensively dispose of ourselves, such intentional change of our personality requires a passionate motive to accomplish it. Originality must be passionate [10].

Citing the example of Kepler, who expressed such passion in respect of both genuine discoveries and mistaken ideas, Polanyi points out that it is not infallible. All the same, it is necessary.

This heuristic function, I suggest, corresponds also to the notion of the motivating emotion. It, too, intimates something specific to be done and sustains through difficulties the effort to do it. It therefore also acts, not as a terminating emotion in the specific sense, but as a provoking one which evokes further efforts after disappointing results have been encountered at particular stages on the way.

Polanyi's third function is the *persuasive* one [11]. Having satisfied himself that he has made a genuine and significant discovery, the scientist must communicate it to his colleagues, and so have it confirmed. It is not made true by consensus, but all serious utterances about the world are put forth with what Polanyi calls 'universal intent', as true sayings and worthy of all men to be believed. Though it is possible to be *Athanasius contra mundum* and later to be confirmed to have been right all along, the agreement of one's colleagues gives added assurance that one is correct. Thus the scientific community, or those specialising in one's own corner, have to be convinced. Again it is the major discovery, creating a wide logical gap, which demands persuasive passion, on the one side, and, on the other, sympathy with what one initially cannot comprehend [12]. The other scientists have, as it were, to learn a new language, for the great discovery cannot be expressed in terms of existing conceptions and terminology. One cannot argue for a new framework of thought in terms of an old one. A process of conversion is required to bring the others to follow the pioneer in crossing the logical gap that he has bridged. Thus arises the phenomenon of unseemly scientific controversies, some of them long lasting such as those concerning the status of psycho-analysis, in which persuasive emotions get out of hand. At the limit these concern what it is for something to be science or scientific in the first place, the one party claiming that its theory, practice or branch of study is science or scientific, the other denying it. In terms of our scheme of governance by emotion, this persuasive passion is the motivating emotion of a second course of action—gaining the agreement of one's colleagues—which follows upon the successful outcome of a previous one, the original line of research.

Polanyi has an interesting comment to make at the end of his discussion of the constituitive emotions of science:

> Some people may listen to these illustrations of continuing and sometimes violently conducting controversies with impatience, for they believe that science provides a procedure for deciding any such issues by systematic and dispassionate empirical investigations. However, if that were clearly the case, there would be no reason to be annoyed with me. My argument would have no persuasive force, and could be ignored without anger [13].

3. Satisfaction and standards in knowing

'A scientist seeks to discover a satisfying theory, and when he has found it, he can enjoy its excellence permanently' [14]. Without experiences of satisfaction, we would not know when to stop, for we would have no idea of whether we had succeeded or not. Therefore we need to enquire into the nature of cognitive satisfaction and thus of the standards which we use in deciding if we are satisfied or not in the course of enquiry.

What makes scientific theories satisfying is primarily their truth. Polanyi suggested that, secondarily, there are three further forms of scientific value which distinguish more important and valuable truths from the mass of trivial ones. One suspects that, in vain attempts to ape the mathematization of physics and chemistry in subject-matters which do not permit of it, the allegedly human, social or 'behaviourial' sciences often produce precise trivialities, or downright distortions of the truth. Whether that is so or not, one can see that there is a real question as to the satisfactions sought and the standards used. They do not come revealed on tablets of stone, but have to be themselves discovered, confirmed and established in a tradition. Intellectual enquiry is an intelligent and intentional activity: it aims at a goal and seeks an imagined satisfaction in attaining it. It seeks to satisfy the desire to know, and to know more thoroughly and more profoundly. It implicitly projects a conception of what will satisfy that desire. Such a conception may be vague, both in general and in specific terms. Generally, we may not yet know what sort of knowledge, understanding and insight we are seeking, only that we seek something which we feel

ourselves not yet to have. Such is necessarily the case during the birth and infancy of any branch of disciplined enquiry, or during a profound revision of it, such as happened to historical studies at the end of the eighteenth century, when they turned from reliance only upon secondary sources to the use of primary ones—literary ones such as records in archives, letters and diaries, and material ones recovered by archaeology. The story of the rise of modern natural science from the later Middle Ages through the Renaissance and into the seventeenth century shows how it was mixed up with other interests, which we now recognise to be non-scientific, such as magic in the chemistry of Paracelsus and the Pythagorean number mysticism of Kepler, but which were not, and perhaps could not, be distinguished from it at the time. It required, on the part of the pioneers, intense effort and profound belief in a vision that could not be verified for some time in actual accomplishments. Newton's wider historical significance is his demonstration to the educated world of what the new science could do, and so he raised hopes, often much too grandiose, for many more such achievements. None of this could have been done with an attitude of indifference and by the mechanical following of established rules.

A similar general ignorance of what it is that he seeks affects the new recruit to a developed discipline, for he has yet to become familiar with the ways in which it operates and what sorts of things it accepts as valid and what it rejects as invalid. Insofar as he intends to practise the discipline, rather than just to acquire knowledge of its discoveries, the student has to have a desire to know and to discover, has to acquire a sensitivity to intellectual values generally and those of his discipline in particular, and thereby has to learn what sorts of thing in general will appropriately satisfy his desire. These are the emotions which, as Polanyi says, every branch of study teaches its recruits.

Specifically, in any particular enquiry we do not yet know what we seek, otherwise we would have already found it. We seek an X, or a set of unknowns, that will account for, or fill gaps in, what we already know. We have some vague conception of what it is, based upon what we already know. It is a relatively indeterminate something that will satisfy our desire to explain these data, to link up these currently separate fields or theories, to fill in the blanks of this story, to account for this person's sudden change of course. It is like a blank space on a map, unknown in itself but known to some extent as being here and not there, beyond this and north of that. If it were wholly indeterminate, we would never know where to look nor how to recognise it if we found it, and if it were wholly determinate, we would already know and possess it.

