

# The Nature of Man



**Jacques de Mahieu**

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## **BOOKS**

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Jacques de Mahieu

# THE NATURE OF MAN

Philosophical anthropology of the human being

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## PREFACE

For more than 2,500 years, Western man has been seeking to know himself and trying to give a reason for his presence in the Universe. For more than 25 centuries, thinkers, philosophers, theologians, moralists and - lately - psychologists, doctors, sociologists, biologists, anthropologists, ethnologists and, for what it is worth: even journalists, have tried to find an answer to a question which, in itself, is surprisingly simple: what is man? What is this being that one day came out of his primitive cave and conquered the valleys of the great rivers, and then rushed over the plains and over the seas, only to build ships to dominate the oceans, enabling him to conquer entire continents? What is this being who has not been satisfied with this and today speaks of a "New Global Order", as if the time has come when even the planet is too small for him? What is this eternal seeker and conqueror who has already walked on the moon and who continues, little by little, to seek the way to the stars?

The big problem is that, despite more than 2,500 years of research and speculation, we do not know it very well. This is even demonstrated by the multiplicity of disciplines, mentioned above, that have dealt and continue to deal with the problem without being able to arrive at an integral, comprehensive and all-encompassing Science of Man.

Almost half a century ago, an acute French thinker, who had emigrated to Argentina due to the vicissitudes of the catastrophe that was the Second World War in Europe, attempted to answer the questions posed. The result is this book.

"The Nature of Man" was published in 1955, a year of great political upheaval in Argentina. At that time, Jaime María de Mahieu had only arrived in the country relatively recently and was still trying to "*write in Spanish thinking in French*", as he once told me, something that is to some extent felt in the general style of the work. In this electronic edition we should note, then, that we have tentatively and carefully eliminated some of the more obvious Gallicisms - basically only those that really made an already complex text unnecessarily difficult to understand - and, of course, a few obvious typos in the original have also been removed.

Another detail that should be mentioned is the subdivision of the text into paragraphs. In the original edition, following a style quite common in some authors of that time, in all chapters each point is a single paragraph. For an electronic edition such as the present one, this would represent a real challenge to the readability of the screen, and we have therefore subdivided these single paragraphs as carefully as possible, in the interests of clarity of design and clarity of exposition.



Except as stated above, the text reproduced here is the complete and faithful version of the 1955 original; except, of course, for a few errors that may have crept in through optical recognition of the characters of a book that is almost half a century old, very well printed, but composed in linotype type; something that does not exactly help this type of process.

As for the content of the work itself, I will not commit here the arrogant imprudence of attempting an evaluation. I was a friend and disciple of Jaime María de Mahieu, and if there is one thing I learned at the old Professor's side, it was to respect honest intellectual work, even in dissent. Because even from dissent one learns and, at least in my personal experience, respectful dissent often allows one to learn much more than obsequious flattery, which usually generates mere plagiarism, sometimes confessed and surreptitious in the vast majority of cases. Having been familiar with the thought of James Marie de Mahieu for several years, I still marvel at the fairly large number of people who recite it but do not quote it.

However, there are a few points that I think the 21st century reader should be aware of.

Carrel is referred to several times in "The Nature of Man". **Alexis Carrel** (1873/1944), for whom de Mahieu had a strong respect, was awarded the Nobel Prize for Medicine in 1912 for his new technique of suturing blood vessels, an innovation that would later be essential to enable organ transplantation. Concerned with achieving an integral vision of the human being, he was one of those who most strongly pointed out the need to establish a true Science of Man that would consider us in our totality and not in partial aspects as do all the sciences that directly or indirectly deal with the human being. A large part of his thought is expressed in a book: "*Man: that unknown*" (or "*The Unknown of Man*" according to some editions), in which he developed his conclusions, his observations and his proposal. Carrel's work deserves to be re-evaluated, as it raises essential questions that have not yet been satisfactorily resolved.

Moreover, in Chapter IV, the reader will come across the issue of the heritability of acquired traits. James Marie de Mahieu sincerely believed in this possibility (although, truth be told, only as a possibility), which today's genetics categorically denies. However, even admitting today the impossibility of scientifically supporting this phenomenon, it is fair to recognise that this fact does not invalidate the essence of all the rest of his thinking and, in any case, one must take into account the general state of genetic knowledge half a century ago, whereby, although the majority of scientists already denied the possibility of acquired characters being heritable, the arguments still did not seem to be completely conclusive.

However, to do the subject justice, we should also point out that the basic phenomenon of genetic modification - mutation - remains an area in which we are still a long way from knowing everything we should know.

We have come a long way in describing its mechanics at the molecular and sub-molecular level. But we have made much less progress in understanding the causes that trigger it. We know that radiation and a number of other physico-chemical factors can trigger mutation. But we still do not have a really satisfactory explanation of the whole process of the "misinterpretation" of the genetic code caused by events that are still largely attributed to chance. And we can only recall that, in many cases, chance has been to biology what the cult has been to archaeology. When archaeologists unearth an artefact of whose purpose or utility they have no idea, they are almost automatically inclined to classify it as a "cult object". Something similar happens with biologists: when they are not too clear about what governs a process, the temptation to ascribe it to the famous chance seems almost irresistible.

"The Nature of Man" is a good book. Many will probably disagree with its deductions and conclusions. This is to be expected. On the one hand, because it forces us to revise a few paradigms that make up today's "politically correct thinking". On the other hand, because it simply forces us to think and reflect.

And I don't know what 21st century readers think, but I still believe that a book that forces you to think is a good book.

Denes Martos  
19 January 2004

# CHAPTER I

## THE INNER MAN

### 1. THE FUNDAMENTAL EXPERIENCE

I come out of a deep sleep. I am not awake yet. My body remains inert and escapes my senses like the outside world around me. The images of the dream have already faded. My memory, in the common sense of the word, is absent. I neither reason nor remember that I have the power to do so. Yet I no longer sleep. I do not yet know that I have emerged from unconsciousness, but I already feel my life flowing, vague and undifferentiated.

I feel my body lying, without organs or contours, but present. I feel the time of my awakening slipping away. I am on the threshold of the consciousness of my being, in the bosom of the fundamental experience that will allow my reflective intelligence to affirm that I exist, that I endure and that I am conscious of existing and lasting. As I am waking up, the confused feeling of my pure existence fades away and disappears with the influx of more precise differentiated sensations. I feel the warmth of my body, the beat of my heart, the rhythm of my breathing and the movement of my muscles. My senses open up to the outside world.

My skin picks up the cold or the warmth of the ambient air, and the roughness of the sheet on which it rests. My eyes capture the brightness of the day. But these immediate but complex sensations are not in themselves sufficient for the affirmation of the part of the external world that acts on me. When, as soon as I wake up, I open my eyes, my first impression is that of the incoherent, the strange and the unknown. Gradually, however, the objects become clearer and I discern a familiar picture: my memory, or at least what ordinary language calls it, has begun to act. My rational thought awakens at the same time: memory and thought without which there would be no experience, but only a juxtaposition of temporal phenomena with no relation between them and devoid of any meaning for me.

### 2. THE KINESTHETIC FEELING

This fundamental experience, so personal that we have had to relate it in the first person singular for it to retain its full meaning, makes us witness the awakening of our inner life, one might even say its rebirth. It forces us to realise that images, in the broadest sense of the word, whether they are of inner or outer origin, only assert themselves to us in a second temporal stage and are preceded by the confused feeling, that is to say, by the immediate awareness, of our existence and our duration.

Before any analysis of such a kinesthetic feeling, we must note two important points: firstly, that the affirmation of ourselves which our basic experience constitutes does not allow any distinction to be made between our being and our existing, since our being presents itself to us as existing and because existing; secondly, that any attempt to isolate from one another the three data of our affirmation (existence, duration, consciousness) or to create between them any relation of causality would be futile. To say: I am conscious that I exist, therefore I exist, or: I am conscious that I am hard, therefore I am hard, or: I am hard, therefore I exist, has no more experimental or logical meaning than the Cartesian *cogito ergo sum*, for the simple reason that our first experience is, in its data, one and prior to all reflection.

Our existence is inconceivable outside our duration and is only susceptible of affirmation, and a fortiori of analysis, in the consciousness we have of it. Coming out of our spontaneous fundamental experience, we have no right or need to say: "I exist because...". We can and must simply state: "I exist". This gives us more latitude to then break down the whole of this experience, to distinguish its factors, to discover its causes and thus to specify this primitive "I" that we have just affirmed.

The nature of this feeling, which psychology calls kinaesthetic, remains to be defined. We know that it is a state of consciousness. But consciousness of what? Certainly not of our psychic life, since it is precisely the latter that is reduced, in the course of our fundamental experience, to the same kinaesthetic feeling to which only later are images added. Since pure consciousness is meaningless, there is only one solution: our body constitutes the "raw material" of our first psychic state.

And indeed, our body remains, when we sleep, identical with itself while our inner being is dissolved or at least dislocated in the incoherence (relative to our personality) of sleep. The body, each of its organs and each of its cells live and therefore function according to their immanent purpose. Now, what is life, our life of which we are aware, if not above all the solidarity harmony of our organs and our cells, this harmony thanks to which we can speak of ourselves as an autonomous being? It is enough for our organs to be dissociated for us to cease to exist, even if these organs are artificially maintained in activity.

But, on the other hand, our life disappears in the same way if our associated organs lose their functional intention, or simply modify it against the purpose of the whole. Since organic activity is a movement with a particular rhythm, as we shall see later, we can define our cenesthetic feeling as the awareness of the unitary functioning of our body, that is to say, in the last analysis, the synthesis of the individual modulations of the elements that compose it.

### 3. DURATION

This functioning of our body is the result of our organs' own movements, i.e. of the multiple modifications of their living factors. The organs, and therefore the body, live only to the extent that they change, that they change by carrying out their functions and in order to carry out their functions. The awareness of the life of our body cannot, therefore, be reduced to the apprehension of an inert whole, since such a whole would be dead. Our fundamental experience has shown us, on the other hand, that our kinaesthetic feeling did not in any way place us in the presence of the mass of our body which, on the contrary, escapes us at first and only reveals itself to us to the extent that differentiated, sensory and kinaesthetic images are superimposed on our original impression.

What we feel in the first place is the flow of our life, i.e. the vital movement of our body in harmonious functioning. The duration experienced in our awakening is therefore the duration of our biological evolution. Our inner life, as we know it up to now, is the awareness of our bodily life, moving like the body itself, in a movement that is both continuous and changing. It is a flow of images of physiological origin, fused in such a way that it is impossible for us to distinguish them in the homogeneous whole.

The kinesthetic duration constitutes, at certain moments of our psychic activity, the only conscious data of our inner life. But this is not always the case. We have seen that precise images were not long in adding to it and eliminating it, at least apparently, from the field of consciousness. In reality, the kinaesthetic duration only disappears with consciousness itself. It constitutes the framework into which the sensory images that it modifies and which modify it come to be incorporated in a double process of reciprocal adaptation.

Each image is like a clod of earth that we throw into a river: it disturbs the river to make a place for itself, makes the water jump in all directions and causes waves and whirlpools. But soon the river closes up again and dissociates the earth into insignificant corpuscles to incorporate them into its mass and its movement. The water no longer has the same composition, but the clod has lost its individuality. Of course, as we shall see, the image does not dissolve completely, since it is preserved by our memory. But this does not mean that it disturbs the flow of our inner life any less when it is incorporated into it, enriches its weft any less and receives from it any less the colouring that makes it our own.

When sensory images follow one another in rapid succession, as they do in ordinary life, they impose themselves on our consciousness like the surface of the river on the observer's eyes. Our duration vanishes in appearance, but the images we observe are impregnated with it because we recognise them as belonging to our self. On the other hand, without it, our inner life would be

made up of juxtaposed images, while it manifests itself, on the contrary, as one and continuous: unity and continuity that cannot obviously come from heterogeneous and isolated images. The image is similar to the solo that stands out for a moment from the background of orchestral music to the point of attracting the full attention of the audience and does nothing but enrich a whole without which it would have no meaning and from which it borrows its rhythm and its intention. The kinesthetic duration is the "imaginal background", permanent though changing, on which the inconstant images stand out, receiving from it the personal colouring that marks their incorporation into our ego.

#### **4. PSYCHIC DYNAMISM**

If the kinaesthetic flow, as we have just seen, is the psychic expression of our bodily life, it is logical that it should vary with the latter. Indeed, if we go back to our fundamental experience, we will realise that there is a difference between the various phases of our duration that we have successively verified.

In the first stage, while our body remains to some extent under the influence of the effacing dream, and remains relatively drowsy and immobile, our inner life flows slowly and regularly, without any noticeable shocks or variations, like a broad river whose course nothing comes to disturb. But as soon as the inner and outer images arise in our duration and amalgamate with it, everything changes: the current accelerates and moderates its movement according to the influx of the elements that join it.

When we hear a monotonous and trivial discourse of which nothing holds our attention, we are half asleep and our kinesthetic duration is not modified by the words that come to us: thus, the drizzle does not disturb the course of the river. But let the speaker suddenly break off, suddenly, in an inflamed period on an argument that interests us. The images he brings us are pressed, tumultuous, into our thoughts: our duration becomes like the river under the storm.

The analysis reveals first of all an acceleration of our psychic flow, an acceleration which is easy to verify by comparing the running of our inner life with that of the mechanical and constant time of the clock: when images without force do not penetrate our duration, "time seems long to us", i.e. we have the impression that several solar hours pass while the hand makes only a single revolution on the dial, or that to each hour of the clock correspond several "cenesthetic hours". When, on the other hand, the images are numerous and powerful, "time passes lightly" and several solar hours pass for each "hour" of inner time. Thus we know "empty" days and hours in the course of which we are bored, and which

The days and hours "well spent" during which we live intensely and which pass by "without our noticing".

Our psychic life thus runs according to an irregular rhythm, made up of a succession of periods of boredom and interest, which are differentiated by the variable influx of images of different forces, and by the changing flow of our inner time. Thus, of two musical phrases composed of the same number of measures but of which one is made up of half notes and the other of sixteenth notes, the first will be called and will appear slow and the second fast.

This analysis is not, however, completely satisfactory: it may indeed lead us to believe that our inner rhythm is only the consequence of the images that are imposed on us, and that our kinaesthetic duration passively receives the imaginal input that transforms it. In reality, there is nothing of the sort.

Let us take again the example of the clod of earth falling into the river. The first phase of the phenomenon is passive: under the shock, the water current opens up: its flow is disturbed by the unpredictable intrusion of the foreign body. But very soon, the river reacts: it closes again and envelops the clod of earth, penetrates it, breaks it up into imperceptible corpuscles and incorporates it. The clod no longer exists, but the composition of the water and the speed of the current are changed by the external input. If it is only a few grains of soil, the modification will be insensitive. But if, on the contrary, it is a ravine that crumbles, we will see the current concentrate to overcome the obstacle, then accelerate its movement to compensate for the increase in its volume and finally return to its normal speed.

It is exactly the same with our psychic life. Under the shock of the image, our duration is first disturbed, then concentrated in an effort of assimilation, and finally continues its pacified career. Our psychic life flows according to a rhythm made up of alternating periods of tension and relaxation, which manifest themselves to our consciousness in the form of accelerations and slowing down of the flow of our inner time. If it were possible for us to record its movement on a recording cylinder as we can do for the variations of an electric current, the dynamism of our duration would be expressed schematically in an irregular sinusoidal curve whose rhythm, that is to say, whose amplitude and frequency of variations, would depend, by a given succession of images, on the nature of each personality.

## **5. INTERNAL ADAPTATION**

The intrusion of an image, whether of inner or outer origin, into our duration, the harmony of which it disturbs, thus provokes the reaction necessary to re-establish order. Our spirit concentrates on an effort to overcome the obstacle that disturbs its course, either by eliminating it or by

by incorporating it. If the image is not rejected as incompatible with our nature, it is absorbed as the clod is by the river, and under the same conditions. Our psychic tension thus corresponds to a double process of assimilation of the foreign image: our duration adapts to it in order to incorporate it into its flow without disturbing the latter, and it adapts to its contact in order to make room for it, just as the river soaks the clod of earth with its substance and decomposes it, but at the same time becomes a stream of earthy water.

Thus we see the eye adapting itself to the luminous image that reaches it, but also transforming it according to its convenience by selecting, among the rays of various wavelengths that compose it, those that are useful to form the retinal image. The reciprocal adaptation of the duration and the image has the effect of destroying the latter as an autonomous entity but enriching our psychic life with it.

We have just said, however, that this adaptation is not automatic. We are not always ready to assimilate the image, and it may be unassimilable. In both cases, we reject it more or less easily and after a period of confusion, more or less long and intense, provoked by the presence in us of an element that is foreign and sometimes hostile to what we are and what we want to be. In other words, the process of adaptation depends on the relationship that we establish between our duration and the image. We analyse the latter, compare it with our psychic being and then decide to accept or reject it.

It is therefore a real judgement prior to our action on the image and on which depends not our effort of tension, necessary for incorporation as well as exclusion, but the sense of this effort. Since we do not always have the psychic strength to expel the undesirable image, which asserts itself with a power too great for our possibilities of tension at a given moment, the disturbance remains at the expense of our inner harmony.

It would also be possible to trace, schematically, a second curve which would express, not our successive movements of tension and relaxation, but the succession of our periods of inner adaptation and maladaptation, that is to say, of harmony and disharmony of our duration. This would be all the easier as a profound analysis would not be indispensable.

Our inner life receives, in fact, an affective colouring which varies with its degree of harmony. The adaptive curve is expressed in our consciousness by a succession of states or, more precisely, of movements of joy and sadness, resulting from the innumerable movements of pleasure and pain which each correspond to the acceptance, the rejection or the impossibility of the necessary rejection of an image. This does not mean, however, that joy is a sum of pleasures and sadness a sum of pains: there is joy in rejection when this rejection protects our inner harmony, and sadness in rejection when it protects our inner harmony.



in acceptance when this acceptance constitutes the introduction into our psychic life of an element detrimental to our personality.

While pleasure and pain mark the adaptability or maladaptability to us of the image that penetrates into our life span, joy and sadness express the harmonious or disharmonious result of our inner dynamism.

## **6. THE ORDER OF DURATION**

This phenomenon of adaptation or maladaptation of the image requires an analysis that will allow us to specify an essential aspect of our duration.

When we say that a part fits an engine, what do we mean? That this part has a shape and dimensions - that is to say, constitutive relationships - which correspond to those of the other parts with which it is to form a whole; that such a pinion, for example, has a diameter, thickness and teeth which enable it to engage, without excessive friction or friction, with such and such another. If the mechanic, during assembly, realises that the spare part he wants to use is unsuitable for the type of engine he is repairing, he rejects it. Or, on the other hand, if it is too little time before he can fit it in its intended place, he adjusts it and the parts with which it is to form a harmonious whole, i.e. he modifies its constituent relationships.

It is exactly the same when it comes to our psychic life, with the difference that there is no mechanic (it is our duration itself that adjusts the image), and also that there is no place foreseen for such a particular image in the essentially malleable flow of our thought. Since adaptation is adjustment, there must be constitutive relations of our duration as of the image, that is to say: our psychic life must have an order and the innumerable images that compose it must be grouped, succeed one another and be transformed in a way other than by chance.

We could have already discovered this essential character in our own cenesthetic duration, despite the indistinctness of the images that constitute it. Our fundamental experience reveals to us, as we have already seen, the feeling of our life, that is, the evolution in time of our personal existence: a continuous progression in the future which we transform into the present and then into the past. There is, therefore, a temporal order of psychic life without which there would be no duration. But if we now consider the differentiated images that are integrated into this duration, we will see not only that they are divided into present and past, but also that they follow each other according to a necessary relative order.

What makes reasoning is the order of the concepts that constitute it. What makes language is the order of the words that compose it. The relationship

between concepts, words or sensory images is not a simple temporal succession of past and present, but an essential interlinking. Duration thus possesses the power to impose an order on the abstract and concrete images which it incorporates; it is not intelligent - for one could then suppose that the organising factor is acquired and that psychic life could exist, in disorder, without it - but essential intelligence.

Logical and imaginative thought is not organised by reason: it is organised according to its rational nature. It is we who, by more or less conscious analysis, isolate intelligence in order to make of it an autonomous though immanent "faculty", whereas it is a character of duration as essential as time. Moreover, even such a distinction between intelligence and time is arbitrary, since intelligence would be inconceivable without the time which enables it to chain images, and time would be inconceivable without the intelligence which creates the order of past-present succession. It is therefore clear that intelligence and time are not constitutive data of our inner life but two aspects of a single reality: our duration.

## **7. GUIDING INTENTION AND PURPOSE**

However, the notion of temporal order is only sufficient to explain an evolution that is the fact of chance, which our analysis does not allow us to admit as far as our psychic life is concerned. A succession of images, even if they fit together, could not constitute a coherent whole and their order would only be a worthless juxtaposition, just like that of a child who is too young to assemble the pieces of his "Meccano" chosen at random in the box.

Our duration is not indifferent to the result, but on the contrary, it tends to realise, through changing circumstances, what we call our personality and to maintain or re-establish the harmony of the whole which we constitute, and which each intrusion of an image brings back to the table. It therefore acts according to a purpose, i.e. a directive intention oriented towards an end.

It is this immanent intention that gives meaning to the chain of images: without it, reasoning loses its logic and the imaginative movement loses its coherence. We cannot, therefore, conceive our inner order as we have analysed it without it. It follows that our intelligence is the creator of the order which responds to its own intention. It is not only a power of organisation, but also of oriented organisation. What we are and what we "become" depends on it. We can say, therefore, that our organising intelligence makes our personality, and represents our possibilities of realisation in the face of the contingent images that are imposed on us.

Clearly, if our intelligence were different from what it is, our concepts, our words and our sensory images would be ordered differently, and we would think and act differently than we do. In other words, we would be someone else. But this does not mean that our directing intention rigidly follows a plan of mechanical construction, and gathers or rejects the materials presented to it - the images - according to whether or not they are useful for the realisation of a project established beforehand. If this were so, our intelligence would play for our inner life the role of the river bed for the river, or of the rails for the train.

Now then: the bed and the rails "know" their end: the sea and the station. The volume of water and the number of cars can be increased, the goal will remain unchanged: the bed and the rails will lead to it with the same rigour. On the contrary, our personality is subject, in its orientation, to the influence of images. No one is unaware that education, for example, is effective precisely because it forces us to orientate ourselves differently from what we would have done without it. Does this mean that we are less ourselves after having received its pressure? If this were so, the savage would realise his personality much better than the civilised person who is constantly subjected to the "education" of his environment. We know that this is not the case; on the contrary. Michelangelo would not have produced in a savage state the incomparable work in which he fully developed.

Our directing intention makes us choose between the various personal possibilities we possess within us at a given moment of our evolution, and it does so according to the inner and outer conditions of our realisation. It is therefore in vain that we would seek the pre-established end of our duration. This end is created by us as the artist creates his painting, by a constant choice between our possibilities. Success or failure exists only at the moment of our death, the true end in every sense of the word.

But that does not mean that our guiding intention does not respond to a purpose. On the contrary, we know that it tends to realise the possibilities that we carry within us and that it represents. To return to our usual example, duration is not comparable to the stream of water that inexorably follows the concrete banks of the canal leading it to a known and inevitable pool, but to that which, running for the first time through the countryside, traces its own bed and thus realises itself according to its directive intention confronted with the natural obstacles that it overcomes by a process of reciprocal adaptation.

## **8. THE WILL**

It is obvious that the progress of such a stream depends not only on its "intelligence", but also on its strength, i.e. its relative volume. If it is too rich relative to the slope, it will spill out in layers and be lost. If

is too poor, it will not be able to overcome the obstacles it will face. Likewise, the duration depends on both its directive intention and the volume of images it contains.

Hence the failure of the pure logician (Paul Valéry's M. Teste) and the pure receptive (a Rousseau, for example): the imaginative poverty of the former renders his directive intention ineffective, even if it is exceptional, while the intentional weakness of the latter causes the loss of the considerable "volume" of images collected by an exacerbated sensibility. Hence also the pressure exerted on our personal intention by our recorded intentions, i.e. our history. Let us not forget that organising intelligence is only one aspect of our duration.

Now we have seen that the latter, through adaptation, incorporates the images which it does not reject. They thus become an integral part of our psychic life, and the intelligence which has been applied to them in order to assimilate them according to the process we know is no longer, after this work, identical with what it was before. Our directing intention is thus modified as we realise ourselves. Or, more precisely, it is the duration to which it belongs that is transformed and it is the actual duration, and not the abstraction "intelligence", that progresses in time towards its self-realisation.

Such a progression demands a permanent choice between several solutions theoretically possible at a given moment, but of which only one responds to the necessity imposed by contingent circumstances. Our psychic life is in the situation of a motorist whose road is made up of a continuous succession of crossroads: he drives according to his immanent personal intention and definitively leaves behind the possibilities which he possessed in potential form but which prove not to respond to his needs. But, like the motorist, his experience sometimes makes him avoid the road that seems easy but would actually slow down his progress.

Each of our actions results, therefore, from the self-creative impetus of our personality whose impoverishment in potential is only the price of its enrichment in actual. It is the consequence of an intentional choice of inner actualisation, and of adaptation to the outside world and to ourselves.

How would it be possible, under such conditions, to separate our actions into voluntary and involuntary? In each of our choices, it is our whole personality that is engaged and affirmed, whether our decision is deliberate or not, whether it is rational or not. If there is deliberation, the choice is called voluntary. It would simply have to be described as conscious in its process as well as in its result. But such an awareness of rational choice does not alter the intentional, i.e. intellectual, nature of the act. Therefore, there is no will in us, if we mean by this word a differentiated faculty of decision as did the old psychology, and any act must be called voluntary, if we want to

The fact that we have to express our guiding intention as it results from our being and from our historical development is the reason why it responds to our guiding intention.

The will is nothing but the affirmation of what we are, and the voluntary act is the expression, whether or not preceded by an inner conflict and whether or not illuminated by our reason, of our self at a given moment of its adaptive confrontation with the world. Each of our acts, even those imposed on us by violence, are therefore voluntary. Even death, the least reasoned of the events of our history, against which we generally rise up with the most disgust, inevitable *par excellence*, is a voluntary act, and we could say: more voluntary than any other, since it is the necessary end to which our entire duration converges.

## **9. AFFIRMATION AND DENIAL OF PERSONALITY**

This last example obliges us, however, to clarify the definition we gave above of the will as an affirmation of what we are: can we say that death, however voluntary it may be, marks an affirmation of ourselves in the deepest sense of the word, when it represents, on the contrary, the definitive negation of our natural being?

Undoubtedly, yes: death is the result of a confrontation of our personality with the conditions of its duration, just like any other voluntary act. But such a result is only apparently negative. We "want" to die, because we can no longer live under certain circumstances. Death therefore affirms us as we are.

It follows that self-affirmation can be positive or negative, depending on whether our personality manifests itself positively or negatively in the conditions of its development. The being of a morbid nature will be himself in despair, and the hero will realise himself in supreme sacrifice. We must therefore find terms that express our movements towards realisation and towards disintegration of our personality, irrespective of their apparent results.

Let us note first of all that we have only taken into account, in the course of our analysis of the voluntary act, the directive intention and the imaginative volume of the duration, and that we have lost sight of its dynamism. Now, if we return to our example of the river, we shall see that its impetus varies according to the relation existing between the volume of its water and the bed which gives it its direction: sometimes it flows lazily in the plain and is even lost in a lake, sometimes it rushes impetuously into a canyon. Likewise, our inner life passes through phases of depression and exaltation, the relative frequency and amplitude of which express the vigour of our personality.

The higher being cannot be defined only by a clear intelligence which enables him to orient himself effectively in the world and by a keen sensitivity which constantly increases his imaginative depth. He also possesses exceptional energy. His moments of depression are, of course, all the more profound because they come from higher up. But they are few and swift and they whip him rather than crush him. The duration of the superior man is made up of a progression of joy, scarcely interrupted by a few moments of restlessness and abandonment. Such movements of depression may not coincide with the general line of the personality in question: they are, however, voluntary because they respond to a temporary but legitimate demand.

Likewise, the lower being, whose duration is made up of a habitual relaxation interrupted only by a few jolts of energy, wants his own psychic misery, because it corresponds to the reality of his person, but also his moments of relative exaltation which express his meagre possibilities.

There are therefore no involuntary acts, but only acts which contradict the general direction of the personality's development and are therefore ineffective. Let us note that this general sense is never definitively acquired, and that we often see it reversed under the shock of events. The reason for this phenomenon is that our duration is a permanent self-creation by actualisation of its potential possibilities in an uninterrupted voluntary choice, and that this choice is the consequence of an adaptive judgement which ends in victory or defeat. Depression is the result of a permanent maladjustment to oneself and to the world. It is therefore a pathological state, whereas exaltation is the normal state of the inner life on the way to realisation.

## **10. CONSCIOUSNESS**

What common parlance calls a voluntary act is not, therefore, different in nature from the others. It differs from them, however, in one essential way: it is conscious not only in its conclusion, but also in its process of elaboration.

We have already identified consciousness as the basic element of our fundamental experience, as the factor without which our psychic life, in its first datum, would have, at least for us, no meaning. Is it, then, as common psychology affirms, a sort of screen on which the phenomena of our duration are projected? In order to admit it, we would have to forget our so-called involuntary acts, which, however, also come from a choice, but from a choice whose process remains outside our consciousness: a process which is useless for us to know, since the non-rational choice does not require any deliberation, and manifests itself automatically according to our directing intention and always in the sense of the necessary adaptation.

On the contrary, rational choice cannot exist without an awareness of the elements involved in our decision, and of the relationship we establish between them. Moreover, the more we have consciously considered a greater number of the possibilities from which we have to choose, and a greater number of the factors of our determination, the better the act will be, and therefore the more effective it will be.

We see, therefore, that conscience and deliberation go hand in hand, and that conscience is linked to the rational act with which it is confused. To use again an image we have already used in a previous work, we can say that conscience is to intelligence what headlights are to the motorist: it illuminates the various roads among which we must choose, and enables us to recognise the one best adapted to the itinerary set by our directing intention.

Conscience is, therefore, nothing but our rational intelligence in so far as it projects itself upon those elements of our inner life which it has to know in order to choose the path to take in order to remain faithful to the directing intention of our I. It acts, therefore, like a beam of light penetrating our deep life, and illuminates only those images which are necessary to the rational elaboration of our deliberate judgements. It acts, therefore, like a beam of light that penetrates our inner life, and illuminates only those images that are necessary for the rational elaboration of our deliberate judgements.