Seeking something more or less indeterminate at the outset, whose nature is progressively revealed as we go along, is a familiar occurrence in daily life with regard to other desires and satisfactions, when we experience states of restlessness, seek something to satisfy our felt but vague unease, and yet do not know what it will be [15]. We try this and then that, and as we feel disappointment, more uneasy, less uneasy, partially satisfied—'colder' and 'warmer' in the terms of children's guessing games—so we know we are moving away, towards or past what we seek. This is what C.S. Lewis referred to as the dialectic of desire, in the case of the 'Sweet Desire' or Joy, which cannot be satisfied with any mundane object [16]. Following it through experience of what does not satisfy it, and without pretending to oneself that it is satisfied when it isn't, it will lead to what will satisfy it. That, I suggest, is true of all desires, intellectual ones included. Lines of research are often suggested by a felt unease with an existing theory, set of data, wide-ranging conception or received account. An accepted explanation may be felt to be superficial or to leave out facts which are felt to go beyond random variations in observations and experimental results. I stress the word 'felt' here for two reasons: it suggests both the 'niggle', the worry or itch which will not go away, a working of intellectual conscience and sensitivity, and also the tentative groping for something not yet in focus, still largely indeterminate, and yet to be found and seen as what it really is. One has to feel this worry or perhaps intellectual cramp in order to realise that there is a problem at all in what is already known.

The imagined but often as yet largely indeterminate satisfactions of intellectual desire thereby set the standards for intellectual work and success and failure at it: what we shall take to be a true representation of reality, a good explanation, a cogent argument, a valid proof, a proper way to conduct experiments or to carry out surveys. Standards, as in accountancy and medicine, have to be achieved or refined by pioneers and then established through a growing consensus. They are obviously historical phenomena: they come gradually into existence, become established through teaching and thus in traditions, become more exactly defined and more exacting, and perhaps also decline. Professional and academic bodies emerge to endorse, codify, further refine, monitor and perhaps enforce such standards. For example, it is now almost impossible to get any article accepted by a scholarly journal or book by a scholarly publisher unless it has complete set of foot-notes, but such was not the case forty or so years ago. Likewise within the last twenty or so years even undergraduate essays in British universities and colleges have had to fit the same format. Sometimes one may think this to be irrelevant pedantry diverting teacher and pupil from the real questions of content, but the insistence upon the appearance is a fact of contemporary academic life, and most teachers and institutions are not satisfied unless one conforms to these requirements. And they make their dissatisfaction and displeasure

felt.

The intellectual life, now almost the same as the academic one since only in biography and history are there now independent scholars, is distinguished by an attitude of detachment, a bracketing of other concerns and interests. It is the *disinterested* pursuit of knowledge, or it is that primarily although it can be joined with some types of other concern provided they remain subordinate and do not lead to the distortion of the truth. But it is not the *uninterested* pursuit of knowledge. It is detachment from those other interests out of commitment to intellectual and academic ones and attachment to their distinctive values.

So far we have considered natural science in particular and intellectual disciplines in general. We have not considered the emotional governance of cognitive activity in everyday life. I do not wish to deny that there are often important differences, especially between the apprehension and understanding of concrete reality in 'the life-world' as against the generalising theorising and hence abstract understanding of natural and human sciences, if there really are any of the latter in the narrower sense of 'science'. Cognitive activity in daily life is usually 'interested' and undertaken for specific purposes, such as entertainment. This is shown in the preference given by ordinary readers to history and biography over books from other intellectual disciplines. Except when some particular demand is made, as in wanting to know all the defects of a second-hand car which one thinks of buying, we have more relaxed standards in daily life, as witness gossip, anecdotes and much journalism. We take more things on trust and we are not so interested in truth and accuracy. Nevertheless, though in daily life we seek to satisfy other desires as well, and usually seek the truth only as a means to or as but one constituent in the satisfaction of those other desires, insofar as we do seek it the same relationships with emotion and standards apply. I overhear a piece of gossip. 'Surely that can't be true', I feel. But I may not be provoked to confirm my disbelief.

4. Emotion and the apprehension of value

Knowing involves standards which cannot be neutrally and unemotionally defined, but are essentially a matter or what we find to be satisfactory or unsatisfactory. This does not make knowing 'subjective' since fidelity to reality is, or should be, the fundamental standard we set for ourselves and satisfaction that we seek. 'Subjectivism' consists in the preference for other satisfactions over strictly cognitive ones, and not in the seeking of satisfactions *per se*. Someone without sensitivity to such matters, without an active desire to know which can be satisfied or dissatisfied, cannot seriously or for long pursue any intellectual enquiry. At the most, like students on courses which they have to take and in which they are not interested, he can engage only in routine and low-level work, go mechanically through the motions, and so find little meaning—intrinsic meaning—in what he does. Even if he finds its meaning to lie elsewhere, then he still has to have some active desire to know what is relevant to and what will thus be satisfactory as a means to or component in his ulterior purpose. Given the housewife's lack of interest in pure mathematics, she is not going to succeed in effective housekeeping if she is not at all sensitive to relative prices and the correctness of bills and change.

But can we apprehend values and standards, and guide ourselves by them, unemotionally? For example, I have no interest in golf, do not get excited at all by it, and am bored by it. Yet I could nevertheless be taught to tell a good golfer from a bad one. I could then rightly judge Smith to be better than Jones yet feel nothing about them and their achievements. I would be prepared to say that even now I could tell in a rough and ready way the better from the worse, though I would miss the finer points. Likewise a Philistine, while remaining a Philistine, could come to appraise some genuine merits and demerits in art. In these examples, we would evaluate performers, performances and products without valuing the activity. In fundamentally the same way, one can see another in danger—that is, to evaluate as harmful what is likely to happen to him—yet not care about him or it.

Two questions now arise: Under what conditions is this possible? and, Can there be unemotional valuation?

Firstly, unemotional evaluation is the attitude of the detached observer, not of the participant. It is thus parasitic upon the latter. Without sensitivity to the values involved, we cannot either properly or for long engage in an activity but can go only through the motions of a routine. Those who find no satisfaction in their work can be given only mentally undemanding tasks and need attentive supervision.

Secondly, valuation is nothing if not felt—not felt all the time, but most of the time. For example the love of one's neighbour is essentially a practical love, an attitude to be shown in deeds, whatever we happen to feel about any particular neighbour in need. But it could be not shown if on every occasion we helped him with gritted teeth—if we were misanthropes and acting totally against our feelings. Somewhere at sometime there has to be some fellow-feeling for someone. Values, I would say with Ricoeur and Polanyi [17], can be known only in serving them or in at least feeling their attraction and 'command'. Unless you feel the respect due to truth or the 'command' within justice, you do not know what you are talking about for you are not valuing them. One cannot simply register, as if it were a neutral fact, that justice is admirable and to be cherished. Emotions and desires engage us in the world and project around us what Ricoeur calls 'an affective perspective' in which objects appear interesting, attractive, repulsive, lovely, hateful and so on [18].