We find decisive proof of such a theory in the observation of sleepwalkers and, more generally, in the study of our reflexes during sleep. We react automatically to sensory excitations that our brain receives and responds to. The latter thus functions perfectly but without any rational deliberation, and we become unconscious. It follows, on the one hand, that thought does not necessarily depend on consciousness and, on the other hand, that consciousness is nothing but reason. This explains why our cenesthetic feeling, the infrastructure of our duration, remains outside our conscious life.

As we wrote in "The Organising Intelligence", an essay in which we studied the problem of consciousness in detail, "the cenesthetic feeling represents our body, that is to say, an organic complex over which our reason has but little influence. It would be useless, and even harmful, for us to be aware of the functioning of each of our organs and, why not, of each of our cells. This is why the stream of consciousness does not resolutely illuminate this part of our psychic life and limits itself to vaguely outlining its contours, to grasping the rhythm of the whole without going into the details. To take our example again, the motorist would be quite bewildered if his headlights, instead of illuminating the surface of the road and thus indicating its state and layout, emitted rays that penetrate the ground and reveal its geological composition. Consciousness acts like lighthouses: it is constructed to submit to our reflection the data that are useful to it, and the beam of rational intelligence only grazes the psychic expression of our body".

## 11. THE SUBCONSCIOUS

Our conscious psychic life is thus comparable to the surface of the river that illuminates the daylight, but provided it is carefully distinguished from consciousness, which is both the factor of "illumination" and the organiser of the images that make up the higher plane of our duration.

Consciousness is, if you like, the light that "illuminates" a layer of our inner life, but a light without which the elements it penetrates would not have the same composition or the same movement; a light which, far from being external to the current, would, on the contrary, be immanent to it, would essentially act in it and would go to the depths to seek the materials necessary for the elaboration of the upper layer. But what is there and what goes on beneath our conscious thought?

We already know that this is where our cenesthetic duration is to be found, the moving fabric of our rational life that permeates it. And we also know that the feeling of our existence is supplanted, and as it were repelled, by our conscious images, since in their absence, but only in their absence, it offers itself to some extent to our self-observation.

Our psychic life thus possesses a subconscious zone whose images are organised into coherent wholes, although their order does not come from our reason. These sets are not isolated from the conscious zone but constitute its foundations, dynamic foundations which exert a constant pressure under the rational layer and try to break through it, or at least intrude into it. We can see this not only from the study of the kinesthetic duration, but also from the analysis of most of the choices by which our thought progresses. Few of them, in fact, are the result of a process of deliberation.

Generally, we are only aware of a decision which we recognise as ours, but whose elaboration we are unable to explain to ourselves for the simple reason that it proceeds from an automatic judgement, the phases of which have developed subconsciously. In the extreme cases, sleep and somnambulism, the decision itself remains outside a conscious life completely muffled. Our intellectual thinking, since it deals with choices and therefore with adaptive judgements, can therefore walk, with differences of modalities, in our conscious psychic life or in our subconscious psychic life.

The same is true of our imaginative thinking. We can order images with full awareness and deliberate choice and succession, just as we do, for example, when we describe a landscape. But the dream shows us that there is an imaginative thought whose order is imposed outside all conscious activity, while the "rêverie" testifies to an automatic imaginative elaboration, but whose flow is nevertheless inscribed in our consciousness. Moreover, in some "rêveries" and even in certain dreams



"We are in an undecided state, constantly slipping from subconsciousness to consciousness and vice versa, and our images are assembled in an indeterminate zone floating between the two superimposed strata of our organised psychic life.

At the other extremity, if one can say, of our subconscious, imaginary wholes are constituted and develop of which memory is not even capable, as it is for the dream, of giving us a posteriori awareness, and which only arise accidentally, or thanks to a technique such as psychoanalysis, in conscious life.

They nevertheless constantly exert a pressure on it - or, rather, u n d e r i t - and penetrate it to some extent. But they form and progress by themselves, according to an order which is not the rational order but which nevertheless corresponds to a reality of our I. Without such subconscious complexes, a phenomenon as important as conversion would remain incomprehensible, a phenomenon which is incomprehensible. Without such subconscious complexes, a phenomenon as important as conversion would remain incomprehensible, a phenomenon which is not limited to the religious domain, but which expresses any sudden change in our thinking which the observation of the conscious is not sufficient to justify. For conversion to be explicable, it must correspond to the brutal influx into our consciousness of a complex of images which, after pressing down on it and thus arousing in it a state of restlessness, finally breaks through the "ceiling" which forbids its entrance.

Beneath our conscious thought there is, therefore, a subconscious thought that influences it constantly and without us realising it, sometimes imposing itself in a victory of our deep life over our rational life.

## 12. THE UNCONSCIOUS

To say that such a victory constitutes a triumph of subconscious incoherence over conscious order would be a dangerous oversimplification. Subconscious life belongs to us as legitimately as conscious life. It is governed by an immanent order, as is our rational thought, but according to different modalities. Can we deny, however, that our subconscious shows signs of a certain incoherence? No, certainly not, and the dream brings us proof of the fact.

We must therefore distinguish in it several "psychic layers" through which the order is degraded, from the intuitive judgement which seems to be modelled on the rational judgement, although its process escapes our consciousness, and expresses like it, in a more rigid way but with no less nuances and precision, the confrontation of our directive intention with the present reality, to the whirlwind

incoherent sequence of images whose succession evidently does not respond to any kind of purpose.

But are we still here in the bosom of the subconscious? And is there not a more affirmed difference between such an anarchic tangle of images lying "in bulk" in the depths of our psychic life and our subconscious, than between the latter and the conscious stratum of our duration, both of which respond to our personal intention? Yes, of course. But we must not forget that there is no more a clear separation between the unconscious and the subconscious than between the subconscious and the conscious. It is we who make, according to valid but nevertheless arbitrary criteria, the distinctions which are indispensable to our desire for classification, but which nature laughs at.

The reality of the inner life is one, like the course of the river is one, although it is legitimate to distinguish its surface from the deep layers which move with their own movement, and the latter from the silty bottom which escapes the organised impetus of the whole. What is important is to avoid fractioning our psychic life and ignoring the constant exchanges that take place between its various strata. We may well call the unconscious the unorganised mass of images on which our duration runs. But we cannot neglect the fact that conscious and subconscious draw from this common pool the materials necessary for the elaboration of thought, and that the three schematic planes of our inner life are therefore closely united.

The unconscious is susceptible, like the subconscious, of becoming conscious, i.e. of receiving the stream of reason which constitutes consciousness. But, while the latter finds in the subconscious more or less coherent but always organised sets of images, which are the result of a more or less long intellectual elaboration, it finds in the unconscious only single images, or, more precisely, united only by the relations which belong to them in their own right, without any ordering factor acting upon them. Moreover, it is evident that the images that pass into the unconscious suffer there from the influence of the anarchic environment, since they often become less precise than when they enter it.

Let us not forget, however, that the unconscious is not a "drawer" for images, but simply the lower stratum of a psychic life which constitutes a whole, whose organisation is insensibly degraded from the conscious to the unconscious, that is to say, a zone where our organising intelligence, theoretically still present, is so weakened that it no longer acts in an effective and tangible way. Except, of course, when it carries out, from the upper strata, a "dive" aimed at collecting the images necessary for the conscious or subconscious composition of our thought.

### 13. SELF-ABSORPTION

This last observation allows us to complete our vision of the exchanges that take place between the various layers of our psychic life.

On the one hand, images "rise" in a movement from the unorganised to the conscious; on the other hand, intelligence, rational or not, "dives" into the depths of our self. This latter phenomenon presents itself to us in two aspects of contradictory appearances. Either it is a work of our intelligence, the result of which we only perceive: the incorporation into our thought of a new or renewed image. And such perception only takes place a posteriori, when it is our subconscious thought. Or, on the contrary, our reason makes a fully conscious effort to explore all the layers of our "I", an effort that is all the more difficult the deeper we sink into the less organised areas.

We study, analyse and judge ourselves in the course of a true discovery of ourselves. But behind these contradictory appearances and with different modalities, we are dealing with the same phenomenon: a contribution of images, isolated or grouped, to the subconscious support of our duration or to our conscious life itself, images that constitute the deep self that we have to know so that our thought can truly express us and guide us in a valid way.

For where do the images come from that we incorporate into our duration by the adaptive process we have already encountered in the course of our search? From the external world, no doubt. But it is not enough for us, in order to direct ourselves in this world and to realise ourselves in it, to grasp its useful data and to assimilate them. We also have to know the other term of the adaptive dialectic: our "I". Now this "I", considered only from the psychic point of view, is first of all, as we have already seen, our cenesthetic duration which expresses our bodily life and, secondly, the images, bound by our intelligence according to our directing intention, which are superimposed on it and receive their colouring from it.

But these images, those which do not come from the outside world, what is their origin and what do they represent? Their origin is our deep being, that is to say, the bulk of the volume of our psychic life which is not always present in our consciousness, but exists nonetheless, and without which our thought would be no more conceivable than the surface of the river without its body of water. And what they represent is our history, the whole of our experience that weighs on our inner movement, but arises only in pieces, according to its needs, in our conscious life. In other words, it is not enough for us to adapt to the world. We also have to adapt ourselves to it and, in order to do so, to confront images that are ours and express us with images that come from the external environment and express it.

But is this a sufficient explanation? No, for our thought is not always oriented towards the outside, nor even in permanent contact with it. It runs its course when we isolate ourselves within ourselves, and all the images that compose it then come from our deepest self. We well know that an emotion, for example, which marks the adaptive effort of our duration, can be born from the shock of an inner image. That would suffice to show that we adapt not only to the outside world but also to ourselves.

What is the conversion of which we have already spoken if not the appearance in our consciousness of subconsciously elaborated images which we must assimilate by a process of reciprocal adaptation? These images are not foreign to us. They come from the depths of our ego. But they express a forgotten part of ourselves, a part different from that which constitutes, at a given moment, our conscious thought. We cannot, therefore, consider our psychic life as a homogeneous whole moving in uniform motion. On the contrary, it is made up of layers of diverse and often contradictory movements. But our being, in order to affirm itself effectively in voluntary acts that express it validly, must make its own synthesis and thus adapt itself to itself.

This is the work of our consciousness which unites what we are and what we know into a harmonious whole and, by a succession of deliberate judgements, realises us, facing the world, and imposes us on the world. Our subconsciousness pursues a parallel work. It is even, in a certain sense, more representative of ourselves, because it is more deeply embedded in the substratum of our psychic life. But it possesses insufficient knowledge of the world, even if our senses inform it to some extent, as is the case with sleepwalkers, and above all it ignores the reasoning without which judgement, rigid and automatic, cannot make a perfect adaptation.

#### **14. THE DATA OF OUR DURATION**

This last analysis obliges us to revise somewhat the idea we had forged of our directing intention. We now see that it is not simple, but is made up of diverse and opposing tendencies which unite in a permanent synthesis, which is precisely our personality, but, in some pathological states, do so only imperfectly.

Our directing intention is therefore constructed throughout our history and we can only really define and "trace" it at the final moment of our existence. It could not be otherwise, since we have seen that there exist in us several psychic layers, diversely organised, which communicate with each other but nevertheless possess a certain autonomy born of a particular adaptation to the images which make up their matter, diverse images.

as are the relationships established between them and, consequently, the modalities of our organising intelligence.

In our unconscious lie our memory images, loose pieces of our psychic life, which to some extent retain their own order, i.e. the constitutive order they had when they were actual. These images are the residue of our entire history. Our intelligence recovers them in order to incorporate them into our flowing thought, either by using them as they are, or by previously breaking them down into their factors in order to amalgamate them into new invented images or to fuse them with new factors that flow from our cenesthetic feeling and our senses.

The imaginal raw material of our subconscious and our conscious comes, then, from a threefold bodily, sensory and memory input. Should we add a fourth, conceptual, considering that concepts, purely intellectual schemes, do not correspond to any concrete reality and are simply invented by us without using any acquired data to do so? That would be to forget that concepts, too, are actual images or memories that we do not draw from nothing but from our inner and outer experience. They are complexes of essential constitutive relations, i.e. psychic images purified of all accidental or particular factors. The relations which compose them are not innate, but induced from concrete images; which does not mean, however, that they are all of external origin, since a large part of the concrete images of our psychic life come from our cenesthetic feeling and express our body with, of course, its constitutive relations.

Although independent of the other images, the concepts come from them thanks to a work of analysis and synthesis of our intelligence. We say: of our intelligence, in general, since, if most of the concepts are of rational creation, there are some that are constituted in our subconscious, in particular those that relate to our body. Conceptual images are thus added to the bodily, sensory and memory images from which they emerge in order to be assembled, by the action of our organising intelligence and in the sense imposed by our personal intention - or by one of the diverse tendencies whose synthesis they constitute - in the organised series that form our thought, that is to say, the higher strata of our psychic life.

## **15. THE STRUGGLE FOR PERSONAL AUTONOMY**

We now possess all the elements that allow us to have an overall view of our inner life. We can consider it, schematically, as the superimposition of moving layers, variously organised by **d i f f e r e n t** intentions, hierarchised from the unconscious to the conscious and that

They contribute, each in its own place and according to its own purpose, to the harmony of the whole and to the affirmation of the self thus created.

The personality is thus a synthesis of imaginative movements ordered and guided by an intelligence which works according to different modalities. It follows from this analysis that our inner being is not only realised by elective actualisation among its potential possibilities, but also by a dialectical process - if we may use this term when multiple factors are involved - of permanent conquest of its unity and autonomy. Permanent conquest, we say, since our personality constantly tends to dissociate itself by the double influx of external and internal images.

We have seen that only an effort of adaptation allows the assimilation or rejection of the image that penetrates us, and then the maintenance of our personal harmony. But images are constantly flowing in from the outside world, through our senses, and from ourselves, that is, from our body and from the lower strata of our psychic life. Our dynamic equilibrium is therefore in permanent danger of rupture. Under the shock of images, we constantly tend to divide ourselves into several divergent and sometimes enemy "subpersonalities".

If our intentional intelligence is not proportionate to the strength and number of the images presented to it, that is to say, in short, to our bodily and sensory vigour, we remain in a state of constant or momentary subtenion. Unable to incorporate or reject the image, we live in the psychic turmoil born of maladaptation. We become purely receptive and allow ourselves to be swept along by the external or internal flow that imposes itself on us with its own dynamism, and which we cannot "personalise", even when it comes from us - from our body - or has already been selected by our senses from the whole of the nature that surrounds us.

It is no longer a question here of a passing depression, following a movement of tension, but of a more or less accentuated psychic "lack of pressure". Between the "rêverie", in which we allow ourselves to be carried away by images which have not been the object of any judgement of adaptation, and the hallucinatory unfolding, in the course of which we believe we see a part of ourselves personified, there is only a question of degree. In the rêveur, as in the hallucinated person, a parasitic system of images develops which crushes his personal intention and replaces it with more or less force. In all cases, it is a weakening of our "I", that is to say, of our psychic harmony, unity and uniqueness.

These, it will be answered, are pathological situations. But such a character stems from the failure of the intentional personality. It remains, however, that a happy conclusion does not suppress the fact of struggle. Our inner being, by reason of its nature and its conditions of duration, is obliged to an incessant overcoming of its constitutive data. It progresses, affirms itself and works only by a

permanent synthesis in and by which personal victory over the dissociation factors we carry within us is achieved.

Are we to exclude from such a pluralistic dialectical process our kinaesthetic duration which appeared to us, in the course of our fundamental experience, as unitary and which our later analyses have shown us to be the constant basis of our psychic life? We cannot yet answer this question. The kinaesthetic feeling is, as we have already seen, an awareness of the vital harmony of our body. We must therefore continue our search for the analysis of our being as a body.

## **CHAPTER II THE OBJECTIVE MAN**

### **16. KNOWLEDGE OF THE BODILY SELF**

Let us return to our fundamental experience. It gives us, as we have already seen, the feeling of our existence, both psychic, since it constitutes the fabric of our inner life, and bodily, since it is but the immaterial expression of our organic life. In the preceding chapter, we went deeper into the consequences of this kinaesthetic feeling, that is to say, we recognised and analysed the various factors that compose it or are added to it in order to constitute our thought. We have to start our search again from our starting point, but with a different orientation, and attempt the analysis of the body itself.

Let us recall, first of all, that we have arrived at the conclusion of the bodily origin of the kinaesthetic feeling for the simple reason that it is given to us as consciousness, pure consciousness being meaningless and not being able to be the consciousness of psychic elements since, in the course of our fundamental experience, the psychic is constituted entirely precisely by our kinaesthetic duration. We have therefore had to admit that this duration emanates from a non-psychic element of our being.

By calling this indeterminate element the body, we have anticipated our search a little, for the sake of clarity in our exposition. In reality, all we can, from this point of view, draw from our fundamental experience is that there exists in us a "something" which is not our psychic life but which is nevertheless indispensable to it, since, without cenesthetic duration, there would be no inner life. How can we pass from affirmation to knowledge?

First of all, continuing our first experience as we have already done. The images that are inserted into our duration are not exclusively of external origin. Some of them undoubtedly express the world around us. But others come from this "something" of which we already know the existence. We feel the beating of our heart, the contractions of most of our muscles and, in some cases, even the functioning of organs such as the liver or the stomach. The "something" is precise. Our duration, while retaining its global kinesthetic basis, is differentiated into localised images and groups of images that no longer express the indefinite but a heterogeneous and harmonious set of elements that we know "inside", that is to say, in their vital functioning.

Knowledge which is still merely subjective, and which we quickly complete. For of the images which reach us from the external world through our sensory organs, some correspond to an object which is undoubtedly part of that world, since the excitations which come from it are no different in essence from those which provoke the other external objects, but at the same time, it is us.

There is no evidence here: the child explores and discovers its body as it does any object and, it seems, only gradually realises that it is itself. Nor is there an undemonstrable affirmation: for we can see the perfect correspondence between the internal images which emanate from our body and penetrate into our duration, and the external images which are given to us by our senses. This muscle whose contraction we feel, we can grasp its change of form and consistency with the aid of our eyes and our hands; this stomach, which manifests its existence when we are hungry, for example, we can locate from the outside and even modify, by a light pressure, the direct psychic feeling we have of it. It follows that the inner knowledge of the complex "something" of which we spoke above, and the sensory knowledge of one of the perfectly individualised elements of the external world, have one and the same object, our body, apprehended in two different aspects by two different methods.

It will be objected that such sensory knowledge is still subjective. Yes, indeed, but exactly as is our knowledge of the whole external world, with the same possibility of scientific confirmation. The contraction of a muscle can be registered by a dynamometer as by our hand, and the beating of our heart can be inscribed on an electrocardiogram. Our body is therefore, for us, the safest and best known of realities, since we know it like any object within our reach, but we also grasp it from the inside, in its inner workings. We form such a precise and "living" image of it that some hallucinated people project it outside themselves and attribute to their "double" a consistency identical to that of any other human being.



## 17. MATERIAL DIFFERENTIATION OF THE BODY

Let us try to put ourselves, by thought, in the place of the child who is discovering his body, a legitimate and feasible attempt since it simply consists of eliminating from our fundamental experience the memory images that make us recognise our objective self.

The child takes his foot instead of the rattle: what would he see if he had our reasoning? First of all, that what he is holding in his hand has certain characteristics identical to those of his toy: the extension, since his hand cannot enclose it; the weight, since he must exert a certain muscular effort to lift it; the consistency, since it is not possible to put his finger through it. If he goes further in his search, the child will be able to conclude that his foot is a material object like the rattle, but that it differs qualitatively from it: it has a different shape, is less hard, heavier, etc.

In continuing his exploration, he will have to realise that his foot is not an autonomous object, but only a part of a much larger and more complex object that also corresponds to the same definition. Thus the body is recognised in its unity and, for this very reason, differentiated from the outside world. It is a material object in the midst of others, and it is possible for us to subject it to the scientific techniques that allow us to study matter. Let us do so, and there will be no need for surprises.

Let us examine our body, no longer with our eyes, but with the help of a spectroscope. Its shape and dimensions will no longer be the same, since it will be surrounded by an "aura" caused by the infrared rays which emanate from it and which belong to it as legitimately as the skin which seemed to delimit it. If we put it, by thought, in Einstein's famous lift which cancels or multiplies gravity, its mass, that is to say, for us, its weight, will be cancelled or multiplied. If we examine it with X-rays, it will lose its consistency and become porous. Moreover, in the same vein, a microphysical study will show us that our solid body is made up of a multitude of corpuscles devoid of extension or, better still, of a vacuum in which electric charges, without volume, move at high speed.

Does it follow from all this that the large, heavy and consistent body is nothing but an illusion? Not at all, but simply that those qualities by which we recognise and delimit it are only valid on our scale of observation. Our senses give us of our body, as of other objects, the phenomenal knowledge that is useful to us and harmonises with the inner knowledge we have of ourselves. What matters is that we examine the world and ourselves with the same eyeglass, albeit under various angles, so that the relations we establish between what is us and what is the other are exact.

Our senses enable us to distinguish our body from other objects around us, and to differentiate it materially from them. The fact that the

The fact that the qualities we attribute to matter are relative and exist only under certain conditions and on a certain scale of observation does not detract from the objectivity of our experience, but only from its completeness. This does not prevent the differentiation of our body by our senses from being coarse and from responding to an overall view, and we are not forbidden to have recourse to scientific techniques in order to make it more precise. But the essential is given to us naturally: our body is a piece of matter that is part of the world, but it possesses a certain autonomy, that is to say, a certain individuality.

## **18. BODY STRUCTURE**

Our recognition of this piece of matter has hitherto consisted in separating it from the whole to which it belongs but from which it is distinguished by form and dimensions. We must note, however, that our body, as an object known to the senses, only appears to us as a block through an effort of synthesis. The child does not discover his body, but his hand, his foot, his mouth, etc., as distinct objects but with a common quality, that of being part of himself. His body is not for him, at first, but a resultant, and it is only later that he will recognise its unity. We can say, therefore, that he ascertains his structural differentiation, or at least a certain structural differentiation, before his individual differentiation.

Through our kinaesthetic feeling, we already have knowledge of a global self, to which we link the various elements that we will later recognise as parts of our body. But our first objective verification is that of the physical diversity of our being: we have feet, hands, limbs, and a mass to which they are attached. To this physical diversity is added the functional diversity, since each of these parts of us is useful to us in a particular way, and has its own qualities. Our senses, thanks to which we have been able to differentiate our body from the outside world, belong to some of our specialised parts, especially to the head, which possesses exclusively the organs of sight, hearing, smell and taste, which is one of the reasons why common sense is repelled by the idea of considering it as part of the body, to which it is often opposed in common parlance.

Understandable repugnance, since the head seems to us to be the locus of our psychic life and, in any case, of the language through which we express our thoughts. But inadmissible repugnance, since the head is physically part of that material object we call the body. The brain which it contains is, from this point of view, only one of the internal organs whose presence and activity we can more or less guess at, and which we sometimes manage to distinguish within our bodily mass. However, we only have a true knowledge of them through scientific analysis, which allows us to add to the physical diversity and functional diversity already observed, the diversity of the brain, which we have already observed.

physiological that makes manifest the multiplicity of our differentiated organs.

We also discover, thanks to him, that our organs are made of tissues with particular properties, and that these tissues are composed of cells which enjoy a certain physical autonomy. If we go still further, we will be able to reduce these cells into chemical elements, which are only some of those which constitute the whole of the material world, and then the chemical molecules into atoms, that is to say, into different electrical charges.

Schematically, our body thus has a multiple pyramid structure. The atoms are grouped into molecules, the molecules into cells, the cells into tissues, the tissues into organs and finally the organs into our bodily self. Such a structure is complex and the whole to which it belongs is essentially heterogeneous. But the body, thus considered only in its static aspect, differs from a simple stone only in its degree of complication.

## **19. THE DYNAMISM OF THE BODY**

In reality, neither the body nor its constituent organic elements present themselves to us in a static form. Movement is one of its fundamental properties. Immediate observation reveals to us the movement of our limbs, the contraction of our external muscles, the mobility of our eyes and face. A somewhat deeper search reveals the beating of our heart and the variations of our lungs. A physiological study reveals the internal exchanges of our glands, our stomach and our intestines. Finally, we can scientifically verify the renewal of our cells and, to some extent depending on current techniques, the electrical variations of these cells and of the atoms of which they are composed.

So there is nothing inert in our body, not even the physical-chemical matter that forms its basis. But our observation obliges us to go further than a simple sum of varied movements, and to recognise their coordination in what we might call a dynamic structure. Cellular renewal is subject to a rhythm that varies with each tissue, but also with the particular circumstances of the organic whole. The activity of each gland manifests itself according to its own rhythm of secretion, which is also subject to some extent to the needs of the whole body. The heart produces by its beat a variable circulatory rhythm. The lungs work according to a respiratory rhythm, and the stomach-intestine complex according to a digestive rhythm. Let us not forget, although such an incomplete enumeration is only meant to be exemplary, the rhythms of our chemical exchanges and those of our nervous influences.

All these various movements combine to form, on the scale of the organism, the unique vital rhythm which expresses the harmonious or at least harmonious functioning of our bodily being. This vital rhythm is both the rhythm of our life, since the latter is identified with the unified flow of our various movements, and the rhythm of our vitality, since it passes through alternating and successive phases of tension and depression, of activity and rest, of impetus and fatigue, of wakefulness and sleep. And this rhythm is part of the wider cycle of the great periods of our existence, from embryonic age to old age.

If we were to trace the curve of our bodily dynamism, it would show an upward movement from the primitive egg to maturity, followed by a downward movement to death. But each of the elements of such a curve would be the resultant of secondary curves corresponding to our daily cycles, and each of the latter would in turn be the resultant of our various organic rhythms. The amplitude of the vital curve and that of each of its constituent rhythms would therefore depend on the energy of the body and that of each part considered.

We can now have an overview of our bodily dynamism: it is a perpetually evolving bundle of forces that is constantly changing and yet remains itself. It is this change in permanence that has enabled us to define our psychic duration. It is therefore legitimate to speak of a bodily duration made up of internal organic and cellular modifications and sensory excitations of external origin. Even if we do not accept the hypothesis, as yet insufficiently demonstrated, according to which the cells behave like tiny electrical oscillators vibrating more or less powerfully and harmoniously, a hypothesis which would make our biological duration "palpable", it remains that the variable energetic movements of the cells and organs constitute a unitary dynamic flow of changing tension. This duration, considered in its permanence, is what we call our temperament. Considered in its career, we call it our ageing.

## **20. THE FUNCTIONAL ORGANISATION OF THE BODY**

We have recognised in our body a structure and in its dynamism a coordination between its constituent forces. But this double verification would not suffice to prohibit us from seeing in our organism a simple contingent and accidental complex. The raindrops that gather in puddles on the road indisputably possess a structural order, since they are juxtaposed in a certain way and not in such and such another, and a conjugation of movements, since they gather together. Are we to admit that the molecules, cells and organs of our body have grouped together, and the forces emanating from them form our biological duration, by the simple play of chance?

The calculation of probabilities makes the thing highly inconceivable. Moreover, even if chance could justify the assembly of the constituent parts of our body and the forces they manifest, it could not explain the functioning of cells, organs and the organism itself. Each of our organs has its own individuality, since it is possible, with the help of an appropriate technique, to separate them from the biological ensemble to which they belong, and even to keep them artificially active outside this ensemble.

Each therefore has a particular function with a view to which it is organised. Their structural and dynamic order is not a simple juxtaposition and conjugation. It has its *raison d'être*, that is to say, it is the cause of an effect which it seeks and from which it receives its justification, just as the machine is the cause of the product it manufactures but finds its legitimation in it. The machine cannot be conceived without functional intention, nor the organ. Both function because they have a function to perform, and their functioning is conditioned by their structure.

However, while the organ possesses a certain individuality, it does not enjoy any independence. The severed frog's leg may still react to certain excitations, but its reaction will be meaningless and of no use. The gland, suitably nourished under the right conditions, may continue to secrete, but its product is of no use. In other words, the organ is not directed by any purpose of its own, or at least its purpose only becomes meaningful when it is integrated into the whole for whose benefit it works.

On the other hand, let us not forget that the operation of isolating an organ and keeping it functioning is arbitrary and sophisticated. We refer to it only to show the individuality of the organs which, in natural reality, the only one that interests us, only function, or at least function usefully, when they are united in the organism, that is to say, linked together by the blood and the nervous system, and oriented by a unitary directive intention which penetrates them and transcends them.

It is the same with the cells into which we can analytically dissociate our organs. Each one of them constitutes an infinitely complex world with its own order, still poorly understood but manifest. These cells, of various races and endowed with peculiar properties, are not juxtaposed at random: they associate to form the organs and the organism as a whole. Each has its own function corresponding to its capacities. They are therefore predestined by their very being.

Only a superficial analysis, based on their external structure, allows us to define our organs and cells as the constituent elements of a complex organism. Physiologically, the organism is simple. It is constituted and functions according to a thought which is immanent to it, and maintains its essential unity through the specialisation of each organ and each cell which creates and

whose activity it determines. To attribute to this functional organisation of our body a character of contingency would be to recognise randomness as an intention, which would be absurd.

## 21. THE ORGANIC INSTINCT

The functional intention of our organs is particularly clear when it takes the form of an instinct. It is plausible that our instinctive activity is, in some cases, the product of an experience transmitted by heredity. But such an explanation is not valid when the organ is inconceivable without the instinct which determines its use.

The series of fully reasoned acts of reproduction, which would be indispensable for the constitution of the sexual instinct by transmitted habit, is unthinkable, since it would presuppose a real divination of the biological role of organs of which, by definition, no instinct would give the mode of use. The organ of reproduction has no meaning, nor is it conceivable, unless it is accompanied by the tendency which incites its owner to seek the complementary organ, that is to say, very precisely, by the sexual instinct. This is an adaptation to the very conditions of the biological evolution of our being. Instinct is no different from the physiological laws from which it cannot be separated. Between organisation and instinct there is the same continuity as between organ and function. Instinct is but the necessary, essentially foreseen extension of the law.