Emotivists were correct in seeing a close relation between emotions and

values, and a frequent identity of terminology. But they themselves adopted the standpoint of the detached and disengaged observer, merely noting neutral facts about other people. Thus they took values to be projections of feelings and failed to appreciate the felt response to, attraction to and repulsion from the values and disvalues found to be already in or borne by objects. Undoubtedly some things are made valuable to us by our feelings for them, and this we can both recognise or fail to recognise. I can be aware that a rather ordinary painting has a sentimental value for me, as portraying the place where I was born or as bequeathed by my parents, quite apart from its meagre aesthetic merits. And I may not be aware that I am giving too much credit to the work of a pretty student. Equally I can fail to recognise that I am over-sensitive to some things (for example, my own comfort) and insensitive to others (for example, the needs of my neighbour). But then we have defects and make errors with all our faculties. And there could be no possibility of errors if there were no truth or correctness. If the world really were a totality of merely neutral facts, then it would not be the case, as is often supposed, that all our valuations and evaluations are *erroneous* projections of subjective colourings onto it. For, ex hypothesi, they themselves would be neutral facts and no more. If all is neutral fact, then nothing can be right or wrong.

Emotion, then, opens up the world of value and disvalue to us. Without emotion we would indeed be faced by a grey and meaningless world. Or, rather, since emotion is necessary to the governance of knowing, we would not be able to recognise that world in the first place. Indeed, there is evidence to show that it is first given in perception as bearing values—that colours are primarily 'warm' or 'cold' before being colour-tones [19]. Thus, as the fundamental answer to Sartre's question, 'What must consciousness be, that emotion should be possible, perhaps that it even should be necessary?' [20], there could be no consciousness—at least no finite consciousness born into a world which about which it has to learn—without emotion and the capacity to be moved.

From these considerations we see the truth of John Macmurray's definition of reason as the capacity to behave in terms of the object. It follows, he rightly says, that reason is primarily an affair of emotion while the rationality of thought is derivative and secondary. For it is

> emotion that stands directly behind activity determining its substance and direction, while thought is related to action indirectly and through emotion, determining only its form and that partially [21].

This is not to be taken in any Humean sense of emotion as a blind and merely initial push whereas reason is merely a matter of calculation—of means to ends given by that push. No, for as Macmurray states and as studies of the intentionality of emotion have shown, emotion itself contains thought and has its inherent rationality. Thought, as mere and disengaged thinking, is a secondary and derived activity, but one which philosophers are only too liable to take as primary by reflecting upon their own habitually disengaged thinking and not upon our primordial engagement in and with the world. And even that disengaged thinking is directed by interest in and sensitivity towards the truth of things and it seeks that particular satisfaction.

5. Love and knowledge

Emotion, said Macmurray, determines the substance and direction of activity. As objective, it is not a reaction to a stimulus but 'an immediate appreciation of the value and significance of real things', our capacity to apprehend objective values. That also we have concluded. And therefore, he goes on to argue, love is 'the fundamental positive emotion' characteristic of human beings, and can be subjective and irrational, as when we enjoy our own feelings, or objective and rational, as when we love the reality of the other person himself. It then follows that

> the capacity to love objectively is the capacity which makes us persons. It is the ultimate source of our capacity to behave in terms of the object. It is the core of rationality [23].

I propose to consider this claim in relation to knowledge and shall suggest that what is true of that can be generalised to all forms of activity.

Negative emotions and attitudes certainly tend to shut one off from the world: one does not get to know better those for whom one feels hatred, scorn, contempt, anger or resentment; and moods of misery and depression close one up in oneself. But is love needed in order to know? That is precisely what Max Scheler argued in his 'Liebe und Erkenntnis'.

He begins by quoting two opposing statements:

> One can only get to know that which one loves and the deeper and fuller the knowledge is to become, the stronger, more forceful and livelier must be the love (Goethe).
>
> Every great love is the daughter of a great cognition (Leonardo da Vinci) [23].

Both of these he opposes to modern 'bourgeois' (and Objectivist and Positivist) opinion that love can only blind and that genuine apprehension requires emotional restraint. Scheler argues for Goethe's position rather than Leonardo's, which he sees as representing Greek and Indian views of the matter.

Despite their great differences, both the Greek and Indian views assert that love follows cognition. The Indian view, he states, is that love arises from a transition from not-knowing to knowing which in turn results from a dematerialisation of the object, the recognition that the world is *maya* or 'illusion'. The Greek view, most fully articulated by Plato, sees love as the passage from lower to higher cognition, of the 'not-being' of matter, to the higher cognition of the 'real being' of the Forms. It is a striving which is completed and so

terminated in perfect knowledge [24].

In contrast, says Scheler, Goethe expresses the Christian view, which begins with God's love for unlovely since fallen man (rather with God's overflowing love which creates the world out of nothing). Love is thus a condescension from God to man, and not a passage from lower to higher. Scheler thinks that the Christian revolution in world-view has not been fully carried through in this respect, save only by St Augustine and some of his followers such as Malebranche and Pascal, and that St Thomas Aquinas followed Aristotle too much in regarding love as a striving which must be preceded by an intellectual act, desire as requiring a prior perception, and wishing as requiring a prior conceptual grasp of the object. This, he states, has serious theological consequences for Thomism [25]. St Augustine in contrast began a new epistemology and psychology in which intellectual acts arise, not from the object and its attractiveness, but from a prior act of taking-an-interest and thus from the love or hate which motivates it. Without these, there can be no perception, memory or thought of an object; no selection from all possible objects of those which we in fact perceive and think about; no direction of our suppositions and perceptions; nor any intensification of our cognition of an object [26].

At first sight it seems obvious that we can love only what we already know, and so that love follows and does not precede knowledge. Boy meets girl and then falls in love with her. Love is a response to its object. How can it possibly exist in advance? This is what Brentano codified in his doctrine that emotions, along with judgments, are necessarily founded upon 'presentations' [27]. But consider again the vague moods of restlessness and stirring in which we want something but as yet do not know what it is. While love, for a person already met, can strike out of the blue or gradually grow, it can also exist first as vague yearning for someone else and then be focused upon a particular person. More generally, modern studies which emphasise the activity of the mind and its projection of a 'field' of awareness prior to particular objects, tend to support Scheler's view. For example, the perceptual processes of animals are highly selective and geared to what is significant for their lives. The world is first perceived in terms of emotional significance and thus motor responses towards or away from things [28]. It is not the objective loudness but the meaning of the utterance of one's name or of the crying of one's child which catches our attention. We do not simply register a mass of equal stimuli, but respond differentially to them and distinguish 'messages' from 'noise'. We may assume therefore that there operates in knowing a prior taking-an-interest (in certain sorts of thing and particular things). But is that taking-an-interest to be called 'love'? That term is surely too specific. And Scheler sees taking-an-interest as dependent upon prior movements of love or hate. Obviously this is true at times. Having a love or liking for a certain sort of thing, one is likely to wish to know more about an example of it, and, conversely, having a disliking for some other sort of thing, one is likely not to want to become more familiar with any examples. Yet are not such loves and hatreds, likings and dislikings, themselves acquired through experience of previous instances, and so originally derived from knowledge? A central fact of human nature is that we are not born with a set of determinate instincts, which would close our minds to things not impinging upon them, but with general capacities often manifesting themselves at later stages. We are essentially open to the world, able to take an interest in anything. Perhaps what we should say, then, is that we have some relatively specific interests from birth, and also that general openness which becomes specified into more determinate interests, and perhaps closed by determinate dislikings as well as by lack of time and energy. In some people, that openness seems to disappear as they come to live within a narrow and unvarying round. Therefore there is an original taking-an-interest from which emotions and knowledge develop together, and with them all forms of activity, each becoming more determinate, so that a particular instance of either can precede and generate a particular instance of the other. Goethe and Leonardo were both right and both wrong.

6. Sensitivity

Routine and habit can govern life, for some of the time. Complex skills can be deployed in routine ways, and thus without much involvement on the part of the self. Hence the experience, usually on a familiar route, of suddenly realising that one has driven quite a distance while thinking about something else. At any moment, unless one were half asleep, a non-routine event would have immediately caused one to focus attention wholly upon one's driving and that particular event. What that sort of reaction reveals is a latent sensitivity to certain things, in particular those bearing upon the task in hand. This sensitivity is presupposed by the governance by emotion which we have already considered. Were we not sensitive to what impinges upon what we are doing, we could not be satisfied or dissatisfied with its results or its results so far, and so terminate, redirect or restart our courses of action. It is to be noted that sensitivity is not simply a passive reaction. Indeed, there is nothing simply active or passive in human life. Sensitivity is the reactive reverse to the obverse of the active taking-an-interest-in. The latter motivates the former and the former directs and focuses the latter. We shall now consider further the nature and need for sensitivity in human life generally.

There are certain things to which we are always sensitive, whatever our state of mind. For example, our names, sudden noises close to us, sudden events which we glimpse out of the corners of our eyes, the crying of our children if we are parents. Such things have a great importance for us,

and we always respond to them. No one can ever train himself not to be caught off guard at all by the unexpected calling of his name or by a sudden noise just behind him. One may be able to inhibit most of the physical expression or consequences of one's response, but not the inner and felt grasping of attention and apprehension. Let us now think away all forms of this sensitivity, this liability to be brought up sharp. What then would happen?

The merely routine performance of a task is likely to result in the overlooking of significant items and events. If I file papers in a merely routine way, I am likely simply to scan them. Some unusual items will catch my eye and cause me to look more closely at the papers which contain them, and so probably not to put some where otherwise I would have put them. Yet less obvious differences, ones to which I am less sensitive, may well escape me and so may result in my misfiling those papers. If we now subtract that sensitivity entirely, we are left only with established routines and items for which we explicitly look. Now we can explicitly look for or bear in mind, not just particular things, but sorts of thing. Thus as well as looking for certain obvious words, in scanning pages in search of a specific topic, I also look, perhaps without explicitly realising it, for other words connected with that topic, and shall be brought up by them as well as the others if and when I see them. This does not happen when scanning pages written in a language in which I am not fluent. But without a sensitivity to the unanticipated, I shall spot only what I have explicitly thought of in advance, as now I have to do with foreign languages. We could, I conclude, perform without sensitivity only those tasks which can be reduced to routine and explicit anticipations.

But how can we establish routines and form explicit anticipations in the first place? Only by being involved, making a personal effort, and being sensitive to what we do and what happens, so that we learn what generally to do and not to do, what generally to notice and to look out for and what to disregard, and how to respond to it. Personal involvement and sensitivity can be reduced by routines and habits. But unless the latter are not to be inflexible and blind to what is unexpected, they can never replace the former, and require the former in order to become established in the first place.

Let us now consider some further applications of sensitivity. I suggest that generally it has an essentially bodily element or aspect. Obvious examples are a doctor feeling a pulse, a mechanic tightening a nut, a taster sampling tea. It is especially associated with touch, or smell and taste which themselves include an element of touch which hearing and sight do not, unless what we hear is especially loud or penetrating or what we see is especially bright or glaring, so that we feel it in our ears or eyes. We speak, literally or metaphorically, of the skilled person's 'touch' in the practice of his art. One insensitive to criticism and abuse is 'thick skinned'. Those insensitive to the feelings of others, and to their effects upon others, are 'callous'. The physical feeling of touch is the paradigm of sensitivity. And there is an echo, at least, of this basis and origin of sensitivity in all its forms. The mechanic is not as physically sensitive to the lumpy or smooth running of an engine as he is to the nut which he is tightening. Nevertheless he is attuned to the engine; he projects himself imaginatively into it; and feels its lumpiness and smoothness. The proper performance of his task requires that sensitivity and personal involvement [29]. Less physically based, yet still not without some echo of it, is the sensitivity of the fluent and alert user of a language to errors and abuses [30]. He immediately feels that there is a mistake in something he hears or reads, before he can analyse just what it is. Without such sensitivity, he would not spot, or spot so quickly, the error. The inexpert user of the language does not notice it and, if he has explicit knowledge of the rules (insofar as there is a rule for the particular case), has explicitly to scrutinise the sentence or passage for possible errors. It is a heightened sensitivity, through training, practice and experience, on which the skilled practitioner relies and which distinguishes him, that sure 'touch' beyond calculation and explicit formulation. A woodman feeling the weight and balance of an axe, a doctor listening to a patient's heart, a lawyer examining a contract or listening to evidence in court, a scholar studying a text, a scientist scrutinising experimental data—all these display and require a trained sensitivity in order to come to know what concerns them in their specific work.