We must, however, make an important reservation about this term of prolongation. It must be well understood that we use it only in a pragmatic sense: we possess genital organs before mating according to the rules of our sexual instinct. The instinct is therefore, from this point of view, the prolongation of the organ and its organisation. But it would be easy for us to invert the relationship and say that the organ takes on its meaning, and is even conceived only to the extent that it will be used, and that the instinct must therefore pre-exist the instrument it will use, just as the creative intention of the craftsman pre-exists the tool he imagines and makes to realise it.

These two points of view are contradictory only in appearance. In reality, the instincts which we can define as extensions of physiological laws are, in their essence, indistinguishable from these same laws. The organ without the instinct is inconceivable, just as the instinct is inconceivable without the organ. We know that the sexual instinct disappears if a man's genital organs are amputated, but that, on the other hand, the muscles atrophy when they do not function. The reason for this double phenomenon is very simple: the instinct is not a tendency which the organ adds to itself in order to achieve its purpose, but the organ itself in so far as we consider it as acting, or, better still, the dynamic order of the organ. To separate structure and purpose is purely arbitrary, since the structure of the organ is not a tendency which the organ adds to itself in order to achieve its

purpose.

It exists only as a function of its immanent finality, which in turn can only be realised through a certain organisation.

Structure is therefore functional as is intention. All this applies, of course, not only to the organs, but also to the organism that encompasses them. Moreover, here too, it is not possible for us to consider the organ in isolation. The sexual instinct is the functional intention of a perfectly delimited organic whole. But it would make no sense at all if this whole were separated from the body, since the individual function of the genital organs is nothing but a specialisation and, one might say, a delegation of the organism to which they belong. This forces us to consider, once again, the functional unity of our body.

## **22. ORGANIC MEMORY AND FORESIGHT**

The activity of our body, as of each of our organs, thus depends on a directing intention of our being, which is realised and creates, by its realisation, our biological duration. But this duration is not only a progression in time or, more precisely, as we shall see later, a progression of time. It expresses the modifications that occur in our organism, essential modifications that come from the general scheme of our evolution, and accidental modifications that respond to the contingent demands of events.

But our physiological being does not last only in the present instant, and we could even say that duration, continuous by nature, excludes the present or, at least, reduces it to a mathematical limit between the past that is no longer and the future that is not yet. It seems impossible to us, therefore, to admit that the past has simply disappeared, erased and as if repelled into nothingness by an immediate reality. Moreover, our bodily past is only the past of our duration, that is to say, a synthesis of partial modifications that constitute the changing flow of our organic life. It is therefore necessary that our physiological being has registered its past, and that this past intervenes to modify the organisation that lasts, that is to say, it is preserved by transforming itself without ceasing.

Each organic event is imprinted on our body in the form of a definitive modification of its cells and humours. The ageing of an organ or of the body as a whole is nothing but its increasing individualisation or, considered from another point of view, the evolution of its history. Our body creates its future in the sense that the guiding intention of its immanent thought chooses at each moment between several possible paths, this choice being the fact of its present being, which is nothing but the synthesis of its past. However, this past of our physiological being obviously does not comprise only the accidental part of its history. What could not have been



determines the choice, but only among the possibilities envisaged by the directive intention.

Our body, therefore, is not only endowed with memory, but also with what seems to us to be a prophetic gift. We have already seen: the organic instrument is constructed according to its subsequent function, which it must know in advance. Our sexual organ was constituted only in anticipation of its union with a complementary organ belonging to another individual. The white blood cell foresees its possible action on a microbe, not only external to the organism, but even unknown until then. If one kidney is removed from a sick person, the other grows, even though, in its normal state, it would have been able to amply satisfy the needs of the organism: it foresees a possible exceptional activity.

Our tissues and organs are therefore organised with a view to what will happen, but also to what may happen. Prophetic gift? Certainly, if one wants to express by these words the simple knowledge of the future. No, properly speaking, since a motorist who has studied his route and planned his petrol reserve with a view to an eventual detour is not described as a prophet.

Our organism is more foresight than prophecy. It knows the goal it must reach and the various paths that circumstances may force it to take, and it organises itself accordingly. It must therefore have thought out its itinerary and possess, knowing it, the map of its real and virtual future. We can therefore say that our present body contains or, better, is at once all its past, i.e. its history, recorded in the form of physiological modifications, and its experience, acquired and preserved in the form of habits, and all its foreseen possible future.

### **23. THE BODY, A BIOLOGICAL WHOLE**

We have seen successively that our body constitutes a structural ensemble of organs and cells associated according to a certain constitutional order, a dynamic ensemble of vital rhythms associated in a certain organic duration, and an evolutionary ensemble of the temporal phases of its development. But these are, of course, only three aspects of our bodily being, since its duration is conditioned by its structure, and its evolution is only the progression in time of this same duration. Our body is therefore a biological whole that is both permanent and changing: permanent, since it is always, at whatever instant of its duration it is apprehended, one and the same being, and changing, since this being is constantly changing and is never absolutely identical to what it was in a previous observation, however close it may be to the present moment.

The chemical matter of which our body is composed is completely renewed every seven years. The shape and dimensions of our body change with age, state of health and way of life. Its duration is enriched by experience and impoverished by possibilities. But it is always the same body that assimilates and excretes chemicals, grows and swells or gets thinner, and creates its history by pushing itself through time. Because it lasts, that is to say, it lives and therefore refuses to disappear, our organism is obliged to modify itself according to changing circumstances, in order to resist them. It has to adapt itself to its internal variations, as well as to those of the outside world in which it is immersed.

The synthesis, indispensable for its permanence, of its organic and cellular dynamisms is not automatic. It requires a constant effort to overcome forces that must necessarily remain subordinate: an authoritative coordination that maintains the organic harmony that constantly tends to break down.

On the other hand, our body is subject to the action of the environment. Food, air, light, sounds, perfumes and known and unknown radiation penetrate it. Atmospheric pressure varies, as do temperature and electric fields which it cannot avoid. It has to move and, in its movement, it comes into physical conflict with this or that external object. It lives in the midst of other animate beings, and its relations with them involve some collisions. Our body must therefore, by the combined interplay of complex processes, constantly modify itself in order to respond satisfactorily to the needs of the moment.

Some of these needs are normal, in the sense that they are inherent to our existence, irrespective of fortuitous events. Our organism automatically maintains, through the intervention of its regulatory systems, its internal temperature and assimilates its food. Sometimes, on the contrary, it defends itself against accidental phenomena. Its tissues adapt to the rupture of a blood vessel as to the fracture of a bone, or its whole adapts to a change in altitude. Without such adaptive processes, our body would either dissociate under the divergent internal pressure of its constituent elements, which, as we have already noted, have a certain individuality, or it would succumb under the weight of the outside world. It remains only itself and lives as long as it adapts.

Change is the condition and therefore the law of its permanence. It is therefore not at all surprising that it is foreseen, in its various forms, by our body, even when it corresponds to accidental circumstances. This does not mean that this accidental is foreseen, since there would be a contradiction in terms and we would have to say, with Carrel, that the prophetic adaptation is unintelligible in the light of our concepts of organisation, space and time. It is the accidental possible that our organism foresees, just as the automobile manufacturer who puts a thermostat even in the cars he will sell in Equatorial Africa foresees its functioning at any latitude. Our body, which is

its own builder, it provides itself with a system of adaptation to circumstances that will or will not be realised.

We could say of our organism what theologians say of God: it does not foresee, it sees. It does not foresee its future, contingent to some extent: it sees the multiple plan of its own development, with the various foreseen solutions of a certain number of possibilities. And He sees it because He carries it within Himself. But if our body does not succeed, or no longer succeeds, in adapting to itself or to the world, that is to say, if it does not possess the appropriate response to a given event that weighs on it at a given moment, its functioning is interrupted like that of a machine whose essential part is broken because it has lost its indispensable elasticity: death ensues.

## **24. UNITY AND COMPLEXITY OF THE BODY**

Our quick study of adaptation would suffice to show that the term "whole", which we have used for our body, cannot mean a simple sum of organs, of dynamisms, or even of functions. We must not forget that our fundamental experience has revealed to us our organism in its unitary duration and that it is only by a legitimate but purely rational analysis that we succeed in discovering the multiple elements into which we have broken down our body. Has our experience deceived us? Has it presented to us as an organism what was in reality only a complex of juxtaposed or at least associated organs?

Certainly not, for the simple reason that our organs have no existence and no meaning except in so far as they are bound together in the organism by a unitary thought which does not belong to them, that is, in so far as their particular functional intention is dominated by the directing intention of our body. Not only are our organs interdependent, to the extent that any modification of one element of the whole influences each of them, but also that they are what they are only because of this interdependence.

However, they do not possess any force of attraction which would tend to bring them together and harmonise them. On the contrary, they have rather a tendency to work on their own. Better still, our organs are only what they are and above all function as they do because a double network of humour and nerves links them together and, above all, puts them in communication with the controlling organ of our body, the brain, the latter being supplied by the humours which transmit to it the products of the activity of each cell and each organ. It receives, via the centripetal nerves, the information it needs about the functioning of the whole organism and its relations with the outside world. It sends out, via the motor nerves, its orders in response to circumstances signalled by chemical and nervous pathways. It is assisted in its task by the

annexes of the bulb and the spinal cord, which are in the same receptor position.

In other words, our organism only functions as a unit because it is directed by a nervous complex that imposes its intention on it, the intention of our bodily self. Although, therefore, our biological duration is a synthesis of the functional dynamisms of our organs, as we have seen, such a synthesis is the result of a centralising will, and the dynamisms carry out their orders by modifying themselves according to the needs of the whole of which they are a part, and without which they would not be.

It is the brain and its attached nerve centres that possess and express this guiding intention of our bodily activity and then of our bodily being. This  
Would it be right to say that our organs are nothing but instruments in the service of a brain which alone would be truly ourselves? No, certainly not if such an interpretation would force us to consider these organs as indifferent. But no instrument is indifferent to the one who uses it, and the possibilities of the tool limit and guide the creative activity of the worker and the artist.

The mode of functioning of each of our organs - and we already know that it depends on the anatomical structure, but also on the nourishment, which itself depends on the activity of all the other organs, as well as on the incorporation of external elements - modifies the humoral and nervous environment of our brain and, therefore, its decisions. It follows that the realisation of our organic directive intention - intention embodied in the brain - is to some extent subject to the functioning of all the organs of our body. It is often said of a good captain that he is identified with his ship. The same is true of the brain, to the highest degree: it is confused with the whole organism.

The real is not, therefore, a more or less complex association of autonomous elements, nor even of more or less interdependent parts, but an organism, one and simple, which is differentiated, according to its functional needs, into specialised organs.

## **25. THE EVOLUTION OF THE BODY**

This is not only about the primacy of the organism over the organs, but also about their historical priority.

Let us consider, in fact, with the biologist, the development of our body from its origin. Although infinitely complex, the primitive egg is not a micro-organism, and in vain would we seek in it our organs in reduction. In spite of its constitutive heterogeneity, we can therefore speak of its

indifferentiation with respect to their later structural states. It is only gradually that the organs are drawn out, refined, grow and become ordered without anything essential having been added to the original cell.

We know, moreover, that this cell contained the genes which governed the process of differentiation and thus potentially possessed the structure of the body and, generally speaking, all its development, i.e. all its possibilities. The historical evolution of our organism therefore implies the action on an acquired raw material of an organising intelligence, immanent in the egg, which is actualised according to the functional requirements of life.

But when we say that the primitive cell contained such intelligence in potential form, we must not infer from this that the organising power was as it were added to it. What makes the egg the egg, and not a small mass of protoplasm, is precisely this dynamic set of possibilities which implies the differentiating evolution indispensable to the autonomous life of the body. Therefore, we can legitimately say that the egg is already our organism, even if it does not yet possess our organs. Hence the evidence of the priority of our bodily being over its parts, evidence which is no less manifest if we consider no longer our structure, but our dynamism, and not only our dynamism of differentiation but also our dynamism of adaptation.

To what, in fact, is each of our organs adapted? To its conditions of life, that is to say, of subsistence and functioning. These conditions are those imposed on it by the environment of which it is a part, that is to say, by the whole body, which requires of it not only a certain activity, but also certain modifications of its activity which respond to the need for functional unity of the organic whole. The body, considered as a unit, thus directs the adaptation of the organs.

But on the other hand, it adapts itself to maintain or restore its internal harmony, i.e. it constantly adapts to the individual variations of its organs. When one of them is infected, our whole body changes its rhythm and its exchanges: fever is an adaptation of the organism to its internal conditions of existence, disturbed by a pathological phenomenon. The body acts in defence of the organ, and takes the necessary measures to restore its natural dynamism, but it does so in its own interest and not in the interest of the organ whose activity, and therefore whose health, has no meaning except in relation to the organism. The adaptation of our body to itself thus responds to its unitary directive intention.

The same is true of its adaptation to the external environment, and the resulting modifications tend to maintain our bodily harmony in the face of the world that acts upon us. There is nothing more obvious in this respect than the process of adaptation to the ambient heat and cold, by which our organism maintains the necessary internal temperature.

Our biological adaptation to ourselves and to the outside world thus demonstrates not only the primacy of our bodily unity over its dynamic differentiation, but also the priority of our directive intention without which the adaptive process, in all its aspects, would have no meaning. How can we doubt this when we see our tissues, already differentiated, transforming into each other for the repair of a bone or the healing of a sore? If our directing intention and then our bodily unity were the result of an association of our cells and organs and the result of their individual dynamisms, it would not be possible for them to return to a differentiation of which they would not be the cause but the effect.

## **26. THE LIFE OF THE BODY**

Without its adaptive faculties, our body would be unable to function, that is, to live, since its functioning depends on the harmony, or rather harmonisation, of its organs, whose adaptation is merely a response to the pressure exerted on them by the body's directing intention. It would also be incapable of resisting the continuous modifications of the external environment that includes it. For our organism, to adapt is to create in itself the state which best corresponds to its internal and external conditions of existence. Such a new state is, therefore, the result of a true judgement of the value of our organic functioning with respect to the various forces that tend to hinder or prohibit it.

But a judgement is an eminently intellectual operation. Is our body endowed with intelligence? Undoubtedly, since, through adaptation, it recognises the inadequacy of its present state in a modified environment, and chooses from among its virtual possibilities of evolution the one which enables it to transform itself in such a way as to re-establish the vital harmony which has been compromised. Such an organic intelligence immanent to our body is not new to us, since we have already encountered it in its role as organiser of our bodily structure and of our developmental dynamism.

Adaptation consists in the modification of our structure and our dynamism. It results in the preservation of our functional order. The construction of our body and its adaptation are therefore only two aspects of its vital requirement, that is to say, of the intention to function which it carries within itself. Our organic directive intention is nothing but the organising intelligence of our body, at once the plan of our vital evolution and the impetus for the realisation of this plan; that is to say Bergson's "vital impetus", but only if we specify its intellectual nature and, moreover, note that it progresses by choice among its potential possibilities, and not by the simple creation of new forms without precedent.

Our organic intelligence proceeds by creative actualisation, that is, by elaboration of what already exists in potential, but could not have been realised. Our body, therefore, is determined by its original virtualities, in the sense that it can only "become" its own essence, but it creates itself to the extent that it chooses from among its possibilities, according to its needs of adaptation to itself and to the external world.

A very limited choice, to be sure, since it must respect the structural and dynamic order that conditions our organic functioning, and since, moreover, as our life unfolds, our virtualities diminish, not only those we have realised and which have become our history, but also all those which, at other times, we could have chosen at each moment of our past but which we have not chosen, and which have been eliminated.

The history of its life weighs on our body, both by its successive rejections of possibilities that have been definitively discarded from its "becoming", and by its successive choices that act on its future decisions. Our organism finds itself in the situation of a chess player who sees his future choices reduced with each move. It has to constantly adapt not only to its opponent's game - the outside world - but also to its own present situation, the result of all its previous evolution.

It would therefore be inaccurate to say that our bodily directive intention works according to a pre-established plan, and that our vital evolution is directed, by paths that depend on circumstances, towards a pre-assigned goal. The plan exists in the form of potential possibilities. But it is not necessarily realised: it is created by a constant choice among the possible ones; a choice demanded by the adaptation to the internal and external conditions of our functional activity.

The purpose still exists, but it does not impose any precise goal. The only purpose of our intentional intelligence is the functioning of our organism, i.e. its life to the highest possible degree.

## **27. BODILY WILL**

We have to say again here what we have already said about our psychic life: it is not the abstraction "intelligence" that progresses in time towards its self-realisation, but, in the present case, our bodily being as a whole, the directing intention being an aspect and not a part of it.

Therefore, it is not our organising intelligence that forces our body to adapt and imposes on it the transformations indispensable to its proper functioning, but the body itself that overcomes, by modifying itself, the obstacles it encounters. The guiding intention of our organism is nothing more than

his intention to live and adaptation, the faculty he possesses to realise this intention, i.e. to realise himself and thus assert himself in the face of circumstances.

The act of adaptation - and we must assimilate it to the act of development since, in creating its structure, our body does nothing but adapt to what it is - thus responds to our reason for living. This intentional, and therefore voluntary, character of life, does not everyday language, although prone to assimilate will to deliberation, recognise it when it uses expressions such as "not wanting to die" or "se cramponner à la vie"? Our body does not let itself live. It conquers its life by the effort of adaptation, thanks to which it defends its constantly compromised functional unity, and imposes itself on the outside world: voluntary effort, since it expresses our organic affirmation; intelligent effort, since it is the result of a judgement that proceeds from the adaptive relationship of our bodily being with its environment; free effort, finally, and this qualifier requires some explanation.

By freedom is often meant the elimination of any causal relationship, and thus a character of arbitrariness is attributed to the free act. If this were true, there is no doubt that the adaptive decision of our organism could not be called free, since it is linked to a cause, i.e. the very state of our bodily being at the moment it faces new conditions of existence, a state which depends, as we know, on what we are and what we have experienced, i.e. on our individual essence and our history. Are we to conclude from this that our bodily activity is determined? Yes, but by our body itself, whose nature is, on the one hand, the product of chance: chance of the conception that created it, and created it with a certain capital of possibilities, and chance of each of its innumerable confrontations with the outside world.

Are we to say, then, that our body is determined by chance? This is nonsense if we give the word "determine" the meaning attributed to it by some materialists, for whom life was a mechanical chain which excluded chance as well as all judgement. But we can say that our organism is self-determining in the sense that it constantly chooses from among its potential possibilities those which, under the given inner and outer conditions, permit its best realisation.

The voluntary act of our body is therefore unpredictable, since it results not from a mechanical development, but from a dialectical process of adaptation. It is only in this sense that we can call all our organic phenomena free, including those which are the least variable. We choose to make our heart beat rather than to stop it, and our choice is free, since it proceeds from an organic judgement of the present conditions of our life with respect to our immanent purpose. Our death itself is a free act of our body, since it depends, at the moment of its occurrence, on the possibilities and history of our bodily being, confronted with the inner and outer conditions of its realisation.



## 28. BODY DURATION

Thus, by free affirmations of our vital intention, the constructive or adaptive differentiation of our body is made. Now, this differentiation is not distinct from the progression in time of our organic dynamism, from this bundle of rhythms which constitutes what we have called our bodily duration. But each of these rhythms belongs to an organ, or a system of organs, which therefore possesses not only a structural individuality, but also an evolutionary individuality, and therefore its own intention which governs its functional movement.

Our organic duration is a synthesis. But this synthesis is not a simple resultant. Let us not forget that we have established that our unitary intention is prior to the differentiation it directs. Our bodily duration is the voluntary creation of our directing intention that forces the functional processes of the organs and organic systems that it itself differentiated to converge. We can compare this physiological duration to the evolution of a family whose father keeps in guardianship the children he has fathered, and to whom he has thus given a certain individuality, and forces them to live and work together in a harmony without which the group would disappear. The dynamism of the family exists only through this permanent unitary effort. But its direction depends not only on the father's intention, but also on the activity of each of the children. Or, more precisely, the head of the family has for his sole intention the harmonious life of the group, and each of his orders expresses his exclusive will, to adapt it to himself and to the world which surrounds and presses upon him.

Thus the organising intelligence immanent in our body ensures the unitary functioning of the whole it created. It is it, therefore, that constitutes our duration, that is to say, our unified dynamism, using, to achieve this, a specialised organ, our brain and its network of communications. But let us be careful not to individualise our intentional intelligence as a kind of chief of staff, who, from his command post and using his telephones, directs the movement of his troops. It is not only omnipresent in our organism, but it is also that organism which, without it, is unthinkable except in the form of a heap of physico-chemical matter.

Each of our cells and each of our organs function only because they are not intellectualised elements, which would imply their possibility of existence without organising intention, but intelligence. This does not prevent each cell and each organ from possessing its own functional dynamism - i.e. its own duration - which is only integrated into the unitary organism through the synthetic action of the brain, but would have no meaning outside the organism.

We must therefore consider our organic intellectual activity in two aspects, that is to say, more precisely, in two complementary processes: on the one hand, its penetration, starting from the original germ, into the physical-chemical matter to which it is attached; on the other hand, its penetration, starting from the original germ, into the physical-chemical matter to which it is attached.

The body is organised into differentiated cells and organs in such a way that they meet the requirements of the functional specialisation of our body; on the other hand, their coordination into a dynamic whole of the elements thus constituted.

Our intentional intelligence works, therefore, like the engineer who builds the machines necessary for his factory, assembles them and ensures their harmonious functioning. But such a comparison is only valid if we note that, in our body, the engineer is immanent to the factory and differs from it only by analysis. Our duration is not a product of our organic intelligence: it is that same intelligence, incorporated in our constitutive matter, which is progressing in time, and which inserts our living bodily personality into the world.

## **29. PHYSIOLOGICAL TIME**

It remains for us to specify the meaning of the expression "progressing in time" which we have just used, and to study, for that very reason, the rhythm of our organic duration. It is not our purpose here to analyse the nature of time. It is enough for us to consider it, empirically, as an essential character of existence, since nothing can be conceived of as having instantaneous existence, and to note that it is apprehensible to us only in so far as it is assimilated to a change, that is to say, to a movement. Thus the time of our clocks corresponds to the movement of the hands on the dial, and, in the last analysis, to the movement of the earth around its axis.

Common usage wants us to express our duration in clock units, i.e. in sidereal time. This is a convenient procedure, no doubt, but illegitimate, since our body has its own internal movement. Cosmic time can only be for us a reference system, all the more useful because it is practically uniform. But how can we grasp our organic time in itself?

We know of two procedures to achieve this, both based on the fact that each functional movement of our organs leaves its traces in our blood plasma in the form of toxic substances, which act as a brake on our physiological activities and, in particular, on our cellular reproduction. We can calculate, at fixed sidereal intervals, the rate of healing of a sore or, more conveniently, compare the growth of a colony of infusoria in our plasma with that of an identical colony in salt water.

These two techniques allow us to see that the flow of our physiological time is not uniform. It varies with our age: our organic activity decreases as we live, and our ageing is much faster.

- with respect to cosmic time - at the beginning of our life than at its end.

It also varies with how well our body is functioning, and an injury, infection or difficult adaptation slows down its course.

The sidereal year of a ten-year-old child, while his organism is in full development, comprises four times as many organic phenomena and therefore physiological "years" as that of a fifty-year-old adult, and the sidereal year of a sick person, in the course of which his body struggles to fight evil and defend its existence, corresponds to several of his normal physiological "years".

Our duration flows, therefore, according to an irregular and decreasing rhythm that is strictly personal to us, since it is the expression of our organic activity in its relation to its inner and outer conditions, that is to say, to our physiological past inscribed in our tissues and to the adaptive demands of our environment.

### **30. THE STRUGGLE FOR THE LIFE OF THE BODY**

This analysis brings us back once again to the functional unity of our body, a unity without which our duration would only be a resultant of forces, and not a synthesis made by a personal organising intention, prior to the anatomical and dynamic differentiation of which it is the author but which it never ceases to dominate.

This fundamental unity should not, however, give us any illusions: it is precarious and always provisional. We have the impression of the solidity and permanence of our organism, because it admits of no intermediate state between functioning and death, and we observe it, of course, in life. In reality, however, not only is our body inexorably heading towards its destruction, but also its life deserves rather the name of survival and, always in danger, only lasts at the price of constant effort.

Our organism is at the mercy of a pressure from the outside world that is too strong for it to be able to adapt to it: it can withstand neither too much cold, nor too much heat, nor certain microbes, nor prolonged immersion, nor fire, nor even a shock that is too brutal. It has to find the food it needs around it, otherwise it will lose the physico-chemical energy it needs. Finally, at least at certain moments of its existence, particularly in childhood, it needs the help of its fellow human beings.

But that's not all: while it imposes itself on its environment and adapts to it in a continuous struggle, it has to take into account the "fifth column" that undermines it from within. Our body, in fact, has incorporated a certain amount of matter that comes from its progenitors and its suppliers. This matter is organised, as we have already seen, but in an unstable way. If we stop our organic functioning, it will soon decompose and transform itself into

a mass of chemicals, which will retain only a negligible part of its organic structure. This shows that the matter of our body has a natural tendency to return to the outside world from whence it came, and thus to destroy the anatomical conditions of our vital functioning.

Our intentional intelligence must therefore continuously and successfully oppose the physico-chemical decomposition of the organism. It must also, as we have already seen, contain the independent impulses of our cells and organs by coordinating their complex activities. Finally, it must maintain the physico-chemical, physiological and biological harmony without which the functional conditions of our life would not be fulfilled.

We can say that our bodily duration is the result of a prodigious effort of our personal intention, and consists in a continuous victory of our organic being over its inner and outer forces of decay.

## **CHAPTER III THE UNITY OF MAN**

### **31. BIOPSYCHIC DURATION**

A superficial reading of our two previous chapters might give the erroneous impression that we are analysing two divergent sets of phenomena from our fundamental experience. In reality, this experience is only a starting point for our search, and not for our evolution: a particularly favourable cut-off for the observation we make in our duration.

We deliberately say "our duration" and not "our durations". Indeed, in the course of our basic experience, our feeling of existence is merely kinaesthetic, that is to say, our psychic duration is reduced to the awareness of our bodily duration, of which it is only an aspect. It is only later, when differentiated images are superimposed on the kinaesthetic flow, that our psychic life and our bodily life are distinguished from each other, but without, however, being separated, since, as we have already seen, the feeling of our organic activity constitutes the moving fabric of our psychic duration, which could not exist without it.

Let us note, moreover, that when we speak here of psychic duration, it is not only our conscious, i.e. rational, duration, but the whole of our inner flow, as is shown by the fact that our dreams are sensitive, and more sensitive than our reasoning, to changes in our organic equilibrium, a heaviness in our stomach, for example.

Between our two orders of activity, that is to say between what we have agreed to call our body and what we have agreed to call our spirit, there is, therefore, no mere momentary contact, but on the contrary a coincidence without any solution of continuity. We cannot even say of our cenesthetic duration, as we have said of the feeling we have of it when our consciousness apprehends it, that it is an aspect of our bodily duration: it is our bodily duration. Or, more precisely still, our kinaesthetic duration is both bodily as a functional synthesis of our organs, and psychic as a flowing substratum of our images. It constitutes a moving layer of transition, between our spatial-dynamic organism and our purely dynamic spirit.

Therefore, the two series of phenomena which we have successively discovered and analysed in ourselves are neither divergent nor even parallel. On the contrary, they are superimposed upon each other without any clear separation, which would authorise us to speak of body and spirit as anything but convenient but arbitrary abstractions, since our whole psychic life necessarily includes our organic duration, to which its images are amalgamated. There is, therefore, nothing surprising in our being aware of the evolution of our physiological time, and realising that the solar years "pass more and more quickly" as we grow older, and our organic activity diminishes. Our consciousness is in the situation of the traveller who feels himself carried along by the train he is in, and compares its irregular speed with that of the river running beside the track.

But our psychic duration, as we have already seen, is not completely bound to the kinaesthetic task. It has its own movement, the variations of which depend on the changing influx of images. We can well compare it to our traveller of a while ago, but provided that this traveller, instead of remaining in complete solidarity with the movement of the convoy, walks with an irregular step, in the direction of the train, and thus shows a certain independence without, however, being able to do without the speed of the floor which constitutes its substratum.

But we must note here a strange fact: solar time seems to us the longer the more numerous the organic phenomena are inserted into our bodily duration, while it seems to us the shorter the greater the number of images incorporated into our psychic duration. A day is longer for a child than for an adult because his cellular activity is greater, and it will seem relatively shorter if he is not bored, that is to say, if new images constantly demand his attention. Everything happens as if the organic fact and the psychic fact possessed a different "density" making it more

The former weighs the flow of our physiological duration, while the latter "relieves" our psychic duration.

### **32. BIOPSYCHIC SENSATIONS**

We have established that our kinaesthetic life, of bodily essence, constitutes the foundation of our whole inner life, which penetrates and colours it. But where do the images that overlay it come from, and are they to be considered as "pure" psychic facts that prove the existence in us of an ideal factor independent of our biological being?

There is no doubt about the images that express this or that part of our organism and come from the differentiation of our kinaesthetic feeling. They are obviously of a biopsychic nature. Then come the images which represent the external world and our body itself as a material object. Now, these psychic images are neither emanations of a medium which has inserted itself by its own authority into our duration, nor direct awareness of the objects around us, for the simple reason that there is no possible contact between the world and our spirit. It is our body which possesses the specialised instruments which enable it to constitute of the object one or several more or less incomplete images. Our consciousness - or sometimes our subconsciousness - grasps, not the objective data of our environment, but the bodily results of the contact of that environment and our sensory organs. The psychic image which we believe to be that of a tree is, in reality, that of an organic image of that tree.

Now then: the organic image is a complex of sensations, that is, of modifications of our bodily being produced by the exciting action of the object. It is as positive as the image obtained with the help of a photographic machine, and we can examine it scientifically, but it is positive and observable as a state or dynamism of our body, and not as a phenomenon apprehended through our body. In other words, our psychic image does not express the object. It is, therefore, of exactly the same nature as the kinaesthetic image. Its only difference with the latter is the relational, and not functional, character of its origin; although knowledge of our environment is indispensable not only for our unitary existence but also for the very functioning of our body which must, to some extent, adapt itself to it.

Moreover, what matters to us here is to note that our psychic images of organic and sensory origins, are in fact biopsychic like our kinaesthetic duration itself. The abstract images which are added to them are simply the product of a double process of analysis and synthesis from biopsychic images, and our

memorial images are nothing more than reproductions of previous images or new creations with the help of elements taken from acquired images.