Without the capacity for feeling, physical and non-physical, many tasks could not be properly performed and perhaps could not be performed at all. Sensitivity, as the reactive side of taking-an-interest-in, is a part of the foundation of all practical and theoretical knowledge.

7. Emotions and further knowledge

I now propose to contest a statement made by A. Kenny, that whereas one can infer from seeing a flash of blue that there was a policeman at hand, one cannot infer the same conclusion from feeling a wave of hatred [31]. Emotions, he concludes, can tell us nothing about the world.

As we have just seen, taking-an-interest-in and sensitivity alert us to things in the world which otherwise we would miss. Not only is sensitivity necessary to the recognition of the values and disvalues in things, their quality or lack of quality, but via sensitivity to those values and disvalues we become aware of their factual basis. It is this function of sensitivity which we shall now consider in more detail in order to show that emotional responses can and do lead us to, even if they do not exactly tell us about, particular things and events in the world.

We often feel that something is wrong before we know just what it is,

and our feeling causes us to be aware of it and then to investigate it. Let us note that there is an interesting asymmetry here between negative emotions and disvalues, on the one hand, and positive ones and values on the other. We take the latter for granted more often than not. If something feels right, then we usually we accept it without troubling to find out what makes it right. There are good practical reasons for this. For, if something feels right, we can get one with enjoying or using it, but if it feels wrong then we are likely to have to stop and do something about it.

But this familiar experience of feeling that something is right or wrong before we know what it is, is perhaps hidden from some philosophers because of their assumption that values are logically and ontologically supervenient upon the other properties of things and that therefore the latter have to be apprehended first. Accordingly, one has to find out what something is and how it is constituted before one can determine what value or disvalue it has. Surely, they will say, we first have to see the painting and read the book before we can decide whether it is good or bad. True, but we can be immediately struck by seeing the painting or as we begin the book, and find it confirmed as we finish, that this is good or bad, without any analysis of its separate qualities. It is the whole painting or book that strikes us as good, and we attend to that from its parts which, at first, we know only subsidiarily and thus tacitly. Likewise the whole sentence strikes us as grammatically or logically mistaken, as we attend to it and only from the individual words. (Hence the familiar experience of remembering the meaning but forgetting the actual words.) We then have to attend to the individual parts or aspects in themselves to find out where the merits or errors lie. In knowing, as in classical epics, we always begin *in media res*, and never at some logical or ontological ground floor of atomic units. We can then move either downwards into analysis of lower levels and subsidiary parts or upwards into the integration of what we already know into a yet more comprehensive entity or complex state of affairs.

Sensitivity thus makes possible a type of fore-knowing beyond explicit awareness. I could not give a complete inventory of what I have left on my desk or bench—I can cite some things straightaway and then some others with an effort—but on returning I feel that something is missing before I can identify it. Again I may not be explicitly aware of the rule of usage or logical principle in question, nor never have explicitly known that there is such a rule, but I immediately feel that there is something wrong in a particular sentence which I hear or read. I then have to consider the sentence, its structure, its words and their meanings in themselves, and so work out if there really is something wrong with its grammar, expression or logic, and therein just what it is. In doing that I may for the first time come to be explicitly aware of the rule. Another familiar example of this experience is that of entering a room where the people are standing silent and rather rigid. Immediately one feels, via emotional infection in catching the 'atmosphere' of the room, that someone has said or done something wrong or embarrassing, but, of course, one has yet to find out who has said or done what. Again, there is the feeling that, despite another person's friendly manner, there is something wrong or false about him. One cannot put one's finger on just why one feels that, for we are usually focally unaware of the details of expression, and only of their meaning, since we attend from them and to it. Thus we are aware, but only subsidiarily and tacitly, of the details which have betrayed the other person and his real nature and intentions, and cause us to be suspicious and on our guard.

I am not suggesting that, on the basis of a Romantic invocation of feeling against intellect, such fore-knowing is infallible—none of is infallible in any respect—and clearly it can also be a fore-mistaking. Moreover, such fore-knowing via feeling is itself an intellectual operation. But I do assert that there are many things in life which we come to know only through a felt apprehension of their value or disvalue in advance of the things themselves.

7. The functions of wonder

Taking-an-interest-in is primarily that general openness to the world which is distinctive of human nature. It is something which some adults lose as their interests become fixed in a particular and exclusive pattern. Too often we go around overlooking rather than looking at the things about us. For example, in towns we hardly ever look up above the ground floors of buildings or down to the end of a road. Thereby we miss a lot in life. One of the personal values of emotion is that it gives zest, flavour and colour to our lives, or, rather, the experience of the flavour and colour of the things around us. (Of course it also yields worry and suffering.) This is what Macmurrary emphasised in his notion of 'living in the senses' [32]. By that he meant a fuller immersion in our perceptions of the things we meet and thus greater sensitivity to their qualities. To say that it is an aesthetic attitude can be misleading, if that is taken to imply a more a passive contemplation of things than living the perceptual life to the full. It certainly is a mode of openness to things, specifically to their perceptual qualities.

There are times when, without our deliberate going to look at something, it strikes us and causes us to stop and stare. This is the function and significance of wonder—the emotional response to the sheer existence and qualities of things. As Ricoeur says [33], it can interrupt habits and bring us to perceive something new, or, indeed, really to perceive something for the first time. Wonder is important and valuable in itself in the way which Macmurray had in mind, and to that we shall return in a

moment. But it has a more specific value in our cognitive activities.