If, therefore, we provisionally dispense with the intentional intelligence that orders the upper layers of our duration, we have to recognise that our psychic life comes entirely from our body or, better, constitutes the superstructure of a dynamic whole whose foundation is bodily life.

### **33. BIOPSYCHIC EMOTION**

This conclusion is confirmed by the analysis of our emotional processes. Ancient psychology considered the organic phenomena that appear in them as simple consequences of the emotion itself, of a strictly psychic nature. Such an interpretation makes no sense to us, since the bodily modifications in question cannot but provoke a change in the rhythm of our cenesthetic feeling under the influx of organic images which express them.

However, we do not observe this change after the emotional movement, but in it. And, on the other hand, how can we explain that the psychic tension which we call emotion is not limited to the plain and simple incorporation into our duration of the representative image which is at its origin, but corresponds to an adaptation of our whole being to what this image means for it? Let us not be told that such an adaptation is subsequent to the emotion, for then the exceptional psychic tension we experience would not be justified: fear, for example, would be reduced in our inner life to a simple adaptive judgement on a disturbing image. Our subsequent decision to flee or to defend ourselves would not change the fact that the image of a dangerous object is no different in itself from that of a sympathetic object and therefore does not require any special tension from our mind. If such a tension is produced, it proves that the emotion includes the organic modifications provoked by the image, and that they correspond not to the process of reciprocal adaptation of our image and our duration, but to that of the adaptation of our being to the situation in which it finds itself or, more precisely, to a more or less effective effort of adaptation but always of an intensity proportionate to the relation established for us between the phenomenon and the whole of our personality.

Emotional tension is thus provoked not by the normal psychic effort of incorporation of the original image, but by the influx into our duration of an impetuous current of organic images, which increase in volume from the bodily modifications determined by a psychic judgement of an image of a sensory nature. Nothing could better show us not only that we are dealing here with a biopsychic phenomenon, but also that there exists between our duration and the original image, and that it is not only a biopsychic phenomenon, but also a biopsychic phenomenon.

The same relations and exchanges between our organic flow and our psychic duration as between the various layers of our inner life. Or, more precisely, that our organic flux is, as we have already seen, only the fundamental layer, in the proper sense of the word, of our biopsychic duration.

There is no interaction between two parallel series of essentially different phenomena, but a constant interpenetration of dynamisms of the same nature which manifest themselves in different ways. Our psychic duration is not comparable to a layer of oil running over the river, but rather to the foam that the water current forms on its surface and reabsorbs in an incessant transformation, with the essential difference that the foam has only a negligible action on the liquid mass, whereas our psychic layers have a profound and decisive influence on our organism.

Our psychic life is not an epiphenomenon of our bodily life, but an aspect of the biopsychic dynamism that only analysis can dissociate.

#### **34. THE BIOPSYCHIC INSTINCT**

The essential unity of our duration implies a unity of organising intention. Our images, as we know, are associated and follow one another in a certain order, and our organs evolve according to the immanent law corresponding to their function in the organism. If our psychic duration is but the upper stratum of a moving whole whose infrastructure is constituted by the organism, we must recognise that our psychic and bodily processes of organisation cannot be independent of each other.

We consider the instinct which we have defined above as the order of the functioning of our organs. By this title, it is not possible for us to distinguish it from the dynamic order of living matter in general: the functional intention of our genital organs is of exactly the same nature as that of our liver. However, we call only the former instinct. Why? Because the functioning of our liver, and therefore its order, are purely organic, and we only become conscious of them in our kinaesthetic feeling, whereas, on the contrary, the functioning of our genital organs manifests itself in our psychic duration in a differentiated form.

It is this particular manifestation which common parlance calls instinct, although the term must logically be applied to the phenomenon as a whole. On the other hand, we are not dealing here with a mere reflex, nor with a simple knowledge of the dynamism of our genital organs, although the sexual instinct obviously corresponds to it and is its conscious expression. Without the psychic tendency emanating from them, our genital organs could well exist. But they would be incomprehensible and would not act, since the momentary transformations which make them fit for the use determined by their nature and their



They are governed by our psychic instinct and by the equally psychic images that set them in motion.

The psychic tendency is thus born of the organ and its functional order, but the organ only performs its function through the impulse of the psychic tendency. In reality, then, the dynamic organisation of the organ presents itself in two equally indispensable complementary aspects, instinct being a biopsychic functional tendency which orders, according to its own purpose, both the cells of our body and the images of our mind.

We deliberately say two aspects and a single tendency. For, if we analyse the instinctive act, we can legitimately distinguish in it two kinds of phenomena, some belonging to the psychic layer of our duration, the others to the bodily layer. But in vain would we look for an inner instinctive duration and an organic instinctive duration. We discover, no doubt, two species of facts integrated in two dynamic complexes differentiated by some of their characters, but a single instinctive series in which psychic phenomena and organic phenomena take place, mutually determining each other and concurring to a common end.

We can thus regard instinct either as a psychic tendency which partially utilises an organic "raw material", or as an organic tendency which partially utilises a psychic "raw material". Nothing shows better than such a double possibility the unitary nature of the phenomenon under consideration. Instinct expresses neither our psychic being with the help of our body, nor our bodily being with the help of our spirit, but a functional whole, made up of images and organised cells, which has meaning and reality only in the intentional simplicity which dominates and directs the indispensable differentiation.

### **35. UNITY OF INTELLIGENCE**

This analysis of instinct enables us to grasp the whole of our organising intelligence whose existence we have previously recognised through its diverse activity. More precisely, we already know, on the one hand, that our images follow one another according to a certain order which responds to a purpose, and not to chance, and that there exists, therefore, a psychic intentional intelligence which imposes order and direction on them, and, on the other hand, that the physico-chemical matter of which our body is made is organised with a view to a certain result, and that there exists, therefore, an organic intentional intelligence which orders and directs it.

Now, in the case of instinct as we have studied it, it is obviously a single intention that permeates cells and images, since the phenomenon cannot be dissociated without disappearing, and tends towards the unitary realisation of our being by adaptation to itself and to the world. But this is not only the case with instinct. Our duration, it too, possesses a

It is, however, both psychic and organic. We must therefore conclude to the unity of the organising intelligence that works in our whole biopsychic being and builds it up in space and time.

This only seems accurate, however, for the organic stratum of our duration and the psychic strata that are immediately linked to it. Our rational intelligence seems to associate images in systems independent of our bodily life. But this is only an illusion. Let us not forget, in fact, that the images of sensory origin and the abstract images that we draw from them come from our body, and are impregnated with our cenesthetic duration before being captured by our reason. The latter, on the other hand, possesses the same fundamental properties as biopsychic intelligence. It orders the images according to a directive intention that tends towards our self-realisation. The only particularity lies in the way it acts by deliberation.

But the difference in procedures does not necessarily imply a difference in nature. Rational intelligence allows us to choose from among our possibilities the one that best makes us "become" ourselves, just like our biopsychic intelligence. But whereas instinct, for example, adapts us to our self and our environment in an automatic way that is not fully effective except in invariable and foreseen circumstances, reason studies the data of the new problem that arises and allows us to adapt ourselves to it. The intention is therefore identical and the result is the same. It is no less clear, however, that the two procedures overlap and sometimes contradict each other. Our reason often opposes an act that our instinct urges us to perform or, on the contrary, urges us to act when our instinct holds us back.

We can easily explain this phenomenon by observing that rational intelligence and biopsychic intelligence are located in different layers of our duration, and that we cannot try to present the former as a simple aspect of the latter. Reason constitutes, by conscious deliberation, systems made up of images which it receives from our organism, and from the psychic strata which immediately depend on it. These images come to it not only from our senses in contact with the external world, but also from our functioning organs. They express objects, but also vital organic demands. To a given situation corresponds a biopsychic decision which our reason can, in certain cases, that of instinct in particular, make the object of a deliberation, that is to say, of a "control" which takes into account accidental factors which could only escape the first automatic response.

Rational intelligence can therefore contradict biopsychic intelligence without having a different intention or purpose. A well-made law and a judge of integrity have the same purpose: the judge, however, does not apply the law as an electronic brain would. He may err where the machine would work without fail, but his decisions will be more nuanced because he will take into account elements that could not but be overlooked.

to an instrument designed to provide an answer, and a unique one, to each type of problem posed.

Rational intelligence is of the same nature as instinctive intelligence and organic intelligence proper, but it works in different ways. Or, more precisely, it is a question here of the differentiated forms which our intentional intelligence takes in the various planes of our being. We can add to them our intuitive intelligence by means of which we grasp the world and ourselves "inside", in their fundamental mobility.

Our organising intelligence thus manifests itself in several streams of different modalities which tend, by various paths, towards our adaptive realisation. Organic or psychic - but we have seen with instinct how relative this distinction is - it expresses a single intention.

### **36. BIOPSYCHIC GENES**

Our demonstration, however, is not yet entirely satisfactory. For we can conceive of organising forces of the same nature, working according to the same intention, and concurring in the same result, but nevertheless distinct from each other and individualised, as are the workers in a gang, each in his own place, doing a common work. In other words, our vital order could be the work of two intelligences, organic and psychic, more or less co-ordinated in their action according to the layers of our duration, and finally convergent.

To solve this last difficulty, we have to examine what is the origin of our streams of intelligence. If it is multiple, we must admit that its unity is merely pragmatic. If it is unique, we can, on the contrary, affirm its essential unity.

Where does our organic intelligence come from? Biology answers us, without dispute, that there are in the original egg corpuscles called genes which govern the development of our body. On them depend not only our indispensable dynamic structure, but also our peculiar accidental characters. We have a heart and this heart has such and such dimensions, beats according to such and such a rhythm, and thus causes a more or less intense blood circulation, because our original cell contained one or more genes which directed the cell differentiation, and consequently the organisation of the absorbed physico-chemical matter, in a certain sense rather than in such and such another.

In order not to rehash here the lengthy analyses we devoted in a previous work to the elucidation of this problem, we will simply say that everything happens as if the genes were organising intelligence, condensed in the form of matter that disintegrates, little by little, into the directing energy of our bodily evolution.

Our primitive egg contained or was in potential all our future possibilities, with its energy of actualisation and then of choice. It was not, therefore, an inert plan that we realised through the chemical energy absorbed in the course of our existence, but a force that created our bodily being and adapted our organism to its conditions of life, then a force of development and functioning.

Since we know that not only certain data of our psychic duration depend on our organism but also, to some extent, its order, and since, for example, our circulatory activity partly determines the temperament which will make us order our images in such a way rather than in such another, we must admit that our biopsychic tendencies come from our genes. How can we doubt it if our instincts are inseparable from the organs whose functional order they constitute?

There remains, therefore, our rational intelligence and our "intuitive" intelligence. However, what we commonly call our "intelligence" is only one character among many that define our being. It develops with our organism. Biology teaches us that it can be modified by working, according to various techniques, on the genes of our first cell, and it is also a hereditary factor. There is therefore no doubt: our psychic intelligence is, just like our organic intelligence, the actualisation of an organising energy that existed in potential in our genes.

Otherwise, where would they come from? We would have to admit a divine creative intervention throughout our evolution, i.e. over time, which is theologically and psychologically inconceivable. In the egg, our intelligence therefore existed in its entirety, with its various possibilities and modalities. This is a logical conclusion, since our reason and our intuition would have no meaning outside the biopsychic whole which supplies them with the raw material to organise, without which any dynamic existence would be impossible for them.

### **37. PSYCHIC THINKING IS ORGANIC**

Our psychic intelligence is thus embodied at its source and applies itself to images that come from our organism, or from the external world through our organism. It cannot, therefore, in any case, in the course of its development, become entirely independent of our body.

But is it nevertheless detached from it to some extent? Yes, certainly, if we consider that our rational and intuitive thinking is something other than the simple expression of our organic functioning, that is to say, something other than our kinaesthetic duration. But it is no less dependent on an essential organ of our body: the brain.

We think with our brains as we walk with our legs. Our psychic power waxes and wanes with the activity of our grey matter. The slightest definite or momentary modification of our cervical cells causes definite or momentary disturbances of our thinking. It is inaccurate to say with the materialists that "the brain secretes thought as the liver secretes bile", since we have established that our intelligence comes from the genes of our original cell. But without it, our psychic intellectual energy would remain in the state of mere virtuality or would manifest itself anarchically. Our brain is the instrument for the actualisation of our rational and intuitive intelligence. In it, moreover, the sensory and organic images are concentrated, which this intelligence arranges into systems, and through it our psychic thought intervenes in our organism.

Our brain is therefore the organ of our psychic life. But it does not constitute an autonomous whole. The differentiated cells of which it is composed are immersed in a liquid medium derived from the blood serum, as produced by our entire organism. The instrument of our thought is therefore modified by the functioning of all our organs. It is not surprising that we reason with difficulty when our muscles have poured too many toxins into our blood, when our stomach has sent too much alcohol to our brain, or when our thyroid gland is not functioning as it should. Not only is our emotional life profoundly influenced by our liver, our intestine or our genital glands, as daily experience shows, but also our rational activity experiences the rule of our organic life.

The logical chaining of abstract images depends on the state of our viscera, our glands, our muscles and even our bones: emotion makes us lose our judgement, the stoppage of our blood flow suppresses all psychic activity, and tiredness makes us incapable of any intellectual work, while, on the contrary, sexual excitement favours, in the mathematician as in the artist, the process of creation.

We now better understand how wrong it is to consider our psychic intellectual life as a stream of thought that floats freely on the surface of our duration or, at least, remains independent of our bodily life. Our analysis - based on Carrel's work - brings us back, once again, to the unity of our biopsychic being. Our rational and intuitive thought, like all our psychic thought, is embodied in our brain, and this brain only exists, and exists as it is, because of the contribution of all our organs and all our functioning cells.

### 38. ORGANIC LIFE IS THOUGHT

On the other hand, we know that our brain is not only the functional substratum of our psychic intelligence, but also the organ of the unity of our body. Without it, our autonomous organs, even supposing they could have been constituted, would have no meaning, since their value depends on the role they play in the whole of which they form part, and then on their co-ordination. Our brain is, therefore, the seat of all our organising activity, and we thus better understand the unity of nature and intention of our intelligence in its various modes. Our bodily intelligence is present and operative in all our organs and in all our cells, but it possesses a centre of action which is the centre, at the same time, of our psychic thought and of our entire duration.

Let us note, however, that such a situation did not exist from the beginning of our vital development. The encephalon was not in the egg but in potency, and it differentiated itself only after a certain lapse of embryonic evolution. It is therefore, like our whole body, an actualisation of virtualities and organisation of physico-chemical matter by our organic intelligence. The latter therefore contained, or carried - whatever, since our genes were our entire intelligence - our potential psychic thought. In other words, our intelligence became differentiated only after a certain time of organic activity, in the course of which it constituted the organ that would allow its differentiation.

This confirms our unitary conception: it is indifferent for our intelligence to order material corpuscles or images. The work is of the same nature, and only the raw material changes. Thus, the architect arranges with identical facility the abstract images of his calculations and the concrete bricks of the building he constructs. The proper function of intelligence, like that of the architect, is to establish relations between given elements.

We have already seen, moreover, that these relations are not of any kind and do not depend on chance - although chance does intervene in the choice of our potential possibilities - but on an intention. Does not the architect also have a unique intention when he calculates and when he builds? If, therefore, our psychic thought consists of relations, determined by its directing intention, which our intelligence establishes between images, what shall we call the succession of relations which the same intelligence establishes between molecules and cells, but organic thought? The nature of the work is identical in both cases, and the intention which directs it is the same. The only differences we can note between psychic thought and organic thought are due to the proper character of the materials employed.

Molecules and cells have a relative rigidity that reduces the number and nature of possible combinations, and also the range of possible combinations.

modifications of its order. Thus phantasy (i.e., attempts outside the theoretical line imposed by our directing intention) is excluded from our organic activity while it constitutes a habitual mode of psychic progression. For the same reason, our organic choice is more limited than our psychic choice, and the possible variants of our bodily evolution are much smaller than those of our imaginal duration. On the other hand, the "raw material" of our psychic life (i.e. the images that come to it from our body and the outside world) is infinitely more diverse than the chemical elements that our organism incorporates. It is not surprising, then, that our duration is all the more changeable and multiform the more it rises above its bodily substratum.

### **39. MATTER AND INTELLIGENCE**

At this point in our search, we must ask ourselves the essential question: What is left of the old dualistic theories which considered man as an association of two juxtaposed but interacting beings, the body and the spirit? Exactly nothing, since we have shown that the body is organised by an immanent thought which is but the intentional intelligence which also orders our psychic life, and that our spirit is organic by the images which constitute the elements of its duration, and by the instrument which it requires to manifest itself.

Body and spirit are thus nothing but systems arbitrarily isolated by us from a unitary whole on the basis of a single property: the extension which the body possesses and the spirit does not possess. But this property is not essential. We know, in fact, that physico-chemical matter is only a particular form of momentarily condensed energy. It is possible for us to transform it from potential into kinetic, either by chemical reactions which are only partial changes in the form of the atomic cloud, or, more completely, by nuclear disintegration.

This is not, as far as we are concerned, a purely theoretical possibility. Our body is not composed of inert material elements. The molecules that constitute them are constantly being transformed by chemical reactions. On the other hand, the nervous influx which transmits our images to our brain and, through it, to our duration, and the nature of which is still a matter of controversy for biologists, certainly has neither mass nor volume. Extension is therefore not sufficient to delimit our body in a valid way, even if we admit that organic intelligence constitutes a psychic intrusion into it.

But, on the other hand, what does our organising intelligence consist in? We have seen that it does a work and cannot therefore be reduced to a mere inert scheme which physico-chemical matter follows in the course of its evolution, like the

train follows the rails. Now, work is precisely the functional criterion of energy. Therefore, our intelligence is energy, but a different energy from that which manifests itself in chemical reactions as in nuclear disintegration, since the latter is characterised by a mere expansion without orientation, whereas intelligence is self-directed and directive. Moreover, this intellectual energy that works in the extensive matter of our "body" as in the images of our "spirit", that is, in reality, in our physico-chemical molecules and in our duration, and presents itself to us in the course of its organisational work in kinetic form, we have already met it in our original cell in the form of genes, that is, in the form of extensive matter of extraordinary atomic weight.

Despite the difficulties that remain to be solved, and in particular that of chromosomal regeneration during cell division, there is no doubt in our minds that genes are the organising intelligence of our being, since nothing is added to our primitive egg in the course of our evolution but physico-chemical matter.

We can therefore define ourselves as intellectual energy embodied in condensed potential energy which is gradually and partially transformed, by chemical reactions, into kinetic energy. Body and spirit clearly appear to us as the artificial data of an inadequate analysis, and we must replace them by physico-chemical matter and intelligence, while specifying that these are not new names, but realities which are essentially opposed to the old distinction. Let us add that between physico-chemical energy and intellectual energy, the criterion of differentiation is not extension, since we have just seen that this constitutes a potential modality of all energy, but the orientation and the directing power attached to it.

#### **40. DUALITY OR UNITY**

It may be noted that our analysis does not reduce the two traditional factors of our being to unity, but merely shifts their line of separation. It is undoubtedly true that, despite their identical energetic nature, intelligence and physico-chemical matter cannot be confused and that we are thus composed of two distinct elements. But the constitutive duality in no way excludes unity. An engine is made up of many parts: no one, however, would think of defining it as a juxtaposition of elements, why? Because its complexity only appears in the analysis and is dominated by its functional unity, the essential aspect of an engine being its functioning.

The same is true of our being. Isolated from the intelligence that organises it in us, our physico-chemical matter has no human character. But our intentional intelligence is unthinkable in itself, since it has a human character.



precisely because of its immanence in matter, without which it would remain in potency, whereas any potency is only comprehensible in the light of the act into which it will be transformed.

Our life, that is to say, our functional activity, is not a simple sum of two factors, but the unitary result of an action of our intelligence on its indispensable physico-chemical support. We cannot, therefore, admit the monistic theories which reduce one to the other two factors of which we have noted the essential and functional differences. But we must equally reject the dualistic theses according to which we would be made of two associated beings each possessing a life of its own, since there is no more collaboration between intelligence and matter than between the sculptor and the clay. Our only life is that of the functional being that we are, and this being cannot be broken down into parts without destroying itself, that is to say, precisely without losing its life.

The duality of intelligence-matter therefore excludes dualism because it is subordinate to our unity of functioning. It also excludes Manichaeism, latent or expressed, which logically stems from the spirit-body duality. Indeed, it is only possible to attribute a different value to our constituent elements insofar as they possess a certain autonomous or at least differentiated existence. Now, without intelligence, matter is neither us nor part of us, and is therefore indifferent to us as far as our being is concerned. It only acquires value through the intellectual immanence which animates it, and whose indispensable support it constitutes, that is to say, in the unity of the biopsychic I, without which it would play no vital role.

#### **41. THE INDIVIDUAL**

The matter which is ordered by our intentional intelligence is not, therefore, in itself different from the rest of physico-chemical matter. It is only differentiated from it by the particular organisation which separates it from the whole of which it is a part, and incorporates it into our being whose basic material it constitutes. Even once it is incorporated, it is not definitively incorporated, since we acquire and reject physico-chemical elements in a continuous renewal throughout our lives. It is, therefore, our intelligence that individualises matter by giving it an order and, for that very reason, limits. But this same intelligence is actualised in matter, thus determining itself by the choice that makes evolution indispensable, which, without matter, would not take place.

This limitation of matter by the intentional intelligence that makes it ours is therefore the fundamental operation of the formation and permanence of our individuality. The egg is not really us, but only the possibility of us. Or, more precisely, it is us only insofar as it is already organised matter. We create ourselves in matter as the artist creates his work in it, imposing on it the limits upon which the

perfection. By this creation, we are therefore an individual, i.e. a relatively isolated and closed functional whole.

We possess biopsychic dimensions and cohesion, which make us an object that is distinguished from the environment in which it is placed and with which it maintains relations. We manifest a continuity that makes us remain us throughout our evolution and through the successive forms imposed on us or, rather, that we can "cut" in the insensible change we live through, a continuity defined by the temporal limits of our conception and our death. Finally, we have an internal, cellular, humoral and imaginal movement, directed by our intentional intelligence, and which takes place, not in a closed circuit, since our physico-chemical matter renews itself and our images increase in number and can be communicated by us to the outside, but at least according to an autonomous functional system.

As an individual, we are thus a distinct part of the universe. But individuality is not an absolute. Its degree depends on our particularisation within the cosmos. We individualise as we develop and become more distinct as a result of our history, and also as we conquer our relative independence. It is not by chance or by mistake that the word individuality expresses, in common parlance, the idea of self-assertion vis-à-vis the rest of the universe.

## **42. THE PERSON**

This individual affirmation is passive, in the sense that it proceeds from the simple objective juxtaposition of our being and the other differentiated elements of the cosmos. In other words, we are an individual in exactly the same way as a star or a dog. But, unlike the star and, to some extent, the dog, we are not only an object within others, but also a subject that knows the objects from which it is distinguished, and knows itself as an object.

Our affirmation of ourselves is therefore active. It manifests itself, as we have already seen, by a reflection, in the proper sense of the word, on our being, that is, by a self-awareness of what we are. It does not constitute a parasitic or sumptuary phenomenon of our vital evolution, but, on the contrary, contributes to the realisation of our directing intention, thanks to the deliberate judgement it allows us and which is superimposed on the automatic judgements it completes.

We know, on the other hand, that consciousness, the instrument of our self-absorption, is nothing other than the reason that projects itself onto the particular object that we constitute for it. Hence it follows that we are not only an individual-object, but also a rational subject from whom the action of self-knowledge and

self-organisation constitutes an essential character and a mode of intentional progression, i.e. a person.

It is not without some hesitation that we use this term, which too often conceals a political-philosophical mythology unrelated to the real facts of the problem. However, we have to mark and name what differentiates us, as human beings, from objects that are sometimes more individualised than we are, but which do not possess rational capacity. The person is not a Platonic soul that is added to us; it is not a transcendent "spiritual" principle that valorises our individual being and gives it directive intention and freedom. Such a Manichean dualism that makes the person and the individual two associated entities no one knows why or how, since they are at least as much opposed as they are complete, is not founded on any satisfactory observation.

The person is not even a principle of rationality that is added to the individual that we are, since it is precisely our reason that is an indispensable datum of our being. We are a rational individual, an individual who deliberates on some of our actions, an individual who has the power of self-absorption, self-examination and, in part, self-knowledge. Let us suppress, by thought, reason, deliberation and introspection: the functional system we constitute dissolves, and our individuality disappears with it. Person and individual are therefore only two complementary aspects of our being considered from two different points of view: the individual is the person as an object; the person is the individual as a subject.

We are not at all the place of interference of spirit and matter, half-angel and half-animal, but a biopsychic, unitary, non-unified being. We are not an individual by reason of our matter and a person by reason of our spirit, but simply an individual insofar as we are and a person insofar as we know that we are. Rationality is essential to us, and we only become aware of ourselves in our whole being.

### **43. THE PERSONALITY**

Ultimately, as far as man is concerned, individual and person are synonymous, since both define us in our completeness and our unity, although in different lights. The factors of our individuality are therefore also those of our personality. Although this last word, when applied to the whole of the peculiar data which make us ourselves and not some other, is not strictly speaking not exact, it is nevertheless correct, because it shows very well that our consciousness does not constitute an autonomous part of our being, but depends, on the contrary, on the whole in which it is essentially integrated, including the non-conscious data which form its indispensable substratum.

But we must not forget that the biopsychic traits which personalise us, i.e. which make us humanly distinct from other subjects, differentiating us qualitatively from our "fellows", individualise us at the same time as an object, as a relatively closed system. This does not make it any less clear that we possess an individuality simply because we have a cellular, humoral, nervous and psychic structure - a structure which is established and preserved only by functioning - while our personality depends on the peculiarities of this structure and its functional movement.

The most obvious of these peculiarities are physical. We have a height and corpulence, a colour of skin and hair, a shape of skull, a muscular strength, a physiognomy and also a way of behaving and moving which belong only to us and are enough to make us recognisable. But our physique is only the appearance of our organism, made up of a triple system of tissues, humours and nerves whose chemical and physiological personality is observable, albeit very imperfectly, in the course of certain operations such as analysis, grafting, blood transfusion and sensory experimentation.

Our organism, as a functional organism, possesses a biological personality which is manifested by its capacity for adaptation and by its inner rhythm. Finally, we have a biopsychic duration whose evolution is not identical with any other, and a combination of mental characters whose exact equivalent we would seek in vain in others. But why insist? We know very well, and no one doubts it, that we do not have a perfect "double". We are as differentiated by our molecules to the chemist, by our tissues to the physiologist, by our organic reactions to the biologist, and by our character to the psychologist, as by the shape of our nose or the colour of our eyes to the man in the street.

How can we be surprised by this when we know that our entire biopsychic being is the product of the action of a personal directive intention on a polymorphous and changing environment? The environment is enough to differentiate two twins with the same hereditary chromosomal composition, but two "common" siblings raised in exactly the same way in the same environment, turn out to be different. Our intentional intelligence personalises the chemicals we take in and the sensory excitations we register. But these products and these excitations guide our adaptive choice among our possibilities, and the history of our past choices weighs on our present choice.

We can say that it would suffice, to differentiate essentially two twins from each other, a single molecule or image absorbing only one of them. But it is no less true that our personality can be crushed by a levelling discipline or a medium with which we cannot harmonise, unless our personal tension is powerful enough to resist all pressures and overcome all obstacles. The rigour of our intentional progression, and in particular the

concentration in a single impetus, of the various strata of our duration, which naturally tend to conquer their independence and to assert themselves. We see this in certain mental illnesses, like so many superimposed and sometimes opposing personalities. The unity of our being is therefore linked to its personality, that is to say, to its uniqueness.

#### **44. ESSENCE AND EXISTENCE**

It may be objected that, under such conditions, our present unity is undoubtedly assured, but that our historical unity is, on the contrary, badly impaired, since our personality is constantly changing in the course of its evolution. Even if certain traits remain unchanged throughout our existence, it is no less understandable that we are not the same at birth as at conception, nor at ninety as at thirty.

The physico-chemical matter of which our body is made is renewed in its entirety several times in the course of our life. Our images accumulate in our memory and weigh more and more heavily and differently on our psychic life. Our directing intention leads us, in the various epochs of our life, to choices which, in identical circumstances, have nothing in common and are even contradictory. Our character changes like our temperament. Finally, the relationship between our potential possibilities and our already accomplished acts is constantly changing.

Our individuality is not impaired, for we change gradually and continuously. But our personality is not based on our permanence in evolution, but on a set of characters which defines us. Now, it seems that we are successively several character sets, and then that we have several personalities. But this is only an illusion, for we have no right to make cuts in the moving. Moreover, we do not renew ourselves in the course of our lives, but we build ourselves up little by little, by an effort of adaptive updating.

Our personality seems to transform itself as it creates itself, and what we take to be various phases and even successive personalities are, in reality, only the stages, moreover arbitrarily cut by us, of such a creation. Thus, the existentialists are quite right in saying that we are the product of our history, or better still, this history itself, and that our personality cannot be apprehended in its completion, but only at the end of our vital evolution. But they forget that our existence would not exist without the potential possibilities among which we continually choose - we could say, among which we choose ourselves - and which constitute our essence.

Indeterminate essence, we will be told, and which will only deserve such a name after it has received its reality from history. Certainly, but we possess, at the origin of our existence, not only possibilities, but also the personal intention that will enable us to create ourselves according to these possibilities confronted with our environment, that is to say, to exist.

We see, therefore, to what extent possibilities and history are inseparable. Our existence does not create our essence, but it realises and specifies it. Our essence does not determine our existence, but it does condition and construct it.

What is the fate of our personality in all this, when are we most ourselves, at the beginning of our duration or at the end? This is an ill-posed question: we are never ourselves, but we "become" ourselves. Our personal historical unity is ensured by the voluntary tension that pushes us to the conquest of our own future.

A strong personality is not one that does not change, but one that imposes its intentional stamp on the changes it masters. An inconsistent personality is not one that varies more than others, but one that undergoes its own variations. More than our permanent characters, it is our duration, with its tension, its rhythm and its directing intention, that constitutes our personality. It is the one that chooses among our possibilities, accepts or rejects the physico-chemical and imaginal elements that are offered to us, and imposes us on the environment by adapting us to it. It expresses our whole being in its realising and creative impetus of our self.

We do not say that someone lacks personality because no particular trait differentiates him, but because he does not possess a biopsychic tension sufficient to bring out the distinctive characters, more or less accentuated, which are the endowment of each one.