Firstly it is a motive for exploration and for simple curiosity, wondering what something unknown is like and feeling like finding out. It is also the origin of branches of organised enquiry, that which causes the pioneers to begin physics or history. It is perhaps often lost as the discipline becomes established, academic, somewhat routine and partly a matter of technique. Within intellectual enquiries, lines of research are often suggested by problems with what is already known—data without exaplanations, discrepancies felt to be significant, tensions and perhaps contradictions in explanatory conceptions. Motivation for pursuing them rather than others thus comes from immersion in the present state of knowledge and so also from awareness of its gaps, limits and defects. But, I suggest, there is another source, at times definitely distinct: sheer wonder at something either taken for granted or never yet thought of. 'Why is this as it is?' or 'What would happen if . . .?' are two characteristic ways in which it arises. Perhaps Newton speculating on falling apples and the movements of planets and Einstein speculating on travelling at the speed of light are, respectively, examples of them. It is wonder as questioning, a more radical questioning than is usual, since it questions what has not yet been questioned or has become unquestioned.

Therefore it is not quite the same as the contemplative wonder of 'living in the senses'. That is one motive and source of value in art. One important task which the literary and visual arts fulfil is to present to us that which we overlook. By representing it in pairt or stone or words, by putting it in a frame, on a plinth or in a book, the artist or writer draws our attention to it and to its perceptual qualities. Hence the otherwise inexplicable practice of painting pictures of everyday objects, such as pair of peasant's clogs, or of writing poems about suburban scenes. Art and literature thus bring out, by selection and heightening, the emotional qualities or impact of things. They thus reawaken that openness which we have allowed to become dormant [34].

8. Conclusion

I have not exhaustively surveyed the cognitive functions of emotion. But enough has been presented to show that emotion necessarily initiates, guides, sustains and terminates our efforts to know things, and some examples have been given of those specific functions and of specific emotions that fulfil them. It follows that there can be no unemotional knowing, save in a secondary and temporary manner when it is a matter of mere routine. It also follows that all dichotomies of 'objective fact' and 'subjective emotion', of 'reason' and 'emotion', of 'knowledge' and 'feeling', and the like, are to be abandoned and the conceptions involved to be radically rethought in the light of their fundamental unity. It also follows that those epistemologies which regard emotion as irrelevant to, or essentially disruptive of, knowledge need radical revision.

One final point: some would object that my argument, and the examples quoted in support of it, are themselves irrelevant. For they adduce merely 'psychological' facts of no philosophical important. What matters for philosophy is not the subjective accompaniments of knowing—feelings of interest, dissatisfaction, anxiety, delight and satisfaction—but the logical questions of the nature of truth and validity, of correct and incorrect methods for research, of appropriate and inappropriate criteria for judging the results of research. Upon these genuinely epistemological questions, the quoted facts have no bearing. At the most, what has been shown are the subjective requirements for the proper implementation of epistemological standards and criteria, but nothing has been said about what they themselves are.

Even if that were true, then it would also have been shown that emotional involvement is not essentially disruptive of cognition and that a totally unemotional knowledge is impossible. Consequently, from the alleged logical irrelevance of emotion, it cannot be inferred that emotion is functionally irrelevant to, still less that it is necessarily disruptive of, our cognitive operations, as many philosophers and other persons have assumed.

But in any case the logical and the psychological cannot be so easily distinguished and separated. Throughout every phase of the above, as well those parts where it was explicitly treated, we were concerned with the roles of values, standards and criteria in knowing, and we saw on more than one occasion that they cannot be rigidly defined and reduced wholly to a codified system which could be mechanically and routinely applied [35]. There is no algorithm of truth, though many philosophers have sought it, nor exhaustive casuistry for accepting and rejecting claims to knowledge. These are essentially matters of personal judgment, whether individual or corporate, according to the standards which I set for myself or take over from the traditions of scholarship and research within which I have been trained. The 'logical' question of defining cognitive standards and criteria cannot be exhaustively answered in terms of explicit and exact definitions, but inevitably appeals to our tacit grasp of the standards and criteria which we in fact apply in our necessarily felt responses of satisfaction and dissatisfaction to claims to truth, coherence, consistency, cogency and validity. Mathematics itself, as Gödel's theorem demonstrates, cannot be proved to be free from inconsistency and therefore not to need the personal judgment and emotional involvement of mathematicians.

Loughborough

Notes:

1. R.S. Peters, 'Emotions and the category of passivity', (*Proc. Aristotelian Soc., Vol. 62, 1961-2,* p.119). A somewhat less negative attitude was shown in his later papers on emotion, reprinted in his *Psychology and Ethical Development* (London, Allen and Unwin, 1974).
2. For examples of this attitude and criticism of them, see R.W. Leeper, 'A motivational theory of emotion to replace "Emotion as disorganised response"', in (ed.) M. Arnold, *The Nature of Emotion* (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1968).
3. 'The governance of action by emotion' (*The Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology*, Vol. 22, No. 2, May 1991) which follows and revises the scheme of S. Strasser in his *The Phenomenology of Feeling* (trans. Wood, Pittsburg, Duquesne University Press, 1977), which in turn uses and revises that of Aquinas.
4. PK p.134.
5. PK pp. 133-4. See also pp. 171-4 on science as the fulfilment of intellectual emotions and interests. Contrast J. Macmurray on science and enquiry in general as technical transformation and art as purely contemplative and evaluative, in *The Self As Agent* (London, Faber, 1961), pp. 193ff, 198, and *Persons in Relation* (London, Faber, 1957), pp. 176-7.
6. See below, §4.
7. PK Chap. 6, on p.138 and in §5, and elsewhere (e.g. the experiments of D.C. Miller, pp. 12-3, and the observations of Lord Rayleigh, p.276) Polanyi gives examples of each of these.
8. ibid. pp. 123-4.
9. ibid. pp. 135-6.
10. ibid. p.143.
11. ibid. pp. 150ff.
12. See also ibid. p.101, where Polanyi, drawing on his own experience as a medical student, shows that such sympathy is needed in the learning of anything radically unfamiliar, otherwise one will take it to be nonsense at the start.
13. ibid. p.159.
14. ibid. p.173.
15. See Strasser, op. cit., pp. 191-23
16. *The Pilgrim's Regress*, Preface to 3rd ed. (London, Collins, 1977).
17. Ricoeur, *Freedom and Nature*, p. 75f; Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge*, pp. 302-3:
'You cannot speak without self-contradiction of knowledge you do not believe, or of a reality which does not exist [this should be 'of a reality which you do not believe to exist']. I may deny validity to some particular knowledge, or some particular facts, but then to me these are only allegations of knowledge or facts and should be described as "knowledge" and as "facts", to which I am not committed. Commitment is in this sense the only path for approaching the universally valid'.
18. *Fallible Man* (trans. Kelbley, Chicago, Henry Regnery, 1967), p.78.
19. *Reason and Emotion* (London, Faber, 1935), p.24.
20. *Sketch of a Theory of the Emotions* (trans. Mairet, London, Methuen, 1971).
21. *Reason and Emotion*, p.19.
22. ibid. pp. 31-2.
23. *Gesammelte Werke* (Bern, Franke, 1954-), Bd 6, p.77.
24. But see J. Rist, *Eros and Psyche* (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1964), for another strand in Plato, not so prominent and more implied than stated, which does envisage a fruition and so a continuation of love for the Forms, and also an overflowing love on the part of God towards the world.
25. But see Strasser, op. cit., p.234, on Aquinas and the cognitive role of *amor*.
26. op. cit. pp. 94-6.
27. *The Origin of Our Knowledge of Right and Wrong* (trans. Chisholm and Schneewind, London, Routledge, 1969).
28. 'The world offers itself to a child physiognomically and expressively, laden with feelings'; 'Physiognomical not cognitive, attributes of the environment are primary. The principle applies as much to the comprehension of inanimate objects as it does to the understanding of living organisms. As Wertheimer states, "An object is just as sinister as it is black; in fact it is sinister first of all"': D. Katz, *Gestalt Psychology* (trans. Tyson, London, Methuen, 1951), pp. 154, 82.
Colours are perceived primarily in terms of their emotional and motor significance rather than because of their colour qualities: see Merleau-Ponty, The *Phenomenology of Perception* (trans. C. Smith, London, Routledge, 1962), Pt II, 1, and the studies cited therein.
29. Hence Strasser (op. cit. pp. 183-4) is somewhat mistaken in stating that technical and scientific work require a 'quiet and sure being-in-a-mood' which has with no sudden shifts of emotion and is mostly neutral yet not the 'grey everyday disposition'. Contrast R. Pirsig, *Zen and the Art of Motor-cycle Maintenance* (London, Bodley Head, 1974).
30. See further Rudolf Haller, 'On the feeling for language and its epistemic value' in *Practical Knowledge: Outlines of a Theory of Traditions and Skills*, ed. J.C. Nyiri and B. Smith (London, Croom Helm, 1988).
31. *Action, Emotion and Will* (London, Routledge, 1963), p.56.
32. *Reason and Emotion*, p. 42ff.
33. *Freedom and Nature*, pp. 312ff.
34. Wonder has a special function in philosophy: see Plato, *Theaetatus* 174; Aristotle *Metaphysics* 982b; Aquinas, *Commentary on the Metaphysics*, I, 3; J. Pieper, 'The Philosophical Act' in *Leisure the Basis of Culture* (trans. Dru, London, Faber, 1952) especially p. 109f; and M. Merleau-Ponty, *The Phenomenology of Perception*, pp. xiii-xiv, where he quotes Eugen Fink and Husserl on its role.
Most versions of modern philosophy have no place for wonder: Critical, because it starts with doubt; Idealist, because it absorbs the world into consciousness; Positivist, because it denies any conception of the world

and any questions about anything other than particular facts; and Analytic to the extent that it follows Positivism and seeks to be a mere 'undergardener' for the special sciences especially natural science.

35. The desire for a wholly 'objective', and thus routine and mechanical, system of appraisal and marking within education, has resulted in the production of allegedly 'objective tests', i.e. multiple-choice question papers which can be marked either by means of templates, which reveal only the required answers, or by computer programs. But these tests are not 'objective' and result in a distortion of knowledge and education, and the marking of them is not wholly an impersonal routine. See further my 'Reductionism in education', *Paideusis* (Canada), Vol. 5, No. 1, Autumn 1991, pp. 20-35.

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Reconstruction of Mature Theory Change: A Theory-Change Model
R.N. Nugayev
Peter Lang AG, Bern and Berlin, 1999. 198 pp.

This book addresses the question of what are the routes and mechanisms of the theory-change process in science at the level when the change involves the calling in question of a mature theory, i.e. one which has been widely accepted as accounting very well for a large range of experimental phenomenon. An example is the replacement of Newtonian classical mechanics by Einstein's theory of relativity or by Planck's quantum theory during the first third of the 20th Century. The author bases his conclusions on historical examples.

In the early chapters are considered in turn earlier proposals for theory-change, viz, by Popper (falsification); by Kuhn (revolution despite 'incommensurability'); by Lakatos ('research programmes'), and Feyerabend's commentaries on these alternatives. It is concluded that none of these is satisfactory, and the author raises the question whether, in logico-methodological terms, such a process should be seen as revolutionary or evolutionary in nature. The author describes these two alternatives as 'reductionist' or 'synthetic' programmes respectively and strongly prefers the latter.

Nugayev exemplifies his choice in a very interesting last chapter chronicling the ultimate preference of the physics community for Einstein's (synthetic) theory of relativity over a rival (reductionist) theory by Lorenz. Both were trying to brine together Newton's mechanics and Clerk-Maxwell's electrodynamics, with Lorenz looking to a (reductionist) solution whereby one of these theories incorporated the other, whereas Einstein was looking for a new (synthetic) theory whereby the two of them could be reconciled through modifications within a more general theory. As the historian Holton has pointed out, Einstein disliked having his theory of relativity described as revolutionary; he preferred it to be seen as a progressive culmination of the two earlier theories. A continuation of the latter approach is implicit in the current search by the physicists for a comprehensive 'Theory of Everything'. Nugayev does emphasise that such an approach is only possible at a stage when theories are already well established in relation to earlier experimental work.

Within the book there is wide use of somewhat similar-looking three-letter acronyms, the deciphering of which detracts from smooth reading. Otherwise the writing is clear and the bibliographic coverage is comprehensive with the distinct advantage that it includes work of the principal Russian authors in the field. The book will be much welcomed both by those interested in scientific theory-change and in its historical process during the twentieth century.