#### **45. THE PERSONAL STRUGGLE FOR LIFE**

At the end of our first three chapters, we can clearly define ourselves as a biopsychic functional whole, unitary and unique, which forms and affirms itself, according to its own rhythm, in a permanent confrontation with its external environment.

This whole, as we have already seen, is unstable. The molecules and images that constitute its raw material tend to break free from the order imposed on them. The world in which we are immersed exerts on us an uninterrupted destructive pressure of assimilation and invasion. We cannot, therefore, consider ourselves as a machine running with a movement indefinitely identical to itself in a suitable and constant environment. We last only by our unceasing opposition to the inner and outer forces which try to dissolve us.

But this opposition does not consist of a wall that we erect against the enemy, nor of an armour whose mission is to enclose us within ourselves and isolate us. The rupture of our functional harmony is not, in fact, the simple consequence of our organic and imaginal multiplicity and of our indispensable contact with our environment. If internal and external circumstances did not force us to choose, at each moment, among our virtualities, the one that best suits us, we would be incapable of any decision and, like Buridan's donkey, we would remain immobile among our various possibilities: we would no longer evolve, and our duration would come to a halt, with death as a consequence.

The adaptation through which we continuously restore our compromised harmony is therefore not a painful obligation and does not entail any waste of strength. On the contrary, it continues the indispensable process of our vital progression. We endure in and through a permanent struggle in defence of our functional order, and this struggle is the factor of the actualisation of our potential being, that is to say, the factor of our existence.

Our duration thus consists in a constant effort of dialectical overcoming of the contradiction which opposes us to our environment and to ourselves as a complex. A constant effort, but not always similar to itself, since our personal dynamism develops according to a variable rhythm of tension and relaxation which corresponds to the demands of our struggle and since, moreover, it manifests itself unequally through our various biopsychic strata.

We affirm ourselves, with a more or less sustained effectiveness, in a drive for adaptive self-realisation, through our struggle for personal harmony, i.e. our struggle for life.

## **CHAPTER IV: MAN'S DEPENDENCE**

### **46. THE INHERITANCE**

Considered in its origin, our being is reduced to a small mass of living matter that contains, in potential, all our possible "becoming". This small mass did not fall from the sky, nor did it emerge from nothing. It is the product of the synthesis of two corpuscles coming from people of different sexes. The egg, which

is already us, it is formed, therefore, from elements which belonged, before their fusion, to our parents. We are a new being in our individuality and potential personality, but the organising intelligence to which we are reduced, more or less, is inherited from our progenitors, who received their own dynamic possibilities from the two pairs from which they were born.

We constitute, therefore, the provisional point of arrival of a lineage which goes back to the origin of our species, and is all the more homogeneous in that the successive alliances which formed it took place in a more closed environment and subject to less diverse conditions of life, a lineage which is more or less differentiated by certain biopsychic characteristics common to all its members, or at least to most of them, and therefore transmitted from generation to generation.

This historical group is united by peculiarities common to other similar groups to which it is linked by blood, function and way of life: hence caste, estate or class, as the case may be. It is also part of a larger whole defined by a community of basic characters, the race, which comprises several of these differentiated layers within it, and, finally, of the whole of mankind more or less easily distinguishable among the animal species.

Our original cell thus potentially contains a biopsychic structure which we can call necessary in the sense that every normal human egg possesses it, and which constitutes the indispensable substratum of our development. But it also contains facultative characters in the sense that they could otherwise not have been transmitted to us. We are therefore a man, but a man differentiated by his race, his biopsychic social level, his lineage and, finally, the combination, personal but carried out independently of us, of the genes received at the moment of our conception.

Our individual development is nothing more than the elective actualisation, depending on changing circumstances, of possibilities that come to us from our ancestors. In other words, we are determined from the very beginning by our hereditary endowment. However we realise ourselves, it is this endowment that we will partially realise. So, can we legitimately speak of personal autonomy? Yes, as long as we would like to say with these words that we are one and unique, we develop ourselves according to what we are or, better still, we develop what we are.

But this is a relative autonomy, since we are only what a long evolution before us has made us, our individuality being placed at the end of an uninterrupted hereditary series, of which it is the last form rather than the last link. We depend, therefore, on the species of which we are a part, but also on the differentiation acquired, in the course of the evolution of that species, by the individuals who succeeded each other between the first pair and us.



## 47. EVOLUTION

In vain has a certain current of contemporary philosophy sought to make of evolution a veritable god creator of new forms invented ex nihilo. In reality, the succession of individuals is produced by the actualisation of a potential organising intelligence which is realised in them. We receive from our parents, not only what we will be and what we will not be but could have been under other conditions of life, but also what we will transmit or, at least, can theoretically transmit to our offspring.

Evolution is not a power, but simply the process of progressive actualisation, that is to say, of intelligent duration of which we are only an instant. If, therefore, we go back in thought to the first couple from which all contemporary men have emerged, we must logically admit that it possessed in itself, in potential, all the possible individual forms of the species, including all its possible variations. Of course, the polygenetic hypothesis in no way changes the nature of the phenomenon. All the less so because we cannot limit our analysis to man.

If we admit that not only individuals but also species are derived from each other - and we admit this with all due caution - we no longer have to go back to the first human pair or pairs, but to the small mass of protein which, at a certain moment in the history of the world, began to live and contained, or rather was potentially all the possible future species and all the possible individuals of each species. Then, we were already virtually determined, in our essential characteristics, in the primitive cell or pre-cell, that is to say, in the small quantity of matter within which the mutation took place that made it pass from the physical-chemical order to the biopsychic order, and from which we have emerged by "chain" filiations, through the individuals of various species that constitute our ancestors.

Moreover, what was the small mass of proteins we have just been talking about, before it began to live? An extremely complex physico-chemical ensemble, which scientists have not yet been able to reproduce by synthesis, so that we cannot believe the calculation of the probabilities that it could have been formed by chance. Moreover, for such an ensemble to be formed, a long process of atomic differentiation had to take place from the homogeneous cloud or primitive atom that science shows us at the origin of our universe, since in the course of such an evolution, the various chemical elements indispensable for the natural synthesis of proteins were born.

If we admit, therefore, that the organising intelligence of the animal series of which we are a part was incorporated by a divine creative act into the small mass which began to live at the very moment of its transformation from physical-chemical into biopsychic, the intentional evolution of inorganic matter, which constituted by differentiation the various elements indispensable to life, we

would be incomprehensible. We would be faced with this absurdity: on the one hand, the intelligent elaboration of the physico-chemical conditions of animal evolution, that is to say, of the small mass of proteins which will be brought to life, and, on the other hand, the development, from this small mass, of the series of species and living individuals; but between these two successive, interdependent and complementary currents, there is an impassable solution of continuity.

It is therefore logical to suppose that these are but two phases of a single duration, and that the organising intelligence of living matter, which we found in the first cell or pre-cell at the moment when it began to live, was already present in it as a potential. There was, then, no introduction of intentional energy into the proteins which constituted the point of arrival of inorganic evolution, but the realisation of a single plan embracing the two orders, arbitrarily distinguished by us, in a coherent whole.

The organising intelligence of living matter existed potentially in the small quantity of inorganic matter which was to be the first cell or pre-cell, just as it exists in the original egg of a living organism. If, as we believe, our analysis is accurate, we must trace back to the origin of the universe the unique creative act of matter and its dynamic order, and we are but an instant of cosmic evolution, or at least of one of the lines of such evolution.

#### **48. THE INDIVIDUAL, A FACTOR IN EVOLUTION**

We do not mean that we are merely a temporary wheel in a vast mechanism, nor a *relay* of intellectual energy, whose role is limited to transmitting what it received, minus its personal share.

To be sure, we are the product of evolution, whether or not we trace it back to the pre-atomic cloud or the primitive atom, and we possess not only the dynamic potential which we actualise and will actualise in the course of our existence to be and to live, but also the possibilities which correspond to all our possible offspring. But we are also the factor of duration that progresses through us.

Indeed, we make a constant choice among our possibilities, thanks to which we realise ourselves in a certain way, while other personalities, also virtual in us, are theoretically possible. However, the genes contained in our reproductive cells, which will bring to our children a part of their hereditary endowment, depend not only on what we receive, but also on what we actually are at the moment of procreation.

It makes no difference whether we are a barbarian of remarkable potential left in virtual potentiality, or a cultivated man, in the proper sense of the word, i.e. a man made by adaptation to a demanding environment. We will certainly not pass on our culture. But the organising intelligence embodied in our genital cells will be charged, at least partially, with the dynamisms corresponding to our habits (what we are accustomed to call our acquired characters), and our heirs will receive them in the form of tendencies and even, if these habits have been reproduced identical to themselves over many generations, in the form of instincts.

Geneticists are still not all agreed about the inheritance of "acquired characters". The phenomenon appears to us, however, as indisputable not only from the point of view of logic, since habit and instinct are of the same dynamic nature, but also from that of experience. We are not so much thinking of the results obtained in the United States with colchicine and in Russia by the natural methods of Michurin as of the data of ordinary observation. The pure-bred puppy which marks its mark in front of the game performs an act essentially contrary to its butcher's nature: it owes it to a hereditary apprenticeship of many generations. Likewise, the difference between our domestic animals and their wild cousins is obvious: it is the product of an adaptation to particular living conditions.

As far as man is concerned, the differentiation of race or social stratum is no less obvious. It is manifested, in particular, within a homogeneous ethnic group, by the existence of biopsychic types which correspond to the various functions performed, and are transmitted hereditarily: the descendant of a lineage of aristocrats and that of a lineage of peasants are distinguishable and recognisable, in a general way, at a glance. Our adaptation to the environment thus produces a modification of our biopsychic being, and this modification is to some extent transmitted to our posterity. In other words, we depend on the adaptive evolution of our distant and immediate ancestors.

Our hereditary endowment does not come to us from the origin of time in the primitive state, but is already elaborated in the course of an evolution of which each individual - and we ourselves in our turn - is the factor and at the same time dependent on it. We are heirs, but we have some control over our inheritance through our possibilities of adapting to the world that presses upon us.

#### **49. THE INDIVIDUAL, PART OF THE UNIVERSE**

The term world, which we have just used, as we have often done, to express the environment in which we evolve, is misleading and requires considerable precision.

Indeed, it gives the impression that we think of ourselves as immersed in a universe to which we are bound by interactive relations, but which is something other than ourselves. Such a conception would obviously be wrong. We are not in the cosmos like the sailor on the ship, attached to it but dependent on its existence and nature and with some possibility of manoeuvring it. We are, on the contrary, a part of the universe. We differ in it and not from it, and what we call the world in opposition to us is, in reality, only what remains of the world after we have arbitrarily excluded ourselves from it.

The matter of our body comes from the earth and returns to it in a constant process of renewal. It is subject, when it forms our organism, to the same physico-chemical laws as when it forms a dog, a tree or a mountain. Our biopsychic organisation is due to an intentional intelligence of the same nature, though, on the one hand, of a different modality, than that which orders inorganic matter and other living beings, and we are, plausibly, but the provisional point of arrival in an evolutionary progression which embraces the whole cosmos.

It is only because of a rational illusion that we consider nature as our framework. We are aware of our autonomy because it is expressed in deliberate decisions. We admit our dependence on the environment because it is sensitive to us, and because we have to adapt ourselves to the beings and things around us at every moment. But we are unaware of our cosmic nature, because we are of the world insofar as we are ourselves. We find ourselves somewhat in the situation of one of our organs if it were endowed with consciousness: it would realise that it is linked to the rest of the organism and depends on it, but it would tend to consider it as a mere external condition of its functioning.

This comparison is not entirely satisfactory, because we possess a much greater autonomy from the rest of the world than the organ has from the rest of the organism, precisely because we reason. But this rational autonomy, which makes us believe that we are independent of nature, is in reality the result of a form of cosmic intelligence that is peculiar to us, although certain other animals enjoy it to a lesser degree. It is not we who rise above the world by our reason, but the world which, in us, asserts itself to be rational.

This does not mean that our autonomy is illusory, but simply that it is relative, not to the cosmos, but to our environment, that is, to everything in the cosmos that is not us. But this autonomy is not absolute, far from it. We depend on the rest of the world to a double extent: from it we acquire the chemical products indispensable for our formation and functioning, and it exerts a dissolving pressure on us which we must resist. The cosmic environment is therefore doubly necessary to us: it supplies us with the material elements of our being, and it forces us to realise ourselves by adapting ourselves to it, by concentrating, in a constant effort, on the struggle for our personal autonomy which we wage not only against ourselves,

as we have seen in the course of our preceding analyses, but also against the conditions of our existence.

This combat, which involves our entire biopsychic self, is not a negative factor in our development. On the contrary, it corresponds to the fundamental law of our dynamic progression. We realise ourselves by adapting ourselves, and we adapt ourselves to our environment because we do not have our place in it prepared, as a jewel has in its setting, but we must conquer it.

## **50. MAN'S COSMIC DEPENDENCE**

How could the cosmos be hostile or even indifferent to a part of itself? Nevertheless, it possesses its mechanical order which our relative autonomy and our rational fantasy come to disturb.

We are in the cosmos like fish in water. The latter has to resist the pressure exerted on it by the liquid mass in which it is immersed, and to overcome the resistance it puts up to its movements. But it is at home in it and could not adapt itself to any other environment. As well as the need for adaptive struggle, we see how the rest of the world helps us. It is our supplier of raw materials: the air we breathe belongs to it, as do the plants and animals we eat. It is our energy provider: without the sun's rays, all life would disappear from the globe and we would starve and freeze to death. It protects us against extreme temperatures, through the regulating systems that make up the atmosphere and the oceans. It binds us, by attraction, to the ground on which we live, sufficiently so that we have dominion over it but without prohibiting us from moving.

We depend, therefore, on the earth but also on the sun and, for that reason, on the whole of the sidereal system, since the relative position of the stars and their movements condition the amount of energy that reaches us. Our analysis is very superficial and we ignore a large part of the cosmic influences that manifest themselves to us. At most, we can grasp some indications. Some animals sense the directions of space which, for them, is as heterogeneous as time is for us: are we sure that the factors of this knowledge which escapes us do not, however, act upon us in some other way?

The moon governs, to some extent, the functioning of the female genital organs: can we certify that its role is limited to that when we know it is capable of lifting several metres out of the oceans? The cosmic rays emitted by near and distant stars penetrate us: how can we suppose that they pass without leaving traces through our organism, which is much more sensitive than the photographic plate they impress? The planets, in their movements, modify our bodies without leaving traces.

The electromagnetic fields in which the earth is located cease: could it be possible that we remain indifferent to their passage, when we react to the slightest variation of the terrestrial fields of the same nature? It is unacceptable that our evolution is determined by the stars, as astrologers teach, and still less by the planet which dominated the sky at the moment of our birth, which is not a beginning, as was once believed, but simply a change of conditions of life within a constant cosmic environment. But we will not fail to see that the sidereal world acts on our body and, through our cenesthetic duration, on our psychic life, just as the storms and some winds do, awakening in us feelings and tendencies that are usually dormant.

Serious research remains to be done in this domain as in that of a certain metapsychics, and a certain magic which should be taken away once and for all from the mystifiers and illuminati, and which would undoubtedly reveal to us, among other things, an aspect, often sensed but scientifically unknown, of the influence of the cosmic environment on man.

In any case, we must retain our double dependence on the rest of the world. On the one hand, it provides us, like all living beings, with the material conditions of our existence and our development. On the other hand, it acts constantly, and by various and changing means, on the course of our evolution.

## **51. COSMIC RHYTHM AND BIOPSYCHIC RHYTHM**

We must, however, note at the outset that our relations with the rest of the world are essentially dynamic. We are a fragment of the cosmos, but a moving fragment of a moving cosmos. We know that we last according to the personal rhythm of our directing intention. Any cosmic influence acts, therefore, not on a monolithic self that will drag like a magnet drags a piece of iron, but on our biopsychic duration whose malleable flow modulates to the extent of our adaptive reactions.

But on the other hand, the cosmos also lasts, evolving according to a rhythm of its own, and we are part of that rhythm. We are an instrument in an immense orchestra. Our part blends into the harmony of the whole, but it retains its own characteristics. For us to be able to speak of harmony, it is necessary that we do not deviate from the general intention. We are in the situation of the hot jazz soloist, who improvises his part, but within the framework of the composition that the orchestra performs. We are gripped by the rhythm of the ensemble which drags us along, and thus puts pressure on our personal playing.

It cannot be otherwise, since our vital rhythm is modified by the mere hearing of a piece of music, or the simple contemplation of a ballet.

Our cosmic environment is infinitely more powerful than a spectacle, and it is always present. But we notice its action less precisely because it is habitual, and it is impossible to compare ourselves to what we would be without it. We know, however, that the cosmic rhythm of day and night corresponds to a modification of our psychic tension, which varies with our temperament and depends on our vagosympathetic nervous system. We are also well aware that our respiratory and circulatory rhythms vary, among other factors, with atmospheric pressure, and that altitude and weather have a powerful effect on them. We experience, like other animals, though to a lesser degree than some of them, the effects of the rhythm of the seasons, and poets do not by mere chance make spring the season of joy, summer the season of vital plenitude, autumn the season of sadness and winter the season of self-absorption. And how can we ignore the fact that the weather is partly responsible for the rhythm of our activity?

We are a sounding board, responding not only to the vibrations of our own intentional strings, but also to the ambient harmony of the universe. We are in the bosom of the cosmos like a loved one, whose feelings and thoughts we perceive without having to express them through words. This is not a literary metaphor. The rest of the world penetrates us in a positive way, as evidenced in particular by dowsing, which enables a few privileged people to become aware of a reality that remains unknown to us.

There is a whole aspect of the cosmos that escapes our senses, but which nevertheless intervenes in us at every moment. The world presents itself as an immense field of complex forces that combine in permanent interaction, and we are one of them, insignificant in relation to the whole. But a field of forces is not a conglomerate of random movements, but a symmetry in the etymological sense of the word.

Pythagoras had already understood this when he sought the numerical key to the moving order of the world, and so did those philosophers who considered music as the unitary expression of man and his cosmic environment. It would be appropriate to reopen these searches in the light of recent scientific discoveries. But, whatever the eventual outcome, our dynamic dependence on the rest of the world can no longer be put on the table.

## **52. THE "COSMIC BODY"**

This dependence is so closely affirmed that it becomes difficult to set the limits of our being within the cosmos.

At first glance, however, the matter is simple. Our limits are those of our body, i.e. the skin that encompasses our whole organism and the body's

separates it from the rest of the cosmos: what is inside is ours; what is outside is foreign to us.

But already difficulties arise. Our hair system is made up of hundreds of thousands of "plants", whose roots are subcutaneous but whose "stems" grow outside what we have taken to be our body. Now: our hair is not a parasitic ornament. It is born from us, it is a differentiation of our tissues and performs well-defined functions. On the other hand, our organism does not assimilate, that is to say, it does not transform into living matter all the physico-chemical elements it absorbs. Some of them simply pass through it without undergoing any modification. Therefore, they do not belong to it at any time. The boundary of the skin is therefore somewhat arbitrary. Shall we say, then, with more than a semblance of reason, that the boundaries of our being cannot be demarcated from the outside and that we have to consider as ourselves, not what any tissue embraces, but what our intentional intelligence organises?

It is undeniable that a chemical element becomes part of us when it is organised, and only in this case. But we would run into a new difficulty of incalculable consequences, since our immanent intelligence does not organise only what it incorporates into our organism, but also a more or less large fraction of the external world, and we would have to include in ourselves our whole work, in the broadest sense of the word. We should perhaps even go further and ask ourselves to what extent we can consider the whole of the rest of the world as external to our being, since we participate in its harmony in a close interdependence, receiving from it certain data of our self, but modifying it by our life itself.

To take only simple examples, do not our radiations of heat spread around us without our being able to set a limit to their range? And is it not the same with the radiations, the nature of which is as yet little known, which the dowser picks up, or with the indeterminate agent of telepathic or simply intuitive communications, or even with the enigmatic energy which seems to manifest itself in the still disputed phenomenon of telekinesis? And we must not forget our own thinking, which, by various means, we disseminate widely.

On the one hand, therefore, the external world supplies us with the elements indispensable to our existence, and thus performs for us a function analogous to that of any gland. On the other hand, we modify this external world by imposing our organic intelligence on it and by incorporating our various "secretions" into it, as we do with our organs.

The difference between the body and the rest of the cosmos seems, therefore, with respect to us, to be one of degree rather than of nature, and to depend on the more or less effective rule of our organising intelligence over the natural elements. We can say, to a certain extent, that the external world constitutes



for us a real "cosmic body" or, better still, the degraded extension of our body.

Let us not, however, exaggerate the results of this analysis. They in no way impair the individuality of our being. Our biopsychic duration is the expression of the inner dynamism of a limited complex. Some of its elements come from the external world, but they are fused into a whole whose continuity owes them nothing. Our intentional intelligence projects itself onto the rest of the cosmos, but does not incorporate it into the flow it organises, as it does with the physical-chemical elements and images with which it constitutes our various biopsychic strata. Our personal duration is imbricated in cosmic duration, but is not confused with it.

However, our individuality does not come from a sum of factors or a sum of organising actions, but from the intentional rhythm of our duration, that is, from the dynamism of the elective actualisation of our potential self. We are in the cosmos like a current in the ocean. Our limits are imprecise, but our movement, one and unique, is undoubtedly different from the whole of which it is a part. Our "cosmic body" is not us, therefore, although it is only through it that we exist and have meaning.

### **53. KNOWLEDGE OF THE OUTSIDE WORLD**

Except for a brief allusion a few lines above, we have left aside, in the course of this chapter, one of the essential contributions that the external world makes to us: images. The problem, in fact, is much more complex than that of incorporating into our body the physico-chemical elements that are indispensable to it. These are absorbed by us as they exist in nature, and our intervention consists only in penetrating them with our organising intelligence, which gives them a new and provisional order and meaning.

Our specialised sensory organs, on the other hand, do not take possession of the object, nor do they diminish it from the image they capture of it. And yet this image is really the image of the object and not merely a biopsychic fiction, since it enables us to know it to some extent and to act effectively upon it. It is the partial copy of a thing that we apprehend in the aspect that corresponds to the specialisation of the organ we use.

But this term of apprehending is not entirely adequate. It expresses well the sensations produced by "emanations" of various kinds, coming from the object or from the intermediary element which comes between it and our organ: calories, olfactory and gustatory "radiations", sound waves, light rays and also mechanical energy. But it does not account for the reality of the sensation of cold or the sensation of touching something immobile, since, in these cases, the sensation of cold and the sensation of touching something immobile are not the same,

On the contrary, we communicate calories or energy to the object. This shows that the image is the product of a mere relationship that is established, by any contact within the limits of our sensory possibilities, between the object and us, whether or not we are the author of the initiative.

But in any case, there is "something" in us after the contact that was not there before: the image of which the objective or subjective "emanations" were obviously only the transmitting agent. What does it consist of?

Let us consider a visual image, which is always easier to analyse than others. It is constituted on our retina by the bombardment of photons of light, which is produced neither by us nor by the object, but which envelops the latter and outlines its silhouette and a certain number of details. The modifications by which our retina registers the image are no more important in themselves than the pencil line that delimits a figure on paper. The image itself is constituted by a set of relations, which are nothing more than the constitutive relations of the object they represent. The image is therefore an organic materialisation of the order of that object, or at least of part of that order. For we must note that our eye selects the radiations it accepts and, by the same token, the relations it captures, and also that it modifies them according to their essential and accidental nature. Thus the retinal image is inverted with respect to the object. Thus the Daltonian confuses certain colours. In other words, the eye, and more generally the sensory organ, adapts itself to the constitutive relations of the object, and adapts them to itself.

But the constitution of the organic image is only the first stage of our knowledge. Our nerves transform this image into a nervous influx and transmit it to the brain, thanks to which it is incorporated into our psychic duration. In the course of this process, it undergoes further transformations. Our mind adapts itself to it and adapts it not only according to the demands of its being, but also in view of our need for a useful representation. Thus, for example, the retinal image is straightened. The sensory data are then supplemented by mnemonic and conceptual elements, which enable us to recognise the object in the psychic image thus constituted.

The sensory perception of the external world is therefore, in two ways, a factor of enrichment of our psychic life. On the one hand, it introduces new data into it and, on the other hand, it brings forgotten or at least absent elements back into our consciousness.

#### **54. PSYCHIC INPUT FROM THE OUTSIDE WORLD**

What does the really new data, which comes from the outside world and is added to our psychic capital, consist of? As we have already said: in relationships. But

It would be more accurate to say: in sets of relations, i.e. precisely in images, provided that we define this term of relation in itself somewhat imprecisely.

Let us consider any object, a table, for example, and let us make a scale drawing of it, as schematic as possible. We will obtain a set of lines that will express positions and proportions: relative positions of the various elements that constitute the object in question - flat surface and four legs - and relative proportions of the two dimensions of the surface and of the legs in relation to it. If we go into detail, we will colour our drawing so that it represents the material of which the table is made. Colour expresses an object's relationship with light, and is defined precisely by the wavelength of its vibrations, i.e. by the dynamic order of its luminous rays, or, to simplify somewhat, by the relationships existing between its photons in movement. Thus, the drawn image of the table is the set of the constitutive relations of the object, or of some of them, isolated from its original matter and transposed onto paper.

We can do better still, and reduce this image to a mathematical formula that allows us, at any time, to reconstitute the drawing or to construct a table identical to the model. We can also, with a television station, transform these relations into Hertzian waves, transmit them through space and reproduce them on a screen with all the accuracy of their initial state. And we can also, thanks to our cerebrosensory system, transfer the organic image into our psychic duration.

Of course, if we were to see a table for the first time, we would not be able to recognise it as such, nor would we be able to specify its material. In order for us to be able to do so, we must add to the directly recorded relations other factors already known, products of previous sensory experiences, and the work of abstraction by which we decompose the apprehended images into simple elements. Sensation thus supplies us, in addition to complexes which remain as such, with loose relations which constitute the raw material of our conceptual activity and, by that very fact, of our abstract thinking.

Let us note, however, that these relations are not the only ones we use: others come directly from our organic being. Let us not forget that our biopsychic duration pre-exists the perception of the external world and already contains fundamental data: the constitutive relations of our self. Moreover, it is our being that conditions the images we capture of the rest of the cosmos. The psychic image is both objective and subjective. It is a synthesis of the order of the external world and of our personal order. In other words, we only capture from the cosmic environment that which finds a resonance in us, just as a violin only vibrates at notes within certain wavelength limits.

We are made to grasp the aspect of the outer world that corresponds to our inner world; to that which is capable of being incorporated into it and is useful to it.

We know the rest of the cosmos on a scale of observation which is also that of our necessary action, a scale which depends not only on our human nature but also on our personality. The painter apprehends an infinitely wider range of colours than the peasant, the musician an infinitely wider range of sounds than the layman. Each one grasps from the order and rhythm of the world the part that corresponds to his own order and rhythm, the only part that he is capable of assimilating. The same is true of what we know of the world by extra-sensory - which does not mean extra-corporeal - means, and in particular of the whole range of diverse phenomena revealed by dowsing. But, for the moment, we have only indications in this domain.

## **55. COSMIC PERSONALITY FORMATION: THE SOIL**

It follows from our previous analysis that we come into the world - at the moment of our conception and not of our birth - equipped with a certain number of possibilities of realisation, some of which are necessarily actualised, albeit with a certain margin of quantitative and qualitative variability, as we choose between the others in the course of our evolution.

Variations and choices depend on our history, but also on the outside world. And our history itself is made up of our past variations and *ch o i c e s* . The cosmic environment is thus the variable factor of our personality, since our inheritance is acquired all at once. By adapting ourselves to it, we mould ourselves on it and receive from it a true formation, in the pedagogical sense of the word.

Thus, the soil on which we live supplies us, through the plants and animals on which we feed, with those physico-chemical elements necessary for our bodies. But it supplies them in a certain proportion and in a certain way. We know, for example, that a deficiency of iodine, which some regions suffer from, causes goitre and idiocy, and that the percentage of calcareous salts contained in the water we drink influences the development of our skeleton. More generally, it makes no difference whether we eat the products of a rich soil at will, or subsist with difficulty on arid land.

On the other hand, and this is undoubtedly the most important point, the natural foods we absorb cannot be reduced to the chemical bodies of which they are composed. They have already been elaborated by a peculiar organic intelligence according to the conditions of its environment. We are incapable of making the chemical synthesis of animal proteins, although we know or think we know their composition, and we ignore everything about the chlorophyll of the plants we assimilate.

The soil is also a powerful factor in the differentiation of plants and animals. The wild species of Andean Patagonia, in a climate similar to that of the Alps, grow faster than in Europe and their wood is less hard. The

Argentine ostriches are smaller than their southern African counterparts, which live in equivalent climatic conditions. The same is true of man. Carrel rightly noted that not so long ago, when everyone fed on the products of his own soil, and endogamy was more widespread than today, biopsychic differences were manifest from one village to another in the same region. Many features of such a state of affairs still exist in some isolated counties whose ethnic unity is not disputed; Brittany or Auvergne in France, for example.

Such a formative influence of the soil is due not only to its chemical composition, but also to certain factors whose existence we barely glimpse, such as electromagnetic fields, and others of which we poorly conceal our ignorance by calling them telluric forces. In any case, we have to conclude, with Carrel, that we are made, materially, from the slime of the earth, specifying that the "raw material" that we take from the soil does not act only on our body, but on the whole of our biopsychic being. When we say that the peasant is tied to the earth, this is not an image, nor the simple expression of a psycho-functional reality. Nourished exclusively by the products of his fields, he forms a body - literally - with them in the complete harmony of an incessant exchange. The uprooted people of the big cities degenerate because of their unnatural way of life, but also because of the way they feed themselves. The synthetic and imported products they feed on make them perpetual misfits.

## **56. THE COSMIC FORMATION OF THE PERSONALITY: THE CLIMATE**

The action of the climate on us is more generally known and accepted than that of the soil. There has even been no lack of theoreticians to forget in its favour the data of our hereditary capital. However, the climate, unlike the soil, brings us almost nothing that enters into the composition of our being. Whatever aspect we consider it in : temperature, atmospheric pressure, wind regime, electricity, sunlight, clouds, rain or humidity, it is only a medium in which we evolve without absorbing anything of importance, except through the soil.

Our climatic framework is limited to forcing us to choose, at any given moment, among our immanent possibilities, the one that best allows us to adapt to it according to our vital intention. Unable to react to the cold, i.e. to compensate the loss of calories absorbed by the ambient air with an increased intensity of our thermochemical exchanges, we die. If our nerves cannot withstand the prevailing wind of our region or its atmospheric tension, we live in a constant state of maladaptation: our efficiency is reduced and our life is shortened.

Hence a first action of the climate on us: it imposes on us an adaptive choice between our potentialities. It shapes us by its nature: cold vivifies and hardens us; heat numbs and softens us. But our climatic environment also works through the exercise of our adaptive functions, i.e. our intentional intelligence, which it provokes. It modifies us, therefore, by its variations: uniform, it creates in us a habit of organic sluggishness; changing, it forces us, on the contrary, to an incessant activity which actualises our dynamic possibilities.

This double influence of climate is a fact of observation. Groups of the same race, located in different climates, differ in their degree of physical and intellectual activity. The apathy of the European in the tropics is as manifest as that of the Negro in a temperate climate. This last example shows us that the action of climate is related to our heredity. It has been possible to delimit with precision the geographical zones whose climate most stimulates the biopsychic activity of the white man. But this map does not apply at all to the coloured races, nor even to certain groups essentially differentiated from the great white race. We are born pre-adapted to the climate which, for generations, has exerted its influence on our ancestors. In other words, the environment shapes not only our individual, but also our race, whether or not it was the cause of the great ethnic differentiations of our species.

This is the reason why our heredity predisposes us to a type of climate which is particularly suited to us, and outside of which we degenerate. It is therefore paradoxical that we have been striving, since the beginning of the century, to artificially transform our climatic conditions of life, to soften them and to reduce their degree of variation. In the effort to adapt, it is our vital tension that is weakened. But it is not useful to insist: Carrel, in this domain, has said all that is essential.

## **57. THE COSMIC FORMATION OF THE PERSONALITY: THE LANDSCAPE**

Soil and climate act on our biopsychic being at the level of its bodily substratum. But there is a third factor of our "education" by the cosmic environment, the landscape, which intervenes, through our senses, in our psychic duration.

Indeed, for us, the outside world is not limited to our food and the weather. It is also a complex of images and, in particular, of visual images around which all other images are condensed in our minds.

Landscape is the shape and colour of the soil and its vegetation, the smells that emanate from them, and the vibration of the light that envelops them; and also, in a broader sense, the pattern of the city and its monuments, and even the

interior picture of our house. The landscape is therefore the permanent scenery of our life and action, or, more precisely, this scenery as we apprehend it. Of course it changes its appearance with the times of the day or the seasons. But its various aspects retain a stable base, and they re-emerge cyclically like the figures on a merry-go-round. The landscape constitutes the imaginary backdrop, of variable lighting, of our psychic duration. Whatever it is, it is impossible to escape it. It permeates all our thinking, imaginative, rational and affective.

In fact, it supplies our duration with images, particularly powerful because of the constancy of the perception we have of them, which we could almost call habit-images. Landscape, then, fixes our imagination to some extent. But this is not its most important role. The images that compose it have an order. We do not want to speak of the constitutive relations of each one of them, but of the proportions of the whole, that is to say of the organisation of the whole scenery.

We usually express this order in the language we use to define our inner qualities. We say that the landscape is grand or delicate, rich or desolate, lush or classical. It is customary to say that we project our own qualities onto it. It is right that we compare it with our personality. We judge it in its confrontation with our being, and we qualify it according to our scale of values. But it is no less true that the personality of the landscape imposes itself on us and contributes to our formation.

Indeed, we necessarily adapt ourselves to our cosmic scenery and create between it and ourselves the harmony that is indispensable for our psychic equilibrium. We certainly modify our vision of the landscape according to what we are, but we also modify ourselves according to what it is. To the extent of our essential potentiality, we acquire something of its delicacy or its majesty, its desolation or its richness, its symmetry or its exuberance. It makes no difference whether we were brought up on the Russian steppe or in the Loire Valley, in New York or in Florence. It would hardly be excessive to say that we are transformed into the boundless plains of the Ukraine or the Château de Chambord, the disproportionate masses of concrete or the palaces of the Renaissance. We incorporate, in any case, the particular order of our imaginary picture, and it is not surprising that the landscape even influences our logic.

It is generally recognised, and rightly so, that the intellectual imprecision of the average Russian is due to the absence of limits and the "indifference" of his land, while the clarity of the average Frenchman comes from the human measure and the luminosity of his natural scenery. Even more evident is the affective power of the landscape. Monotony and fog engender sadness in us, and sunshine brings joy. Sadness is the sign of our essential unsuitability for an image or a group of images that does not meet our personal needs, while joy, on the other hand, expresses the profound harmony of the landscape and its natural scenery.

between our biopsychic duration and the framework of its evolution, i.e. the external factors that act on it and are introduced into it.

There is, then, for us, an optimal landscape: the one that contributes to our integral realisation, developing those of our qualities of all kinds that correspond to its own organisation.

## **58. THE FEELING OF NATURE**

But landscape is only one of the essential elements of anthropocosmic harmony. It is the superficial factor, in the proper sense of the word, of our sentimental attachment to our picture, that is to say, the one that covers and crowns the others, but also conceals them from our observation. It is the aspect in which a unique, infinitely complex reality is presented to us, comprising the whole cosmos, underlying its local differentiations which are soil and climate. Landscape is, if you like, the spirit of nature: it would be inconceivable without the infrastructure on which it rests and on which it depends, even though it surpasses it.

In other words, soil, climate and landscape constitute our external world, in which we are immersed and from which, on the one hand, our being and our evolution originate, but they are also our differentiated points of contact with the rest of the cosmos, i.e. the channels through which the whole external world infiltrates us. The feeling of nature that we experience in the face of the landscape is therefore infinitely more profound than most writers think, seeing in it only a mixture of admiration for the mystery of the world and aesthetic pleasure born of the spectacle.

In reality, it is the expression of our sympathy, in the etymological sense of the word, for our cosmic picture, that is to say, the intuition and acceptance of a symmetry, that is to say, of a common rhythmic measure between it and us. The farmer, who blends in with his land, lives on it and in it, and often loves it more than himself, feels, without usually being able to analyse it, this feeling which identifies him with his frame. He forms a body with his field, like a rider with his horse. And it is the same feeling experienced by the old porteño who "feels" living his city, as one feels living a loved one.

We are confusedly aware of our dependence on the cosmic environment, by a vague sense of well-being when we are in our own frame, and by an impression of isolation which leaves us dissatisfied and helpless when we find ourselves in a cosmic environment which is foreign to us. Thus, the uprooted person lives in a permanent restlessness, the product of his personal maladjustment, and even of a hereditary maladjustment when he is born of a race which, for centuries or millennia, has experienced the formative empire of a powerful environment. The



The nature in which he lives does not "speak" to him. He stands before it, as before an unknown corpse. And this is the exact comparison. We may or may not apprehend the vital rhythm of the universe as a normal part of our life span, depending on whether or not the external world, as it presents itself to us at a given time and place, contributes to our inner equilibrium.

What we call the feeling of nature is therefore much more than the result of our receptivity, much more than the response to a superficial contact. In reality, it is a communion with the rest of the world as it manifests itself to us, in its local differentiation, with all its power and all its necessity. It will be in vain to try here to oppose Dionysus to Apollo, the "cosmic vitality" to the "intelligence of rhythm". Whether nature intoxicates us and provokes in us an almost mystical exaltation, similar to that experienced by the primitive in the course of his animistic ceremonies, or whether it vibrates the depths of our being in an understood and explicitly accepted resonance, the process remains essentially identical.

Our personality responds according to what it is to the pressure of the world, and we do not think that the poet feels less authentically the cosmic intuition which he expresses in intellectualised rhythms, than the savage who manifests his disordered emotion in the course of the celebration of the magical rites of voodoo. The one and the other live the world according to the dominants of their own life. Or, more precisely, the one and the other capture and express from the world what corresponds to their own duration. The primitive allows himself to be swept along by the mysterious cosmic powers that dominate him. The poet tries to take hold of them and to restore their intimate order. The phenomenon of communion with nature is identical in both cases. Only the vision and the action vary.

## **59. THE DOMAIN OF THE UNIVERSE**

This difference in modality is, however, far from being unimportant, since it expresses our attitude towards the rest of the world. Let us not forget, indeed, that we are not a mass of malleable and inert clay which the forces of the universe will mould, encountering some resistance but no reaction. Nor do we represent a simple field of convergent action of cosmic dynamisms.

On the contrary, we oppose to the rest of the world a duration, that is, a vital intention organising ourselves or, better still, a will. Our vital progression within our environment - and there is no other possible progression - is realised by a dialectical confrontation of our intentional impetus with the cosmic forces. We are a synthesis in continuous creation, since the overcoming that resolves the conflict takes place within us. It follows from this analysis that we are at the same time one of the factors of opposition and

the author of the synthesis from which we benefit. There is, therefore, no merely passive attitude on our part.

But that does not prevent the variable force we represent from being more or less powerful in relation to those of the cosmic medium. Even the pure receptive successfully imposes its vital intention upon the external powers which would otherwise destroy it. But this intention is limited to maintaining a mere individuality and not to directing, according to the requirements of the environment but in an autonomous effort, the evolution of a personality. The vital tension is not on the table here. It can be extremely marked, as in the case of the enthusiasm of an African sacred dance. But the personal direction is missing. The violent current of duration allows itself to be swept along by the natural forces that dominate it, and whose rule it accepts and even seeks. Its only ambition is to blend ever more intimately with the outside world, and its only effort is to express it by lending it its own vitality.

The poet's attitude is very different. He too, as we have seen, accepts his cosmic picture and seeks to interpret it. But he does not abdicate before it. He does not expect to melt into the universe, but, on the contrary, to personalise the external powers that penetrate and work in its duration. He accepts them as an internalised raw material, particularly rich and which, for that very reason, offers serious resistance but allows him to obtain a superior result. It imposes its directive intention on them and absorbs them.

For the poet, the rest of the world is a factor of personal enrichment and self-affirmation. This does not mean that he does not depend on his cosmic conditions of life, to which he must, of course, adapt himself. But he does not transform these conditions into determination. It is he who realises himself in his painting, and with the help of his painting, and it is not the rest of the cosmos that realises itself in him.

Of course, the savage and the poet - the true savage and the true poet - whose attitudes we have just studied, constitute extreme cases between which numerous positions are possible. Our analysis would be incomplete if we did not specify that there is a different way of mastering the external environment from that of the poet: that of the one who not only masters in himself the cosmic data which he incorporates, but also marks his natural picture with his own stamp and modifies it according to his own personality.

The farmer who humanises the earth through his creative work, the landscape designer and the architect who give a new physiognomy to the countryside and the city, the artist who materialises his vision, the scientist and the technician who divert natural forces for the benefit of his work, and we, finally, in so far as we shape the world in our image, act as poets, but as poets whose interiority is not enough. Not only do we subjectivise the part of the cosmos we have incorporated into ourselves, but we also objectivise the personal synthesis we have forged, imposing it on our external environment. We are both poet and man

of action.

## 60. HUMAN DEPENDENCE AND AUTONOMY

If we summarise the results acquired in the course of the present chapter, we will have to conclude that we are the product of our parents and of our environment. Even the agent of our personal synthesis, our directing intention, is inherited. Our whole being depends, therefore, without reserve, on factors which are, if not foreign to it, since they constitute it and direct its actualisation, at least external.

Some will perhaps see in these lines a denial of our autonomy. There is nothing of the sort. Our conclusions simply rule out the fashionable thesis that the person is an absolute metaphysical entity to which race and milieu must submit. Our autonomy is real, but relative to our hereditary endowment and our living conditions. How else could it be? When we speak of our autonomy, it is the autonomy of our self, not a divine attribute.

Now then: our "I", as we have essentially analysed and defined it, is determined by our heredity and conditioned by our environment. We deliberately say: essentially, with all the force of the term, since without our inheritance we would not be, and without our environment we would not "become". Our autonomy is therefore that of the dependent being that we are and, better still, it depends on our necessary dependence. We are all the more ourselves, and therefore all the more autonomous, the more we realise, according to our inherited directive intention, the possibilities we received at the moment of our conception. And we realise ourselves all the more personally, and therefore all the more autonomously, the more our environment forces us to choose between the most profound and the least easy of these possibilities.

Our autonomy does not come, then, from an independence from our hereditary endowment, an independence which would be meaningless, but from an acceptance of this heredity and the obligation it imposes on us to fight to realise it, that is to say, to realise ourselves. It is the result of our unitary tension against the internal and external forces of dissociation that try to destroy our personal being.

Likewise, our autonomy comes from the acceptance of our cosmic environment, an indispensable factor in our constitution and our evolution, but in a constant struggle to dominate it, to subordinate it to us, that is to say, to oppose its destructive invasion, without thereby impoverishing the direct contribution it makes to us or the necessary evolutionary conditioning it imposes on us. In other words, our autonomy is not isolation, but, on the contrary, dialectical conquest over the negative element of our inheritance and our environment. We become more and more autonomous, not to the extent that we separate ourselves from our nature and our environment, but to the extent that we develop, in an original and unforeseeable way, our inherited potential.

in a potential state and we integrate ourselves into the cosmos, at the same time "sweeping" ourselves into it and modelling ourselves on it.

Our autonomy is therefore nothing other than the power we possess to realise and affirm ourselves in the world, a power that depends on our personal dynamism.

It is therefore perhaps paradoxical, but in any case strictly accurate, to say that we inherit our autonomy with the intentional impetus that gives us unity and uniqueness, differentiates us, then, in our lineage and our milieu, and makes of us a being as different from the impotent bearing of a closed mechanism as from a mere plaything of evolving cosmic forces.

## **CHAPTER V THE SEXED MAN**

### **61. INCOMPLETENESS OF MAN**

The functional system we constitute is only relatively isolated, as we have just seen, since it evolves in an environment with which it is in constant intercommunication. But we might be tempted to conclude that, given its cosmic dependence, it is self-sufficient. In fact, it is not possible to conceive of ourselves in Robinson's situation without our vital process of self-realisation coming to a halt. In a reduced but sufficient environment, our heart will continue to beat, our blood to circulate, our legs to propel us, our sensory organs to make us aware of our surroundings, and our thoughts to elaborate the information thus received. Our biopsychic duration will continue its temporal progression. Thus the goldfish in its aquarium and the lion in its cage continue to live.

However, a closer examination will allow us to notice a serious anomaly. While our vital organs find in ourselves the conditions and the *raison d'être* for their functioning and thus continue their activity, a fraction of our biopsychic being suddenly becomes almost useless. The whole constituted by our sexual organs is incomprehensible if we consider only ourselves. Indeed, in order to function fully and thus respond to its immanent purpose, it requires a complementary organic group that does not belong to us. Our closed-circuit self-realisation thus maintains in a virtual state a whole complex of possibilities whose

exceptional value we will see further on, and that they need to be updated by an element external to us.

Our incompleteness is therefore obvious. It forces us, moreover, to look around us for the organic factor which is logically indispensable to us. Hence the need to step outside our self, and to take into account our fellow human beings who, until now, have been for us only objects among other objects. We must recognise, by analogy, the specific community that links us to them. But we must also and above all note the essential organic differences which allow us to divide human beings into two sexes.

We see then that each category is incomplete in its own way, but finds in the other what it lacks. Or, more precisely, we possess only one half of the complete sexual system, such as it must be in order to function. But this half requires, in order to exist, our entire biopsychic being, and so does the other half with respect to the whole of which it is a part. Our sexual organs are therefore much more than an element of inter-human contact. They constitute one of two parts of a unique functional system. Each is organised in function of the other, but nevertheless belongs to an autonomous living whole without which it would disappear. This shows that we are conceived according to a supra-individual plan, a problem which is beyond our scope today.

Even if we confine ourselves to our present analysis, the consequences of our observation are fundamental, for they force us to recognise that our full functional existence requires union with a human being of the opposite sex. Our autonomy, therefore, is not absolute. We cannot live closed in on ourselves if we do not give up part of our personal possibilities. We can only realise our full potential if we can emerge from our isolation.

## **62. THE SEXUAL INSTINCT**

In the latter case, it is not a real renunciation, a term that implies a difficulty to overcome, an effort to make and, in short, a certain impoverishment. In reality, isolation is an unnatural state, first of all because it makes full functional activity impossible. That is why it weighs on us and why we seek to break it.

Every organ in us tends to respond to its immanent purpose, and to play the role for which it is organised. Our sexual organs are no exception to the rule. But while the others find their place and function in our organism, they demand a transcendence of our being. Their dynamic order is not self-sufficient. Just as their existence presupposes a

Incompleteness, their functioning requires a complement that can only be achieved by engaging our whole being.

Let us not forget that our sexual organs, while occupying a special place in our organism in that they extend it outside itself, are nevertheless part of its whole. They exist and function in complete interaction with all the constituent elements of our self. They continuously pour substances into our blood, which permeate all our tissues, and act on our psychic duration through their cenesthetic layer. However, these substances come from an incomplete activity, and transmit to our spirit not only the characteristic presence of our sexual organs, but also their functional requirement. Hence the sexual instinct in its double organic and psychic aspect, both instrumental order and desire, which engages our whole self.

It even seems, at times, to place our being at the service of one of its parts. But this is only an illusion, probably due to the functional exteriority of our genital organs. In reality, they have no existence or meaning of their own. They are only a personal specialisation of the whole which we constitute, and which they express in one of their essential directions.

Let us say more precisely that, while it is true that our sexual glands give our whole being a masculine or feminine tone, it is no less true that we are not sexed because we possess such and such organs, but that we possess these organs because our inherited characteristics, that is to say, our nature, make us male or female. The sex instinct, then, is not an accident; it is not even the psychic generalisation of a localised organic phenomenon. It is inherent to a certain epoch in the evolution of our indivisible self. It constitutes a return to our unitary duration of a property entrusted by our directive intention to a group of differentiated organs, which are but the indispensable instrument of a necessary function.

This analysis of ours implies a more general conclusion: it is not our sexual organs that are unsatisfied and demand the search for their natural complement, but our whole being that aspires, through a specialised part of itself, to total union with an individual of the opposite sex. The old Platonic myth of the primitive androgyne, cut in two by Zeus and whose halves always tend to reunite, expresses perfectly this personal incompleteness and the instinct that corresponds to it by trying to remedy it.

### **63. SEXUAL UNION**

The sexual instinct does not, therefore, possess the disturbing and even downright diabolical character attributed to it by the dualism of all ages.

On the contrary, it responds to an essential requirement of our incomplete nature.

Sexual union is foreseen by our own organisation or, more precisely, by a specific organisation which distributes between the sexes the complementary instruments indispensable to the exercise of a common function. At the basis of the union of man and woman there is thus an organic need for the association of bodily "parts" made to fit one into the other in order to work in solidarity.

It is in vain to try to idealise the thing: sexual union is, above all, an instrumental combination analogous to that which gives meaning to the two parts of an electrical plug. But it is not only that, since our genital organs exist only in and through our whole organism. Coupling thus brings into play not only our specialised instruments, but also our whole body, which enables these instruments to be and to live. At the moment of sexual union, it seems that our organism puts itself entirely at the service of the localised act that is taking place. But appearances deceive us.

Instrumental mating is only the outward manifestation of the deep union of the bodies to which the organs concerned belong. They constitute assemblage elements without any value of their own. They establish the communication sought, not by themselves, but by the assemblies to which they belong. If it were otherwise, the bringing together of organs of opposite sex would be sufficient for the sexual union to be fully realised. In reality, the organic conditions of mating, that is to say, the physiological modifications of the complementary instruments, only occur when a first contact has already established between the bodies a pre-harmony in which all the senses participate.

Sexual union, therefore, is conditioned by a previous bodily union which seeks, through it, to acquire its fullness. But mating does not merely complete a pre-existing communion to which it gives an incomparable force. Prior to it, the two bodies are only united by a more or less intense sensory and intuitive exchange. Each retains its autonomy. Through sexual union, on the contrary, they are merged into a single functional whole. Not only does the association of the organs bring about an increase in sensitive contact, but it also fundamentally transforms their nature. Thanks to it, the two bodies are no longer juxtaposed, but confused. They live through each other and for each other. There is no longer only union between them, but unity of function. And this last term means, not the simple adaptation to the generative purpose of the sexual act, but the biological process of self-realisation which loses, to some extent, its individual meaning.

Our analysis is not yet complete. The union of bodies transforms not only organic life, but also the whole of the duration whose substratum it constitutes. Our bodily modifications, demanded or provoked by the



The sexual instincts of the other body, which are the result of an organic union, obviously have repercussions on our psychic life, just as the simple sensory contact with the other body already introduced a flow of particular images into our life span. But before that, our sexual instinct had, as we know, two aspects, biological and psychic.

On the other hand, the bodily conditions of the coupling depend not only on the sensory agreement of the bodies, but also on the psychic acceptance of the images that express it, that is, on their adaptation to our inner life, conscious or subconscious, as it presents itself at the moment of its influx. Moreover, the idea we have of the personality of the being with whom we unite plays its part in the act that receives from it a part of its meaning. Sexual union brings about the conjunction not only of bodies, but also of entire biopsychic personalities, with their various layers of duration intervening to varying degrees in a more or less complete act.

#### **64. GENDER INEQUALITY**

The progression of our analysis obliges us here to make an important clarification. In the course of the preceding chapters, we have spoken of ourselves, the object of our experience, as a typical human being. We had the right to do so, since we could, at any time, apply the structural scheme we had established exactly to each of our fellow human beings. But this is no longer possible, now that we are confronted with the sexual problem. We are united with a being who corresponded perfectly, up to this point, to the conclusions of our research, but who manifests himself, in a new point, essentially different from us.

Sex is not a personal variation on the general theme. It implies a biopsychic and functional differentiation, which divides the human species into two complementary categories. The fact of being sexed classifies us into one of them. It also creates a new dependence on us, which is added to that of the cosmic environment. Indeed, we can only realise our full potential if we are masters of actualising all those of our possibilities that respond to the demands of our being in given circumstances.

Now then: we are incapable of satisfying our sexual instinct on our own. The union it demands is only feasible with a differently organised individual. We are therefore dependent on the sex opposite to our own. That is to say that our fulfilment is only complete, from this point of view, thanks to a difference.

And we must add: thanks to an inequality. The sexual union does not only demand, on the part of both spouses, a different biopsychic and, first of all, instrumental organisation. The role of each implies more : a subordination of the woman to the man. It is not necessary to go into descriptions

The male dominates in the act itself while the female is reduced to an attitude of acceptance. But the inequality of the sexes is not limited to that. To make it better understood, we have, once again, to invert the generally accepted relations. The male is not dominant by function because he is sexed in a certain way, but he possesses the organic instruments which condition his position because he is dominant by nature. The same is obviously true of the woman in her relative passivity. Such a finding does not contradict the fact that the biopsychic characteristics peculiar to our sex depend on the presence and functioning of our specialised organs. But these only exist and function because we are by nature male or female.

Our hereditary endowment is sexed. From it flows our bodily organisation, from which in turn comes the biopsychic differentiation which marks with a sexual stamp all the layers of our duration. The characters which express this differentiation are identical with those which manifest themselves in the course of the organic union, and the fact will not surprise us, since we have just seen that they come from the same cause.

Our structure and our dynamism are but two phases of the same personal reality, and the sexual act is but the most direct realisation of a differentiated nature which has other modes of externalisation. The inequality of the sexes therefore governs not only the organic union, but also the couple's relations as a whole. In other words, sexual intercourse is only the culminating moment of a much broader process. In it the hierarchy of the sexes is fully affirmed. But it manifests itself - or should manifest itself - in all relations between differently sexed individuals.

## **65. THE HARMONY OF THE COUPLE**

It is thanks to the inequality of the sexes that it is possible for us to find the complement which our constitution demands, and thus to satisfy our sexed nature. Our specialised instruments, and consequently the whole of our biopsychic being which is projected in them, require not only an object which enables them to act, but also a subject on which to perform their function. They do not seek simple conditions of an autonomous movement, but an interactive harmony without which their existence would have no meaning. They complete themselves, but they also complete each other.

The union cannot, therefore, validly be considered from the sole point of view of one of the participants. Its reality and its perfection are manifested in the couple and not in the individual. It would not even be accurate to say that two sexually unequal beings give and receive at the same time and complement each other. Undoubtedly, each finds in the union a deep personal satisfaction born of the completeness finally conquered. But the couple is more than the

sum of its members. It constitutes a functional unity which expresses the dialectical overcoming of male and female. The antagonism of the sexes as it arises from their inequality is erased in the couple or, more precisely, disappears at the moment of the union and is then reborn in varying degrees according to the depth of the harmony achieved.

Let us not forget, in fact, that the couple represents much more than the simple conjunction of complementary organic complexes. Through the sexual organs, two bodies and two durations are more or less intimately united, i.e. they overcome their constitutional antinomy. Hence what we could call three levels of harmony depending on whether body and duration participate more or less in the dialectical movement which thus arrives at a more or less complete osmosis of the two beings in presence.

Let us now specify the meaning of the term harmony which we use to define the synthetic result of mating. If we consider sexual union at the instrumental level, harmony consists of a common functional movement by mutual physiological adaptation and interaction of the associated organs. On the bodily level, the relationship established and its consequences are already much more subtle and profound. The contact made by the sexual organs but also by all the senses creates a reciprocal adaptation between two organisms that had their own rhythms, but synchronise them by adaptation so that the couple lives in a unitary momentum. The two durations are confused, like the movements of two cogwheels that mesh, with the fundamental difference that it is not a question here of an average of different speeds, but rather of the creation of a new rhythm, through the transformation of the vital modalities of each of the two bodies united and exalted by their union.

On the psychic level, the problem is posed in somewhat different terms. Each duration receives an influx of cenesthetic and sensory images that correspond not only to the modifications experienced by the body due to the mating and the biopsychic rhythm of the partner, but also to the common functional life of the couple. The synthesis of the psychic durations is thus realised first and foremost by the self-overcoming of each of them in the awareness of the bodily union.

But it demands even more than the simple knowledge of the harmonious biological whole thus constituted, in the lower strata (in position) of our being. It demands, in order to fully create a common eurythmy, a complement of images in the form of a directly psychic rational and intuitive exchange. Only then will symmetry, in the etymological sense of the word, be perfect and the couple will live a unique life which will develop on a common rhythm, whose phases of greatest synthetic tension will correspond to the brief moments of coitus, but which will be maintained outside them in an alternation of desire and satisfaction.

## 66. SEXUAL INTUITION

Without mutual knowledge of the partners, harmony in the couple would obviously not be possible, since the mutual adaptation and synthesis of individual antagonisms presuppose an effective confrontation.

At the instrumental level, we know that this knowledge is direct. The sexual organs have a particularly marked tactile sensitivity, which constitutes the necessary link between them. Likewise, at the bodily level, our senses come into immediate contact with our loved one. Also, at the psychic level, language serves as a means of communication between the two thoughts. But this is not a sufficient explanation of the phenomenon of loving knowledge.

Words have little place in the couple's psychic exchanges, and sensory activity is limited to making us aware of the physical form of the body to which we are united, and of its external behaviour. We apprehend, without much difficulty, the heat emanating from the functioning of the organism, or the thrill born of sexual arousal. But the very movement of duration escapes both our senses and our logical understanding. Since it constitutes the essence of the data which we harmonise with our self, we must recognise the intervention of a mode of knowledge, intuition, by means of which we penetrate deeply into the very duration of the being with which we are united.

While our senses provide us with fragmentary images, the whole of which cannot express any vital reality, intuition, on the other hand, enables us to apprehend the inner biopsychic flow in its temporal continuity. Thus the juxtaposition of sensory data and the logical chaining of words receive the gnoseological complement without which they would give us only an incomplete and lifeless knowledge of the loved one. We would grasp his body as we do a statue to which we lend our own dynamism in order to give it meaning, and his spirit would be reduced for us to a succession of words to which its affective content would have to be restored. Thanks to intuition, sensory images and words offer themselves to us, not only with all the nuances that a fixation would destroy, but also with the moving fabric that gives them their profound meaning.

We incorporate, not more or less superficial and more or less arbitrarily made cuts, but the biopsychic duration without which the synthesis could not be born, for lack of one of its essential terms. Intuitive sexual knowledge allows us to live the inner life of the complementary being, to confront it with our own and to overcome both in the symmetry of the couple. We can say without exaggeration that, thanks to it, we apprehend the profound rhythm of a strange, differently sexed duration, in the same way as that of one of our organs.

Sexual synthesis is thus analogous to that which we realise in ourselves between the various dynamic factors of our self. The couple is thus truly transformed into a single being which evolves according to a rhythm of its own made up of alternating movements of attraction, culminating in the total fusion of coitus, and of separation, in the course of which each personality tends to regain its autonomy. Sexual intuition thus constitutes the most powerful mode of knowledge, by means of which two beings mutually communicate their vital durations to each other before making of them a single whole.

## **67. PHYSICAL LOVE AND SENTIMENTAL LOVE**

Let us not believe that such contact of durations takes place independently of our sensory knowledge, and can therefore be realised without it. Sexual intuition does not manifest itself without physical closeness, and it is all the more intense the more intimate the union of the bodies. It goes beyond our senses, but needs them as the substratum of its activity, still mysterious in its process but manifest in its results.

Now, knowledge is not only the basis on which the harmony of the couple is built, but also the condition of love, that is, of the sentimental actualisation of our tendency to completeness, whether satisfied or not. Unless it is a simple imaginative movement based on more or less modified memories, love demands a certainty about the possible realisation of the sought-after symmetry. We can only acquire it through the knowledge of the being we are thinking of, which we can only think of if we have already grasped its presence and its sexed nature.

Love is nothing but the biopsychic process by which we discover the object that claims our sexual instinct and arrive at the symmetry considered possible from the first moment. It is thus conditioned by bodily contact, without which neither sensation nor intuition could manifest itself. What we call physical love, i.e. desire and its satisfaction, is therefore not a lower form of the union of two beings, but on the contrary its essential reality.

Sentimental love, unless it is mere imaginative fantasy, is made, first of all, of the awareness of bodily sensations and intuitions and, above all, of their common eurythmy. Our psychic duration receives the influx of images corresponding to the shape of the beloved body, to its quivering, to its warmth and also, in the form of words, to its thought. Its vital rhythm, modified by the sexual union, is incorporated. It also perceives the modifications of our own body born of contact and exchange, and we already know that they are particularly violent. To such a whole, which expresses the immediate reality of bodily communion, are added the images-remembrances suggested. Sentimental love evolves, therefore, with the relative autonomy of the body.

of psychic movements, on the kinesthetic, sensory and intuitive background, which comes from physical love.