N. Sheppard

Könnerschaft und implizites Wissen. Zur lehr-lerntheoretischen Bedeutung der Erkenntnis- und Wissenstheorie Michael Polanyis.
Georg Hans Neuweg
Münster: Waxmann. 464 pp. 68 DM

Michael Polanyi is hardly known in Germany today. His work outside of physical chemistry is not available in German, with the exception of the *Tacit Dimension* (available in a rather inexact translation) and the Eddington lectures ('Beyond nihilism'). Language is not the only problem for his reception or lack thereof, however. There are at least two further problems which make Polanyi almost inaccessible to the German reader. One his his style of scholarship. Writing essentially for an English-language audience, he presents even his greatest breakthroughs as if they were common sense. German language readers simply do not know where to put him in intellectual history, unless they are very well trained philosophers. The other problem is that Polanyi wrestled with the problems posed and solutions found by the Southwest German school of philosophy and sociology with is practically extinct, and does this, of course, implicitly. He even misleads the reader who is not too careful into believing that he is following the lead of Dilthey.

Neuweg´s book addresses the first problem splendidly. It is a very learned work (apparently his Habilitation, the 'second book' required for a career in German language universities). The title gives the focus of the book: it is the expert and his or her implicit knowledge. In particular, Neuweg examines the importance of Polanyi's theories for theories of teaching and learning. He relates Polanyi´s contributions to philosophy and psychological research. In particular, Neuweg discusses the work of Gilbert Ryle at length and relates it to Polanyi.

It is a little odd that an introduction to Polanyi's life and work is given in the middle of the text (Chapter 8, 14 pages). It seems to this reviewer that Neuweg tends to overstate the importance of the tacit dimension and to underplay the importance of levels for his thought. For a systematic introduction—beyond theories of learning—it would have been worthwhile to at least hint at the links of Polanyi's thought to the Southwest German school of philosophy and sociology (Windelband, Weber).

The book certainly does give the flavour of Polanyi's work. It contains quite a few of Polanyi's striking examples which are frequently so convincing that the reader does loose the argument they are supposed to prove. Neuweg places them in their systematic context. It is important to note that he is concerned with learning and teaching rather complex skills, such as required in a profession, thereby going well beyond more simplistic models of learning.

This is the first major exposition of Polanyi´s work in German. It is to be hoped that the increased visibility and

accessibility will lead to an awareness of this great scholar who was one of Germany's leading scientists until 1933.

Klaus Allerbeck

Michael Polanyi: Conoscenza scientifica e immaginazione creativa

Carlo Vinti
Edizioni Studium, Rome, 1999; (Series: *Interpretazioni*, No. 28), ISBN 88 382 3817 0; pp. 210; 26,000 lire.

Most of Polanyi's books have now been translated into Italian. To judge by its bibliography, this is the first book on Polanyi to be published in that language. The author is Professor of the History of Contemporary Philosophy at Perugia.

Following the format for the series, Prof. Vinti has written a general introduction to Polanyi's work, which begins with Polanyi's search for a conception of knowledge which does justice to our personal involvement, and moves through his philosophy of science, his criticism of the method of doubt, his movement from La Place to Augustine and Plato, his use of Gestalt psychology, the developed theory of personal knowledge, the person in the community, the ontological implications of personal knowledge, and man as an explorer.

The next section consists of translations of 'The creative imagination' and, under the title of 'Personal knowledge', of pp. 28-45 of *Meaning.*

The final section, 'Lines of research', outlines Polanyi's place in modern and ancient thought, his relation to 'post-neopostivism' and the personalist tradition, his criticism of reductionism and his alternative account, his answer to the mind-body problem, his theory of liberalism, and his accounts of religion and theology, and of art, psychology and education. With each sub-section there is a bibliography of relevant works by Polanyi and on Polanyi. At the end, there is a brief biography and a general bibliography.

This book should provide for the Italian public what several introductory studies have provided for the Anglophone world.

R.T. Allen

Collingwood Studies, Vol. VI: Idealist Contexts

(Ed) D. Boucher & B. Haddock
Collingwood Society, Swansea, 1999; ISBN 0 9524393 6 0; pp. 196

The Collingwood Society has now widened its scope to include British Idealism, and that was foreshadowed in the volume under review. As well as three papers on Collingwood—Collingwood's logic of question and answer (Rik Peters), Kantian aspects of Collingwood's metaphysics of experience (Giuseppina D'Oro), modes of visualisation in neo-Idealist theories (Cassirer, Collingwood, Huizinga) of the historical imagination (David Wisner), there are others on T.H. Green's theory of the common good (Maria Dimova-Cookson), Bradley and Sidgwick on philosophical ethics (Andrew Vincent), social policy and Bosanquet's moral philosophy (William Sweet), and the concept of self-transcendence in the philosophy of Bosanquet (Stamatoula Panagakou).

Apart from the individual merits of the latter essays, is it right to align Collingwood so definitely to Idealism? After all, Bradley explicitly distanced himself more than once from any such school, and Collingwood repeated that claim with respect to Bradley and Green, holding them, respectively, to students yet critics of Hume and Mill. While there was exaggeration in such claims, there was also more in common than has been conventionally thought between 'Realists' and 'Idealists'. As can be seen in the central chapters of *The Principles of Art*, Collingwood, like both camps, was stuck with the Cartesian and Lockean legacy of 'an external world' and the fatal error of attending *to* and not *from* the contents of consciousness, whence arises the 'Realist' claim that somehow we know that there is something beyond them, and the 'Idealist' claim that all is experience. 'Phenomenalism', of course, is the 'Realist' recognition of the truth of 'Idealism' given their common initial assumptions.

Moreover, there are other and often very important elements in Collingwood, notably the Augustinian and fiduciary rejection of the whole 'critical' movement that is modern philosophy (except for Hegel who by-passed it in a different way), as seen in his 'Faith seeking understanding' and 'Reason and faith' and elaborated in *An Essay on Metaphysics.*

Nevertheless, there was more depth and insight and less aridity in the school of Green and Bradley than in their 'Realist' and 'Analytic' critics, as these studies prove.