Desire and possession, transposed into the conscious layer of our duration, expand or shrink as our imaginative power pleases, and in turn influence, according to the process we are familiar with, our bodily activity. Love is thus an integral biopsychic phenomenon. It manifests the impetus of our whole being in its effort to resolve its incompleteness and thus to find its inner balance.

## **68. PERSONAL COMPLETION IN LOVE**

Indeed, man is unbalanced, not only because of the constant pressure of the outside world and his own tendency to dissociation, but also because of the sexual instinct which makes him desire a complementary element which he does not possess and which he has to discover and conquer.

The restlessness, which results from such a natural existence of a factor of disharmony which tends to satisfy the demand it creates, can only disappear in the sexual union. This does not mean that the spouses know no more feelings of restlessness, but simply that the latter loses, for them, its negative character and becomes a necessary phase in the synthetic evolution of their durations.

Without an outlet - satisfaction or sublimation - the sexual instinct is dissociative. But it is, on the contrary, creative when it is oriented towards the act which gives it its meaning: creator of the harmonious semi-entity which constitutes the couple, but also creator of our own personality, since sexual union completes us, allowing us to perform the only function which remained in us in a potential state, and certainly not the least of our being. Sex is not a sumptuous instrument, which we use in certain circumstances and only with a view to a specific act, but a biopsychic colouring of the whole personality which depends on the group of specialised organs which express it.

Now then: sexual activity is only complete in mating. It would be hardly paradoxical to say that we are not fully sexed except in total self-giving, outside of which we function only in a diminished form, without using all our natural possibilities. It is enough, moreover, to see the effects of love on us to be in no doubt about it. In union, our organic rhythms accelerate, our nervous system gives its best and our vitality increases. Our whole body is exalted to project itself outside itself, in an effort of integral affirmation, and our organic duration reaches the paroxysm of its tension. Our psychic duration receives the flow of images representing the intense functioning of our organism and that of our spouse. Hence an emotional turmoil of an extraordinary power, which

We have to overcome a no less extraordinary tension of our inner life. Our biopsychic exaltation is the product of our reaction to the intimate presence of the loved one. We know that our personal synthesis provokes an inner enthusiasm, which constitutes our "vital tone" and comes from our intentional victory over our own divergent tendencies.

Now, the act of love implies not only such a synthesis brought to its maximum efficiency, since it must, as we shall see, go beyond its existential level, but also the absorption of a strange duration, that is to say, an incomparable enrichment. It is not, in fact, simple juxtaposed images, on which it would be relatively easy to impose our law, that penetrate us, but a vital flow that mingles with our own and which we have to master.

Failure is obviously possible. We are all familiar with the case of beings who allow themselves to be carried away, not by their passion, as they believe, for this passion would be nothing but their own search for love that would have found its object, but by the duration of the loved one who imposes his or her own movement on them. But it is a question here, apart from accidental cases which are always possible, of receptive beings who lack the necessary energy to play their part effectively in the symphony of the couple, and who do not fulfil the conditions without which harmony is inconceivable. It is not at all surprising that sexual union does not produce in them the exaltation and joy born of the balance achieved. The fault lies not with love, but with the intentional inadequacy of the one who is incapable of responding to an enrichment that crushes him, when it should give him the opportunity to assert himself with all the vigour of his vital impetus.

## **69. LOVE AS CONQUEST**

The loving affirmation of our personality results not only from the external input received, but also and above all from our dynamic response to this enrichment.

Now this response does not constitute an autonomous movement of our duration. It is only a modality of our biopsychic energy which we have already seen, in the form of the sexual instinct, seek its complement and which has now found it. Love is the second, positive phase of a process of discovery of being demanded by our incompleteness.

But it is more than that, since it is not only the realisation of our personal exaltation, which reaches its maximum degree of tension in mating, but also our will to dominate our environment or, more precisely, an element of our environment which has a particular value for us. It is no longer a question of imposing ourselves on inanimate nature, but on a human being who possesses a personality schematically similar to

ours, and then an autonomy that it has to defend. Love, therefore, is not only knowledge, but also conquest.

We must assimilate the being we desire and, in order to achieve this, take possession of it. This indispensable conquest, which ends in mating, brings our whole nature into play, including, of course and above all, our sexual characteristics. It is worth saying that it does not have the same aspect in men and women, since it depends, in its modalities, on the role of each of the spouses and, in the last analysis, on their instrumental conformation, the latter expressing, as we have already seen, the whole personality inseparable from their sexuality.

Male conquest is realised in possession. It is essentially active and dominating. Feminine conquest is realised in acceptance. Would it not be more accurate, then, to speak of woman as a good conquered by man, rather than as a conquering element? No, not at all, since acceptance and submission are not suffered, but desired and sought. She needs the man as much as the man needs her. But she obtains, by her receptive presence alone, the completeness demanded by her nature. Its conquest is active, but it ends in a passivity which is not renunciation but self-realisation. The man, on the other hand, continues in the sexual act the domination movement of conquest. Both partners equally impose themselves on each other and assert their will to power in the same way. But each does so in accordance with what he or she is, that is to say, in accordance with the demands of his or her sexual being.

The physiological process of coitus perfectly represents this double character of amorous conquest. Without the inequality of the two beings, one and the other indispensable, the union would obviously not be possible. Each would remain closed in on himself or, at least, would only impose himself on the lower world around him. Its power, therefore, would be limited in its exercise by the relative ease of the struggle and its solution. He would also have to renounce the use of the sexual organs, which are one of his most effective instruments of assertion.

The couple represents a masterpiece of nature: an ensemble in which each of the components conquers the other and, far from diminishing him by such subjection, allows him, on the contrary, to become more himself in the exaltation of his finally justified sexual difference and, at the same time, in the harmonious completeness of the integral union.

## **70. SELF-IMPROVEMENT**

Thus, we fulfil ourselves in love both by responding to the biopsychic demand of our sex, and by imposing our power on another human being.



If we were to stop our analysis here, sexual union would not appear to us essentially different from other forms of our action on the environment. It would be a simple personal effort to fulfil ourselves, forcing an element of the external world to bend to our will and serve us as an instrument of affirmation. Taking a woman in one's arms would have no more meaning than taming a horse, accepting a husband's embrace, no more meaning than taking a sunbath. But we would forget that the loving synthesis from which the couple is born is not the result of a simple sum of two beings who end up for each other, but the real overcoming of two personalities in a new entity which they create, rather than constitute, by the reciprocal giving of themselves to each other.

It may be objected that forgetting and surrendering means an abandonment, a renunciation and, ultimately, a denial of self and not, therefore, a self-affirmation. This would be true, indeed, if such forgetting and surrendering were contrary to our nature. But on the contrary, they are demanded by it. Far from damaging our personal integrity, love gives a *raison d'être* to organs which, without it, would remain incomprehensible and provokes that tension of our inner dynamism which our exaltation expresses: an exceptional exaltation which reaches its paroxysm in mating. It creates, moreover, the higher harmony of our whole being as our joy manifests it.

It remains to be seen whether exaltation and joy are not deceptive appearances, and whether our tension and harmony really correspond to a personal movement and state: in other words, whether they are not the results of a coercion imposed by the partner, which is realised at the expense of our autonomy.

At first glance, it seems, in fact, that the union can only be made by the negation of each of its two terms, which accept to submit not only to each other, but also to the two-headed being that constitutes the couple. However, we must immediately note that the spouses, while experiencing a supra-individual interpenetration and exaltation, do not remain less themselves. Moreover, we know that by seeking sexual union and abandoning ourselves to it, we satisfy a fundamental tendency of our biopsychic self. In other words, the partner, for the sake of whom we forget, surrender and abandon ourselves, is not an entity foreign to our personality, but the projection outside ourselves of an inner reality belonging to our nature, or, better still, the necessary enlargement of our hitherto partly potential personality, which develops according to its directing intention.

Sexual union, far from destroying our autonomy, allows it, on the contrary, to assert itself fully. For this autonomy is the autonomy of what we are, and so we are the couple, i.e. more than we were able to express before. This does not make it any less clear that sexual union constitutes an overcoming of our relatively closed individuality, as we have analysed it in the previous chapters, and that this overcoming is not a *fait accompli*, but, on the contrary, that we are the couple, i.e. more than we could express before.

on the contrary, it is always the provisional result of an intentional impetus, subjected to a rhythm of delivery and retention.

Sometimes we long for union and strive to realise it; sometimes we claim our independence and withdraw into our primitive self, that is, into our being amputated of its sexual tendency. But we should not see here an opposition, overcome or affirmed, between the ego and the partner, but an inner succession of phases corresponding to different states of the same personality.

## **71. LOVE SELECTION**

Let us not forget, on the other hand, that sexual union is the result of a voluntary dynamism which undoubtedly requires reciprocity but remains, as far as we are concerned, strictly personal. The couple is born of a shared sexual attraction, which comes from our functional need for a partner of the opposite sex.

This analysis, however, is not complete. Theoretically, a man needs a woman and a woman needs a man. But, in fact, we find it more difficult. Nothing could be more logical, of course, since we know that sexual union is not limited to simple coitus, and that the indispensable correspondence between the spouses always goes beyond the merely instrumental stage, but to an extent which varies with the depth of the harmony sought and obtained. Even on the latter level, adaptation is more or less satisfactory. It is therefore normal that we should seek and love the person with whom we can form a couple united by all the bonds of as complete a harmony as possible.

Hence the importance of amorous selection, since our sexual success, that is, the degree of our affirmation and our overcoming in and through union, depends on it. The sexual instinct, undifferentiated in its object, exists only at the level of the lowest strata of humanity. To the extent that man becomes exalted, however little, his desire becomes more precise in the sense that it is no longer susceptible of being aroused except by a certain category of beings of the opposite sex. The field of our sexual activity narrows as our demands grow.

But on the other hand, the intensity of our exaltation and the harmony of the realised union depend precisely on our personal quality and the degree of our loving commitment. The choice of a partner is therefore self-determined from the very beginning of the search. It is not only made according to a tendency coloured by our biopsychic value, but it also conforms to an imaginary criterion, more or less precise, formed by us according to our aspirations, that is to say, according to our needs. We invent the ideal being before we find and recognise, in accordance with our inner model, the being of

flesh and blood that will satisfy our restlessness. In other words, we create in our mind the partner towards whom we tend by personal nature.

When our desire is individualised, i.e. when we discover the being we judge to be in accordance with the pre-established image, and we consider ourselves complementary not only because of their sex but also because of their rhythm of duration, our instinct transformed into feeling is concentrated in a single direction. We project onto the loved one the ideal image forged according to what we are and what we lack. Hence the illusions of love, born of our anxiety for completeness and harmony.

The difficulty of love selection thus stems from the lack of impartiality of our judgement, i.e., ultimately, from the personal nature of the partner and the image we have of him or her. This is a far cry from the dreams of a certain Darwinism, according to which we would instinctively look for the best reproducer. Eugenic selection is, in reality, the act of a tiny minority of men who are aware of a problem which escapes the majority, and whose criteria of choice include a certain number of rationally established ideas. In the latter case as in the others, it is the satisfaction of our personal need for harmonious union which constitutes the goal of our choice.

## **72. EROTIC BEAUTY**

However, all this analysis seems to be contradicted to some extent by experience. Undoubtedly, love can be partly based on the rational approval of qualities which we judge to be in harmony with our personality. No doubt it depends on the awareness or subconsciousness we have of a biopsychic whole which responds to the demands born of our incompleteness. But this does not mean that the man in the street would be astonished at such statements and that even we are obliged to make a rational effort to recognise their accuracy, and moreover we do not do so, at this point in our search, without some reservations.

It seems, indeed, at first sight, that things are much less complex. Innumerable examples of passions will be cited, which the profound knowledge of their object in no way justifies, and which only arouse physical beauty, not even the intellectually recognised beauty - the perfection of forms - but a beauty which we may call erotic: very precisely that which the Americans designate by "sex appeal", that is to say, a power of suggestion by the body, and especially by the naked body, of the sensual pleasure which gives the satisfaction of our sexual impetus.

That erotic beauty is the foundation of love is only normal, since the couple is the consequence, not of an exchange of ideas nor of an exchange of ideas, but of a relationship.

of any reciprocal feeling, but of a coupling whose origin is evidently the attraction of bodies. But we must note that "sex-appeal" promises only the fleeting pleasure of a superficial contact, and not the deep joy born of true love. It only gives us an indication, valid but very insufficient, of the possibility of total harmony. Moreover, erotic beauty suggests rather than makes us know. The sexual arousal it provokes is an exasperation of our incompleteness by the effect of sensations that bring forth in our duration a flow of cenesthetic and memory images that are associated in an imaginative process that cannot satisfy our tendency to union.

It is symptomatic that suggestive sensations are all the more effective when they leave the field open to our invention because they are less precise. Sex appeal makes us burn with the restlessness that marks our natural imbalance.

We are here at the antipodes of amorous exaltation which testifies, on the contrary, to the harmony it establishes between our duration, and the complementary contribution which responds to our need for union. This is the reason why eroticism so easily takes on a pathological aspect and thus comes, paradoxically, much closer to onanism than to love.

It remains, however, that sexual arousal is indispensable as a factor in amorous exaltation, since the latter requires not only an object, i.e. a body, but also a desire that would remain latent without images to awaken it. Erotic beauty thus plays the role of arousing and exasperating our sexual restlessness, and of making us aware both of our incompleteness and of the possibility we have of making it disappear. Eroticism cannot therefore be confused with love, but it constitutes its preliminary condition, without which the union would lose, if not its *raison d'être*, at least its depth and intensity.

It follows from all this that the amorous passion which seems to us to be founded solely on physical beauty may be less reasoned than others, but it is by no means reduced to mere sexual excitement. Our illusion comes from the intensity of the bodily movements which constitute the raw material of inner exaltation. Now we know that the harmony of bodies gives rise to the harmony of durations. To "spiritualise" love in the manner of the Puritans can only result in destroying it and replacing it with a morbid eroticism, a factor of pathological complexes and an expression of the biopsychic imbalance produced by the dissatisfaction of an essential tendency of the personality.

### **73. THE CREATION OF LIFE**

On the other hand, "spiritualising" love logically leads to Cathar angelism or, at least, to a dissociation of the sexual impulse and the function of

reproduction. Between the violent denial of the Albigensians and the fearful tolerance of the flesh which contemporary Christianity, with some fortunate exceptions, has inherited from the Reformation and Jansenism, there is only a question of degree. Either one refuses generation with horror, or one grudgingly accepts it as a divine command, and a requirement of the species which impairs the purity of the inner life.

Now, sexual union is the consequence of our personal impetus, that is to say, not even of a force immanent to our being, but of the dynamism that merges with our essence and our existence. It is as natural to seek it as to satisfy any conservative tendency. This union, as we have already seen, results in the couple, a reality of synthesis, a new fact but already implied in each of its terms. However, the couple is only an imperfect entity, within which man and woman retain their autonomy, which is affirmed or relaxed according to the phases of their evolution, and whose existence is constantly being put on the table again and again by the two beings who surpass themselves in it.

In reality, such imperfection and instability only appear because of our hitherto incomplete observation. We have studied the couple like an engineer limiting his analysis of a machine to its component parts and to the harmonious interplay of its movements, without taking into account what it manufactures and, consequently, the intention that governed its construction and directs its functioning. The couple only takes on its full meaning if we consider the natural consequence of the union that has been born: the child.

We must not forget that the sexual instinct is linked to a system of organs whose ultimate purpose is not mating, but the production of seminal substances and their contact with other substances emanating from a being of complementary sex. The couple is therefore only an intermediary and provisional entity which is prolonged and realised in the child.

The egg, born of the conjugation of an ovum and a spermatozoon, is made up of elements detached from its mother and father, but possesses from the beginning, whatever its degree of dependence, a personal autonomy and therefore an intention of its own. We cannot logically separate it from the couple whose synthetic unity it materialises and fixes, but it goes beyond it and frees itself from it. The child is therefore both the end and the surpassing of the sexual union.

It is also the expression of the value of our sexed nature, since mating, with all its biopsychic reality, is the condition of the new life we create. Finally, it constitutes, between the woman and the man, the permanent bond of a common work. This last point clearly shows us the unity of the couple-child set.

The woman carries within her, for months, a being that lives according to her own intention and is partly made of a male product. The child is dependent on her, but

She feels the influence of the graft that develops in her body. No further lengthy reasoning is necessary to emphasise the sacred character of the act of love from which life comes, of the seminal substances which contain it in potency and of the organs without which its synthesis would not be achieved.

Through our sex, we possess the extraordinary creative power which makes us not only the transmitting agent of life, but also, to some extent, through our relative freedom of choice of partner and of the conditions of intercourse, the master of the synthesis in which that life will be expressed.

## **74. THE PROPAGATION OF THE BREED**

This analysis shows how impossible it is for us to strictly delimit in sexual union what is personal and what is beyond our autonomous being. The instinct on which procreation depends undoubtedly belongs to us as our own. It is only an aspect of our directing intention and therefore of our will to power. It is not possible for us to regard it as sumptuary, or even as accidental. However, although our sexed nature imprints an indelible and essential character on our entire biopsychic self, it makes no sense at all if we consider only ourselves.

Our vital impulse has a thousand other ways of realising and affirming itself. If, however, it chooses a mode of expression and creation that requires intimate collaboration with another being and the overcoming, in the couple, of its autonomy, we must recognise that our directive intention has a double purpose: on the one hand it imposes and exalts our personality, but on the other hand it submits it to the generation of the child.

There is certainly no essential contradiction between these two aspects of our dynamism, although an opposition may manifest itself, between our tendency to egoistic affirmation and our sexual instinct. It is always a question of the realisation of our ego, of an ego which, being autonomous, is no less dependent, first and foremost, on its own inherited nature.

An observer of a species other than our own, examining us as a chemist examines a crystal or a bacteriologist examines a colony of infusoria, might consider men either as a juxtaposition of individuals or as a "life stream" of successive forms linked together in a curious process of synthesis. But he would only have an accurate view of human nature if he embraced these two inseparable aspects at the same time.

Indeed, we are reproductive as individuals, and the specific purpose of our sexual instinct is indistinguishable from its personal purpose. By producing the child, the couple gives a new form to the organising intelligence of the living matter which its members carry within themselves, but the combination of genes which determines

(This is not to underestimate the importance of chance, nor of the various influences that exert positive or negative pressure on prospective spouses).

The sexual instinct is thus in us the personal expression of the directing intention of the species. Through it the continuity of life is assured. We are thus depositaries of a part of the future of humanity, but we act upon this future according to our personal nature. We receive a certain number of characters corresponding to our species, our race and our lineage, but it is up to us to pass them on or to interrupt the series from which we have been born.

On the other hand, we do not pass on to our descendants our hereditary possibilities as we have received them. Our history modifies them in the course of our existence. Therefore, we do not propagate an undifferentiated theoretical life, but a changing intentional impetus of which we are precisely the modifying factor. Or, more precisely, we are this very momentum and our history is its history. We are a moment of the species, a moment that only exists because of the past and only takes on its full meaning because of the future it creates.

But for it to be effective, the specific individualised impetus must be expressed and overcome in the couple. This means that the personal form it takes in us does not allow it to respond to its finality, but it finds in itself the tendency which pushes it to satisfy the conditions, which we must now call social, of its realisation.

## **75. THE SEXUAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE FAMILY**

If, indeed, we consider the couple no longer in its process of formation and evolution, as we have done so far, but in its objective reality, we will have to define it as a group of sexually differentiated and complementary human beings, and as the simplest possible group, since it consists of only two individuals.

We deliberately say *group*, and not *partnership*, because it is not a juxtaposition due to chance or sympathy, but an organic union required by the nature of both participants. Moreover, the couple is united by a common purpose: procreation. The child is part of the group which it expresses and without which it would not be. He is not born, in fact, of his father or his mother, or even of his father and mother, but of the union of his parents. That is to say, he is born of the organic conjunction of two complementary sexual instincts. The family, consisting of the couple and the child, is therefore a social entity that comes from the specialised vital impulse of the individual. Through our sexual instinct, we are both personal and familial.

In vain will it be objected to the supposed existence of human hordes who lived or had lived in a state of complete sexual promiscuity, without any knowledge of the family order. Even if the fact were indisputable, and if it were really the primitive way of life of mankind, and not a state of degeneration, it would be no less certain that the species has not disappeared, and has therefore reproduced itself. Only an atrophy of the sexual instinct could have created a reverse situation. Therefore, complete promiscuity would not exclude mating. The family could, at worst, see its existence reduced to a few moments. But this would not mean that it would cease to be the fundamental group of society, since the exercise of the essential function of reproduction would continue to depend on it. The whole horde, as it is abundantly described by idealistic sociologists, is only possible between individuals of the same sex or between asexuals. But it is then an abnormal collectivity which no longer deserves the name of society, since it lacks the power to perpetuate itself.

Society necessarily presupposes the child and the child necessarily presupposes the family, that is to say, in the last analysis, the couple which in turn derives from the differentiated structure and sexual impetus of its components. If we consider that each of these components also comes from a family, we will embrace the vital alternation of the personalised sexual instinct and the family group. Our sexual nature already makes us a social being.

## **CHAPTER VI: THE SOCIAL MAN**

### **76. THE SOCIAL NATURE OF MAN**

Our preceding analysis shows us that the family, even if it is reduced to a temporary minimum, is not an arbitrary association born of the fantasy or sympathy of two beings. It is in no way confused with the contractual forms that mark its constitution in organised societies. The Fulano family is undoubtedly the product of a mutual agreement of its primitive members, that is to say of a reciprocal choice which might not have taken place. But such an agreement and such a choice would have no meaning if each of the spouses had not possessed a sexual instinct which would have made him or her generally seek union with a complementary individual. In other words, in the family, only the particular is contractual.



The couple, as we have already seen, constitutes a natural group of a biological character, and its extension to the child, without which the family loses, with continuity, most of its social significance, is no less natural. We must make it clear that the group thus formed comes from a biopsychic tendency which, in each of the spouses, is obviously individual but has a social purpose and thus goes beyond the person of its possessor. The family order is immanent to us, or more precisely, it is confused in us with a directive intention which we had initially considered strictly personal, but which we must now recognise, in its specialised sexual aspect, as social.

There is nothing surprising in that, on the other hand, since we are a social product, the result of the union of a couple. It will be objected that this is true of all sexed animals, including those who are unanimously considered asocial because they live in isolation from their fellows. The thesis is correct, but the classification as asocial applied to beings which periodically, if only for a very short time, seek the perfect union of mating, seems to us to be abusive.

In reality, the sexual instinct is enough to make an animal a social being. But sociability varies with the degree and form of evolution and civilisation of the species, race and individual under consideration. Man is not the most social of animals, and the "polis" is not as rigidly organised as the beehive or the anthill, even though a large part of the inhabitants of the latter are asexual. It is clear, therefore, that our social instinct surpasses our sexual instinct, the more so because our tendency to common life is not confined to our family, nor even to persons of a different sex from our own.

The explanation is obvious. Family life, directly born of our sexed character, has created a hereditary adaptation to group life, that is to say, a specific social habitus. This new instinct, more open than our sexual tendency, is an amplification of the latter by history and its vital demands of work and defence. But it has not, as in the case of the insects mentioned above, stifled our personality and, a fortiori, our sexuality.

The family and thus our genetic tendency remain the foundation of our social nature. Before our inherited social instinct has been able to act on our behaviour, we experience the influence of the family of which we are born a member, and which raises us. Later, we in turn form a group identical in structure to the one that raised us. In other words, the family is the natural basis of all our social activity and, since it is the same for all our fellows, the "cell" of the community, that is to say, the fundamental group without which society would disappear, and at the same time the smallest group in which a collective life and production is manifested, a life and production which derive from our sexual instinct.

## 77. MAN'S SOCIAL HERITAGE

We must therefore distinguish two elements which concur in the formation of our social instinct. The first, as we have just seen, is a fact of our essential nature. It does not depend on our will, nor on the history of our species or our ancestors, whether we are sexed or not. We are made to form a couple and our sexual instinct falls, therefore, in the category of organic instincts, that is to say, of those which correspond to the structural order of our being, and are materialised in a specialised instrument.

The child is born of the couple, bound to its parents by a biological dependence which makes it rightly regard each of them, in spite of the personal autonomy it possesses, as an integral part of its being. Paternal and maternal love is usually increased by life together and the intuitive sympathy born of it, but it has a natural basis infinitely more solid than any other feeling. It is possible to conceive of a social life practically reduced to the family picture, and indeed there is no lack of historical examples. Even here, however, the second factor of the social instinct comes into play.

Indeed, the life of the couple is not made up exclusively of sexual love, but also of the innumerable relationships imposed by living together, from the most material exchanges of services to the highest common intellectual speculations. Thus a habit of living together is created between man and woman which extends to the child as the child, acquiring autonomy, distances himself biologically from his parents but becomes, at the same time, an active member of the family community.

On the other hand, however isolated and self-contained the family may be, it is impossible for it to avoid all contact with foreign elements. Its very constitution comes from the union of two beings who, as a rule, belong to different family groups. Secondly, it has to feed itself and cannot always do so in an autarchic way. Finally, it must defend itself, and solidarity is imposed on it by this necessity. It follows from all this that the family, to varying degrees according to its way of life, gradually forges a social habit, which constitutes a character acquired by extending the biological ties which unite its members. Much more constant than any other, since derived from our sexual nature, this habit has been transformed into an instinct of the type of those which we have called technical, that is, which relate to the accidental but lasting modalities of our existence.

In this respect, the social instinct, primitively free from any compulsory character, has imposed itself upon us by becoming hereditary. The child, as soon as it is able to move, seeks the company of its fellows, and does not do so by reasoning about the value of collective play, still less by a freely signed contract. The human being inherits a taste for society and, by the same token, a tendency towards association. This taste and this tendency generally find favourable ground.

It is exceptional for a child to be born into a family that has no social contacts other than those stemming from its own existence. He usually develops within a complex community with a tradition, that is to say, a set of customs handed down from generation to generation and expressing its various forms of existence. His education, in the broadest sense of the word, that is to say, not only the lessons he receives from his parents and teachers, but also those that come from his daily life in a certain social environment, is impregnated with this tradition.

The community, whatever it may be, does not form Robinsons, but citizens. To the inherited social instinct is thus added, in the child, the habit acquired, without his even realising it, by the simple fact of the common existence which he is not allowed to refuse.

## **78. INEQUALITY AND HIERARCHY**

Let us not forget, however, that the child's existence is shaped by his family, which is the mirror - always somewhat distorting - in which he observes society. The image he receives from society, especially in the first years of his life, which mark and condition him in the most effective way, is entirely impregnated by the family, if I may say so, and the same is true of his ancestors. The direct and traditional training he receives does not, therefore, give him a vague and indeterminate social instinct, any more than his sexual instinct is limited, and above all will be limited after the time of puberty, to a philanthropic tendency, in the etymological sense of the word.

We are born with an instinct to which its biological basis has given a family structure, i.e. an order and the values attached to it. This structure accompanies us throughout our upbringing. We find it again, without being allowed to change it, in the new family group we form, just as we observe it in the social "cells" around us. In other words, our social nature implies not only sociability, but also a certain number of forms and fundamental principles of community organisation which are not exactly those of the herd or those of the hive.

Hence, there is a natural social order: that which corresponds to our instinct, as it results from our biopsychic conformation and from the history of our species, our race and our lineage, and not as idealistic thinkers would have it, i.e. that which is conceived for us as we are and not for an abstract Man who does not exist.

What, then, are the essential requirements of our social nature? No doubt we could discover them in ourselves by a psychological analysis. But it is simpler and safer to induce them from the observation of the family group, the creation of our sexual instinct and the creator of our social instinct itself.

So what does the family teach us? In the first place, that its members are different and unequal, and that the social relations that exist between them are based precisely on this difference and inequality. We have already noted in the previous chapter that men and women possess, in the sexual union which constitutes the substratum of the family group, differentiated functional roles, which derive from their particular biopsychic natures. Such inequality is even more manifest if we consider the relations between parents and children.

It is clear that if the partners were similar and equal, i.e. belonged to the same sex or neither sex, the family group could not exist. Inequality is therefore the natural condition of the marriage contract. On the other hand, there is no need for lengthy demonstrations to make it clear that it is inequality that governs the relations between parents and children. Maurras has rightly emphasised the fundamental role of the "protective inequality" without which the little man would not see the light and, even if he did, he would only survive a few moments after his birth.

The first principle of the natural social order is therefore inequality. The second derives from the first: between unequal beings bound by a common social life and performing within the group functions corresponding to their respective natures, a hierarchy is necessarily established. Because of their biopsychic conformation, men are made to command and women to obey. By reason of their more advanced development, the one and the other are destined to direct the child. The social instinct which is born in the family is therefore naturally permeated by the two principles of inequality and hierarchy which we have just defined as a consequence of our very being.

If it is to play its role, the whole of society must be ordered according to the instinctive reality of its members. Inequality and hierarchy are thus the fundamental rules of the natural social order.

## **79. SERVICE AND PROTECTION**

However, these rules are not enough to characterise our community life. They apply, in fact, to a prison as well as to a family, although the organisations of these two types of collectivities are extremely different. Let us see, then, what meaning they take within the natural group on which our social instinct depends.

We know that the partners are bound by a contract. We must make it clear that this is not a commercial agreement whose clauses strictly fix the obligations of each of the parties, but a mere reciprocal choice which limits the spouses in the exercise of their sexual instinct. The social relations between the man and the woman who constitute the couple are

They are therefore based above all on a biological exchange of services, each being indispensable to the other in order to achieve the fullness of personal life.

Inequality and hierarchy, far from representing the principles of coercion, are on the contrary the factors of a functional collaboration that excludes all calculation. To ask which of the two partners brings more to the sexual union makes no sense at all. Each plays the role assigned to him or her by nature.

If we consider the relations between parents and children, the importance of the notion of service in the family society becomes even more manifest, since there is not even a problem of reciprocity. The child receives without giving anything. He owes the creation and preservation of his life to his parents. The help which is indispensable to him is given to him gratuitously, in an act of pure love and without even the hope of a counterpart, as Maurras has so well noted. On the other hand, there is nothing in such an attitude that could make us think of charity. Unless we are dealing with monsters, the service rendered to the child by its parents is not presented to them as an external obligation, but as a natural movement that proceeds from biological filiation. The newborn child "forms part" of its parents, and all the more closely the less its autonomy is realised, i.e. the greater the inequality. Service is therefore the law that governs the whole of the relationships of the basic natural group.

This is an important observation, since it shows us that the family is organised organically and not contractually, despite the pact which consecrates, but does not create, the union of the spouses. We should not be surprised by this fact, since we know that the couple, at least in the paroxysm of its unifying tension, behaves as a single organism and that, on the other hand, the child is composed of substances of paternal and maternal origin, even if it surpasses them in the personal synthesis it achieves. Each of the three factors of the healthy family is therefore linked to the others by biopsychic relations which derive from its natural function. The stronger gives its protection to the weaker, as if it were directed by a family intention that supplants its personal intention.

And it is, indeed. But the collective purpose of the group does not impose itself as an external force. It is confused with a directive intention, which is both personal and social. We are a family being precisely because our sexual nature implies the group of which we are a part, but which surpasses us. Our social instinct is constituted around this almost organismic intention which is confused with our own vital impulse, and inherits its modalities.

Service and protection are the natural consequences of the inequality and hierarchy of the family group. We find them again, as fundamental characteristics of the more general tendency into which, over the course of the centuries, the intention has been transformed, which impels us, by our very structure, to

to seek in the union with another being of complementary sex the complete affirmation of our self.

## **80. FUNCTIONAL SPECIALISATION OF MAN**

Family life involves even more. Indeed, the inequality and hierarchy which govern the relations between the various members of the biological-social group are not based on a qualitative difference of beings identical in their structure, but, on the contrary, on a functional difference which comes from the particular biopsychic conformation of the sexes, and from the filiation which creates a natural bond of dependence. Our sexual instinct carries within itself a principle of organic specialisation which it is not up to us to accept or refuse. Family life reinforces this tendency to differentiation by the habit which is born, from early childhood, of the need for a division of labour within the group.

It is not fantasy and comfort that impose on man, woman and child their respective roles, but the capacity of each. Our instinctive predisposition to functional social specialisation is thus reinforced by the reality of our family existence, and this in particular during our childhood, when we possess a sharper faculty of assimilation and adaptation than in later times.

On the other hand, it is not only within our family that we live in a functionally hierarchical and differentiated society. All human communities, although to varying degrees according to their levels, take sex and age into account in the distribution of social roles. The more evolved ones also base their structure on the hereditary specialisation of families and estates or castes. However, this general fact of functional differentiation is not peculiar to our generation. It has manifested itself, in varying forms and to varying degrees, as long as the human species has existed. Our social instinct, therefore, is impregnated with the idea of specialisation even before we receive the stamp of the institutions of the collectivity in which we will live. Moreover, not only are we born personally differentiated by our age and sex, and not only do we bring with us a social instinct that has already been specified, but we also possess characters that come from the hereditary specialisation of the family generations from which we have come, that is, from the functional instincts more or less gradually forged by the application of successive individuals of the same lineage to a given task.

Man is shaped by the life he leads, the work he does and the responsibilities he faces. Unless he is degenerated, the heir of a long line of bosses is physically and morally different from the descendant of a line of subordinates. The son and grandson of proletarians is distinguished from birth from the son and grandson of peasants. Therefore, our social instinct does not

is a mere predisposition to collective life. It specifies for us, to some extent, the role that will be - or at least should be - ours in the community.

The liberal society which refuses to take into account this hereditary specialisation acts like a stud farm owner who would deny any functional difference between thoroughbreds and percheron, impose identical training on both, and then leave them free to choose between the racecourse and the plough. It is clear that it is precisely the hereditary specialisation and the functional ability that derives from it that make the thoroughbred as valuable as the percheron.

The same is true of man. We are not a mere unit of a herd, but a differentiated member of an organic society in which we each play a specialised role. Our social instinct and the inherited functional tendencies which delimit and direct it predestine us to occupy a certain place in the community, just as our sexual instinct imposes on us a certain place in the family group. Thus our nature creates society, but society conditions our nature, in a permanent interaction that gives society its human character and makes us a fully social being.

## **81. GROUP SPIRIT**

The word society, which we have just used, is a term whose generality and vagueness make it ambiguous. There is, in fact, no "human society" whose constituent elements are individuals or families, but only natural and contractual groups forming more or less autonomous communities. To say that man is a social animal means that he possesses the instinct which demands and permits his integration into a collective life whose modalities are imposed by nature and history.

We may well feel a certain sympathy for any one of our fellows simply because he is a human being, but such a feeling is not essentially different from that which we have for a dog. It is not at all confused with the functional bonds which unite us with the other members of the natural groups and community of which we are a part. Necessity and interest are generally much stronger than sentiment, and our true social collaboration is based on them. This does not prevent, of course, that sympathy can and usually does arise from living together and the permanent exchange of services.

On the other hand, the terms need and interest should not be taken in too narrow a sense. Social need is not an external constraint comparable to that which weighs upon the prisoner, but the inner drive of instinct which demands to be satisfied. The interest which makes us accept and seek collective life is not a principle of exploitation of the group and the community by the individual, but the mere consciousness of our nature and, t h e r e f o r e , of the

importance, from our personal point of view, of the social reality to which we are subjected.

Now, in order to satisfy our social instinct, we have to accept the framework that the groups and the community in which we live constitute for us, whether it is a situation imposed by our birth - we cannot choose our family or our race - or whether circumstances require us to accept a de facto state - our nation, our land - or whether it suits us to join existing groups, such as, for example, a company, an academy or a club. Our social instinct predestines us to play a more or less precise role in groups of a more or less specific structure.

Our heredity binds us to a certain social milieu, but not to certain defined groups. Thus, through the education we receive and the personal history we create, a real particularisation of our instinct is produced, which, from a tendency to live in society, is transformed into what is called group spirit, that is to say, it becomes confused with the historical intention of the whole of which we are a part. It is this confusion that explains why we can sacrifice ourselves to the community of which we are a part, although there is an apparent contradiction here with our personal vital impetus.

Our directing intention, which is, as we have already seen, of a social nature, receives the stamp of collectivity which marks it out as what it is. The group spirit is a differentiation, through habit, of our social instinct. It is therefore legitimate to speak of the soul of a people or of the historical intention of a community, but as long as we do not make the immanent reality that these words express hypostases akin to the intelligence of the engineer who orders the assembly of the parts of a machine and forces them to work together. What we may call the vital impetus of the group is but the synthetic resultant of the vital impetus of its members, social by nature, specialised by instinct and differentiated by training.

## **82. SOCIAL PRESSURE**

This does not make it any less true that the group spirit imposes itself on our mentality and directs our actions, at least to some extent. We depend on our social environment as we depend on our cosmic environment, and for the same reasons: it shapes us and we need it.

But at the same time, and much more than the cosmic environment, which receives the minimal modifications we impose on it but does not require them at all, society, which is human, depends on our existence and our action. It modifies our social instinct, but this social instinct is the indispensable factor in its being and its evolution. When we say that the vital impetus of the group is the synthesis of the



The personal guiding intentions of its members should therefore not be understood as being reduced to a sum of particular interests. First, because a synthesis is not a sum, but, on the contrary, an overcoming of forces in more or less marked conflict. Secondly, because personal interest is not only particular, but at the same time particular, social by nature, and socialised by habit. Finally, because the natural groups and the community into which we are incorporated from birth already exist, and have a duration which our later intervention will undoubtedly modify, but which weighs at the same time on our inheritance and on our education.

The vital intention of the community asserts itself to us, before we are in a position to act upon it. Its historical continuity is not interrupted by our arrival and, on the other hand, we are already its product, since we are born of a family group, and we carry in our genes the inheritance of a more or less long process of social differentiation. Our predestination to be part of this or that community and to play a certain role in it comes from the pressure exerted on us by the social environment through our parents and all our ancestors, i.e. even before our conception. We are, then, the emanation and expression of a historical reality, prior to us, which moulded our personal intention and determines us to the extent of the differentiation it imposed on us.

On the other hand, the social environment in which we develop is not exactly similar to that which formed the lineage from which we were born. Groups and communities evolve, then transform as they develop over time. We find ourselves in a different situation from that of the bee which is born fully adapted to an unchanging social state which constitutes the perfect framework for its fulfilment. We have to adapt ourselves to an environment more or less different from the one in which we are predestined.

Historical intention is always one generation ahead of the new-born, and the society it forms and directs thus exerts a pressure on us that tends to assimilate us to it, and to transform the "past" social being that we are into a "present" social being.

On the other hand, our personal intention, despite its social nature, is not confused with the historical intention of the community, a synthesis of groups, each of which evolves by synthesis of a multiplicity of individual impulses. That is to say, the community is not perfectly embodied in us as the hive is in the bee, but our social instinct must acquire the changing modalities of collective life, modalities which it only helps to create. On the one hand we are hereditarily adapted to social forms that have partly disappeared, on the other hand we are only one of the individual components of the communal intention. By our nature we need a social framework, but the one in which we have to live cannot fully satisfy us.

We must therefore adapt ourselves to it or adapt to it, i.e. give in to its pressure and thus become a malleable raw material of a historical intention in the orientation of which we refuse to participate, or resist it without, however, refusing the social role that our nature attributes to us, which would be to deny a fundamental part of our being.

It is clear that, also in the social order, the more we modify our environment, the less we will have to allow ourselves to be transformed by it. It is also clear that our action on society will be the fact of our whole personality and not only of our social instinct.

### **83. PERSONAL RESISTANCE TO SOCIAL PRESSURE**

Our duration, we know, is made up of a complex of tendencies unified by our directing intention. Our social instinct is one of these tendencies. It plays a more or less important role in the whole according to the nature of our personality. But it is by no means possible to consider the human being as a simple bearing of a social mechanism. If this were the case, our evolution could be explained by the social exchanges to which we are necessarily subjected. But this is not the case.

We are born into a family and live in various groups, which constitute the organs of a community. It is natural that this should be so, for our sexually based social instinct demands it. But the pressure exerted on us by this society of which we are a part does not direct us as it would an inert body, nor as organic intelligence does physico-chemical matter and its forces.

We have seen that our guiding intention tends to actualise our virtual possibilities in order to realise, to the best of our ability, our entire personality. This realisation implies a social framework, but only as a necessary condition of our duration. In other words, the social instinct works in us as a personal tendency, and not as a "fifth column" which has taken possession of our being and uses it for a purpose foreign to our own evolution. Groups and communities are not, therefore, confronted with a kind of Platonic matter ready to passively receive its pressure, but, on the contrary, with an autonomous entity which is already social, but in its own way, and quite ready to accept the framework it demands, provided it corresponds to its own needs, that is to say, to its own aspirations.

However, this never happens. First, because the society which presses us is a product of synthesis, made up of social instincts formed more or less differently from our own. Secondly, because its effort is exclusively social and tends, for that very reason, to realise in us only those possibilities which are useful to it.

Since our whole being is not socially oriented, in other words, since we are neither bee nor ant, group and community pressure meets with a double social and anti-social resistance on our part. On the one hand, we demand that our frame respond to needs that derive from our instinctive nature and from our reasoning about the structure of society. From this point of view, the present state of the community only satisfies us when it is similar to the past state, i.e. when the conditions of historical duration have not undergone appreciable modifications. Otherwise we seek, more or less rationally, a solution to the problems that arise and we oppose, in the name of the necessary social order, the de facto social state. This means that we resist social pressure in its forms which seem to us, rightly or wrongly, socially unsatisfactory.

On the other hand, however, we demand that the groups and the community in which we live also respond to the needs arising from our personal autonomy. This would only be fully possible if our person alone constituted a social group, as is the case, to some extent, with asexually reproducing lower animals.

Human society, by the very fact of its supra-individual nature, does not yield to our directive intention, but tries, on the contrary, to submit to it, and then to reduce our autonomy by constraining us to act in its own interests rather than in our own. Between the collective and the individual, there is therefore both an interdependence and an essential antinomy.

We resist social pressure, but we cannot do without society. We oppose the group's modes of existence, and even the orientation of its historical dynamism, not in order to destroy a framework which is indispensable to us, but to establish between it and us a harmony which, on the other hand, constitutes the natural social order.

#### **84. THE PERSONAL WILL FOR SOCIAL POWER**

It follows that the attitude of the receptive who accepts all social impositions is unnatural in that it is destructive of the autonomy which legitimately corresponds to the biopsychic system he constitutes. That of the anarchist is no less so, since it tends to destroy the indispensable social framework of a personality which refuses to admit the dependence necessary to its very existence.

If a human community were made up only of receptives, that is, of an inert mass devoid of all hierarchical and creative ferment, it would fossilise in the lowest degree of collective life, tending to become a herd. If it were made up only of anarchists, it would disappear in chaos. Society requires, therefore, in order to evolve, the individual action of at least a part of its members.

members, but an action that blends in with the historical dynamism of the groups and the community.

If we avoid the two pathological pitfalls of social conformism, which testifies to a personal weakness, and anarchism, the consequence of an atrophy or depravity of one of the fundamental instincts that are natural to us, we have only two free paths left: that of enclosure within ourselves or within a small and chosen group - monastery or family -, and that which allows us to overcome the individual-society opposition, in an effort that identifies us with our social environment but exalts our personality.

The former is obviously reserved for a few "elite" beings, who find in it the indispensable compensation for the abnormality of a more or less asocial life. This does not make it any less negative in terms of the evolution of the community. The second, on the contrary, fully corresponds to our total nature. It implies our acceptance of the dialectical movement that opposes us to society, but also its transfiguration. We strive to blend in with our social milieu, not by yielding to its demands, not by merely supporting what satisfies us in it, but by modifying it in such a way that it satisfies us without reservation.

It is useless to point out that such an identification is unrealisable, and that it is necessary for it to be so. It would indeed presuppose, on our part, a superhuman empire over society. But the consequence of such an effort is a voluntary incorporation of our personal duration into the historical duration of the community. In spite of the paradoxical appearance of the proposition, we can say with all accuracy that if our identification with the social milieu is unrealisable as the end of our effort, it is the immediate result of that effort, since it is only by accepting its data that we can act on the collectivities of which we are a part, and adapt ourselves to them to some extent.

We face society not as an enemy who wants us dead and whom we seek to destroy, but as an adversary in a sporting struggle: without him no personal fulfilment is possible; but this fulfilment itself demands that we oppose him and try to bend him to our will, which implies that we accept his existence and adapt ourselves to his game to the extent that we do not succeed in imposing our own on him. We embody in ourselves the historical intention of the community, and we try to guide it according to our own conception of its "becoming". In doing so, we affirm ourselves as an autonomous being of a social nature.

Political action is therefore the culmination of a will to power that is only fully personal if it expresses the social instinct that is an integral part of our being. To Nietzsche's superman, disdainful of a society from which he was born and without which, however much he may think about it, he could not live, we must oppose the leader integrated into the group or community that he embodies and leads; the

hero who asserts himself in social sacrifice, and the revolutionary who tries to restore the decadent society to a sense of its history.

At whatever level of the hierarchy they are placed, such complete men realise in themselves the perfect synthesis of the personal and the social.

## **85. STRUGGLE AND SOCIAL SOLIDARITY**

Such synthesis, of course, is far from automatic. We do not have a machine for selecting leaders. Competitive examinations only consider the intellectual aspect of the individual who is submitted to them, and neglect, precisely, his or her aptitudes for leadership. The "tests" give only random and fragmentary results which need to be interpreted anyway. Only the inheritance of functions takes into account biopsychic realities. Unfortunately, however, it is increasingly removed from social life and does not meet all the requirements of the hierarchical order, since it is itself based on the non-hereditary access to power of the founder of the lineage. Even in the best organised societies, the selection of chiefs, or at least of some chiefs, therefore remains a problem.

On the other hand, leaders, whether men or groups, find their power contested and coveted by hierarchically inferior elements who try, rightly or wrongly, to supplant them. Except, therefore, in the case of hereditary positions, social power is conquered. And once it has been won, by blood or by struggle, it must be defended.

This, moreover, is but one aspect of the complex antagonisms which oppose the individual to the group of which he is a part, the group to the community which includes and dominates it, the individuals to each other, and the groups to each other. If we consider any society from the point of view of a certain neo-Darwinism or, more simply, through the famous formula of Plautus, made famous by Hobbes, it will appear to us as an entanglement of rivalries, more or less brutally expressed according to the level of civilisation. The struggle for social power will be merely an aspect of the struggle for life, and this will constitute the fundamental law of the evolution of societies. However, if such an interpretation were correct, there would be no groups or communities, but prison gangs subject within themselves and among themselves to the law of the jungle. Moreover, the family would have no chance of existence, since the child has no means of defence and would succumb to the struggle to which it would be a powerless party.

But it does not happen like that. The sexual instinct, already social, forms and preserves the family, and the social instinct proper, which derives from it, gives society the structure with which we are familiar. The social struggle is real, but it is dominated by the social solidarity which comes from our nature, and without it, the social instinct is not the same as the social instinct itself, which gives

society the structure we know.

which groups and communities would not exist and, consequently, the individual would not be able to realise himself, assuming he had been born. Social antagonisms are indeed the factors of social duration. But it is enough to recognise this to make evident the supremacy of duration over its factors. In other words, social evolution is dialectical in character, and proceeds by overcoming the complex struggles which develop within it.

It is therefore indisputable that a principle of unity prevails over the principle of struggle. Groups and community only exist precisely to the extent that the solidarity of their members is stronger than their dissociating antagonisms. The law of mutual aid is as natural as the law of struggle and more powerful than it. But neither can exclude the other, and a purely unitary human society is no more conceivable than a wholly anarchic community.

The hive itself knows internal antagonisms that are necessary for its evolution, such as the one that provokes the elimination of the males that are no longer useful. Individual rivalries and personal resistance to social pressure stem from our inalienable autonomy. The reciprocal opposition of groups and their defence against communal authority derive from their organic existence and, therefore, from their own intentional activity. But the community also possesses a guiding intention and a duration. Hence its legitimate predominance over the groups which constitute it and which it federates, thanks to the tendency to solidarity which makes us accept and seek as broad and solid a social framework as possible, in which we find the indispensable support for our affirmation.

## **86. SUBMISSION OF THE INDIVIDUAL TO SOCIETY**

The conflict that opposes us to the social groups and to the community of which we are a part, whether it manifests temporary divergences of interests in the broadest sense of the word or expresses a deeper and apparently constant antinomy, is therefore in itself nothing exceptional. But the overall solution to the problem is given to us by our very nature.

Indeed, we are not social beings only because we prefer collective life to solitary existence and therefore seek contact with our fellow human beings. We have already seen that this is not a mere taste on our part, but an essential requirement. We are born of a social group and, from this point of view, we are not necessarily different from the so-called asocial animals. But we also need the family, or a social substitute for the family, in order to survive. Moreover, a purely solitary life, supposing it were conceivable, would allow us only an incomplete development, since the social instinct we carry within us, and in the first place its biopsychic basis, the sexual instinct, demand a relationship with at least one other human being. The life

Social security is therefore not a luxury, still less a de facto imposition, but a personal necessity.

In other words, the individual-society conflict does not really oppose two entities in contact but essentially distinct - as is the case with a conflict between two individuals - but two partially contradictory phases of our personal nature. It is therefore identical to the inner antagonisms whose manifestation within our life span we have already noted.

Now then: the social instinct is not just one tendency among others, but the suprapersonal condition of our existence and our realisation, then of our autonomy. That is to say that our opposition to society is legitimate only insofar as it raises us up as revolutionaries against an accidental form, judged by us to be pathological, of the group or the community, not against its nature.

The problem of the individual's submission to society is generally wrongly posed. We are not only part of a whole, but also of a whole which is indispensable to us, which penetrates us and whose principle is in us. We depend on our social environment as on our cosmic environment. We can therefore say, as we say of a climate, that such a political regime does not suit us, and we have the logical right to seek its change. But it would be as serious an absurdity to denounce the social fact itself as the air we breathe.

The social fact implies a fundamental structure, an order and a hierarchy. The state is a necessary element of this data. Therefore, we are by nature subject not only to the principle of society, but also to its conditions of existence, and thus to the state, which embodies the guiding intention of the community, or more precisely, to the extent that it embodies it, i.e. fulfils its function and remains faithful to its mission.

Let us note here: the individual could not be subordinated to a general interest which is no more than a sum of particular interests, since it is not a question of quantity but of value, and a single man can be worth, personally and even socially, much more than the whole of his contemporaries; still less to the so-called "general will" which, despite its name, expresses only the demands of a fraction of the social body. It is subject only to the historical intention which directs the social duration, and therefore embraces the past and the future as well as the present, since it is this intention which gives the community its supra-individual existence and value.

It is hardly necessary to add that M. Maritain's solution, according to which the individual would be subject to society, but the latter would be subordinate to the person, has no meaning whatsoever. Not only does it deny the essential unity, which we have perfectly demonstrated, of the human being, but it also attributes to social duration a multi-personal finality which would prohibit it from overcoming antagonisms which, on the contrary, it would have to accept.



## 87. SOCIAL LIFE AND FREEDOM

We cannot repeat enough that society is neither a hypostasis that oppresses us nor a tyrant that imposes its law on us. The individual, in submitting himself to the historical intention of the community to which he belongs, does nothing but abide by the consequences of his own nature.

When anarchists revolt in the name of individual freedom against social law, they do not realise that they harm a condition of personal being and personal development. When liberals, these shameful and inconsequential anarchists, make that same freedom the criterion of value of community organisation, they do not realise that they reverse the present factors and reason as if society were the product of individual will and not, as we have already established, the individual the product of the guiding intentions of the group and community out of which he is born.

The first condition of freedom is existence, and we only exist because of society. This does not mean that we should deny the antagonisms that manifest themselves between the human being and his social framework. On the contrary, we know that they stem from two different aspects of our nature. But there is no need, in any case, to transform these antagonisms into a primordial antinomy, still less to reduce them for the sake of an individual freedom which has no reality except insofar as man is a social being.

Our autonomy only makes sense within the framework of the environment on which we depend. It cannot, therefore, be opposed to it without tending towards absolute independence, i.e. towards the divinisation of the person, which obviously does not correspond to what we are and can only end in failure. We are only free to the extent that we realise our hereditary possibilities according to our environment, which imposes on us the necessary choice for our own duration.

However, by the sole fact of being hereditary, these possibilities are social. And, on the other hand, society is a fundamental fact of our environment. There is therefore no escape: individual freedom is social from every point of view.

This does not mean that we are mere pawns, subject to the whims and fancies of communal intention. If our freedom is social, the historical intention is human: it is embodied in us and manifested by us, in varying degrees according to our social value, that is to say, according to our function and our rank.

The leader is undoubtedly freer than the subordinate. In appearance, he is not dependent on the community, since he imposes his own will on it. But in reality, unless he is an asocial who then deserves the name of usurper, this will is only the expression, more or less satisfactory, of

the guiding intention of the community. We can, therefore, just as accurately say that the chief is the freest or the most dependent human being in society.

It follows that we are the freer the more we integrate ourselves into our environment and the more we identify ourselves with it, that is, the better we realise the personal synthesis of the individualistic and socialistic tendencies, in the proper sense of the word, which belong to us equally. In the man who forms a body with the group or groups and with the community of which he is a part, at whatever level of the hierarchy he is placed, as in the man who opposes a regime which he judges unsatisfactory and seeks to re-establish the true order, at least as he conceives it, the social and the individual are blended in total harmony.

These are, of course, extreme cases. For such a synthesis does not come about without difficulty or effort. But in this effort, which we make to overcome our inner antagonisms and their outer repercussions, our personal freedom is exercised in the pursuit of our fulfilment.

## **88. MAN, THE AGENT OF SOCIAL DURATION**

We have written above that the more we are integrated into our environment, the freer we are. Such a statement requires an important reservation.

Indeed, the bee-individual, if we may use this expression, he who possesses in society a place which satisfies him, accepts without effort or constraint the law of his environment, and is ready to die for the community of which he is a member; such an individual, no doubt, is free, since he obeys his nature which is social almost to the same degree as that of the insect. But his freedom corresponds to an inferior personality, whose autonomy is reduced to the minimum compatible with his existence as an individualised being.

Does this oblige us to go back to our previous analysis and note a fundamental antinomy between our personal autonomy, i.e. our resistance to the pressure of the social milieu, and our integration into that milieu? We would have to answer in the affirmative if the historical intention of the community consisted of a rigid guideline drawn once and for all, which it was up to us to follow or to refuse. We would then be faced with the dilemma of either submitting to social norms, in the manner of the bee, or rebelling against them, at least as far as our individual development would allow. Only the bee-man and the asocial, i.e. the mediocre and the abnormal, would find here a possibility of choice that would not force them to deny an essential part of themselves.

But the historical intention that guides social evolution is no more comparable to a railway track than our personal intention. Far from being "prefabricated", it consists of a mere projection into the present and the future of the community as a whole.

as constructed by the past. In other words, it merely posits the conditions, established by history, of social duration. But the movement of this duration comes from the social beings who constitute the basic groups and, indirectly, the community. Moreover, its precise orientation is not given by historical intention, but created according to that intention, with a certain margin of freedom, by individuals.

It is precisely on this essential point that the social differs from the biological. The organism creates its own "becoming". The community sees its own "becoming" created by its members. If the latter all belong to the individual-bee type, parainstinctive conformism will make them accept the rules in force, without any attempt to modify them. But since man's social instinct cannot attain the degree of perfection which we find in insects, and which is a factor of stagnation, the community of mediocrities will soon degenerate and disappear. Every human society, precisely because it is human, requires that its historical intention be embodied by an aristocracy which knows how to grasp and interpret it according to the present conditions of its evolution, that is, to become the agent of communal duration.

The bee-individual can therefore only realise his mediocre personal harmony in an almost perfect integration into his social milieu when other individuals, conscious of their mission, act within this milieu and impose on the conformist mass the direction that is indispensable to it.

The chief, then, is also free, but with a freedom quite different from that of the passive being, whose very passivity allows him to incorporate himself into his social framework without modifying it. The freedom of the leader corresponds to a superior personality, whose autonomy is powerfully affirmed in his social effort, and who resists community pressure without opposing the community, but on the contrary becomes the instrument of its duration.

There are thus two ways of being free by integration into the social milieu: that of the "slave" whose personal autonomy is weak, and that of the "master" who expresses his powerful individual autonomy by his action on the historical duration of society.

## **89. THE SOCIAL SELF**

There are, however, no pure "slaves", since the individual autonomy of the mediocre, and even of the brute, is never entirely annihilated; nor pure "masters", since we are always somewhat sensitive to the pressure of our social framework and never, on the other hand, completely confounded with the community on which we impose our will. Between the theoretical "slave", with his exclusively social individuality in obedience, and the theoretical "master", with his exclusively social individuality in command, we find the whole gamut of men.

The inner unity of which, individual and social at the same time but not without clashes, is hardly realised in the synthesis of antagonistic tendencies or is distorted in the compromise.

What we have called the bee-individual does not become fully socialised by accepting his environment. The leader who imposes his will on the social whole does not, however, individualise it completely. We are immersed in a moving mass of social data on which we act more or less - if only by our very existence - and which influences us more or less. The most individualistic man may well react violently under social pressure and repel with horror the offers of assimilation made to him; this very reaction is the proof of a powerful effect of the social on the individual.

It is, moreover, natural and inevitable that this should happen, since we possess a social instinct which we can sometimes stifle to a certain extent but never destroy, and which transforms us into a recipient of the social images which are constantly presented to our minds. By this we mean that we constitute with society a homogeneous whole, between whose elements exchanges are normal. We constantly grasp images of social origin, which find the appropriate resonance in us and become part of our life span. If we accept them, whether out of sympathy or passivity, these repeated images form in us habits and beliefs which weigh more and more heavily on our ego.

The boss models them after himself, and uses them as means of social penetration and instruments of action on the community. The bee-individual, on the other hand, is modelled by them. But, in both cases, a social self is constituted in us, forged by crystallisation around our social instinct (itself the product of similar operations at the origin of which we find the sexual instinct) of images produced by collective life and which have in common only their non-individual character. They range from the simple indifferent sight of an unknown passer-by to the intoxicating hearing of the cheers of a people. As the very words we have just used indicate, and according to the general law of all incorporation into our inner flow, these images arouse in us emotions and feelings which express our position in relation to them, and therefore also possess a social significance.

To these are added abstract images, which correspond to the norms of community life. And we cannot forget the images of a different nature that are imposed on us by tradition, in the broadest sense of the word, in particular those of language. Finally, our social action, and especially the exercise of our "métier", form in us dynamisms that our memory registers.

Our social self, therefore, is fed abundantly and relentlessly with new elements, which add an experiential conditioning to the hereditary conditioning of our sexual instinct. In the weak, this self

The social ego takes on such importance that it submerges the individual ego and reduces it to a mere supporting role. In the leader, it constitutes, on the contrary, an enrichment of the autonomous personality which accepts its data in order to affirm itself in all its fullness. In both cases, the social is a fundamental factor in our being and our action.

## **90. THE INTEGRAL MAN**

This last analysis risks causing a particularly serious misunderstanding.

We have shown, in fact, how social inputs crystallise around our hereditarily expanded sexual instinct. Since, moreover, we have opposed this social ego to the individual ego, the temptation could arise to consider it as a special layer of our duration, endowed with a certain autonomy of movement and action, and which obeys a purpose of its own.

We would thus fall into a new dualism, no less serious than the one we have discarded in the first chapters. We would come to define in man an individual personality and a juxtaposed social personality, between which conflicts would arise and be resolved, more or less satisfactorily, in a more or less satisfactory way. We would then be faced with a Manichaeism of a new kind, easily reducible to the one we have already encountered, as shown by the thought of M. Maritain. It is therefore essential to go back and re-examine the question from its foundations.

We have already seen above that the sexual instinct is not localised in the organs that express it, but that these are, on the contrary, only the specialisation of a general tendency of our being. Directly or through these organs, all the layers of our life-span are permeated with sexuality. When we say that social images crystallise around our sexual instinct, this does not at all mean that they constitute with it an isolated block, nor a particular layer of our ego - still less a second ego - but simply that they are added to it and socialise it where it is, that is to say, indissolubly incorporated into our whole personality.

The phenomenon is somewhat comparable to the dyeing of a coloured fabric: it is not the superimposition of a coat of paint, but the penetration of a substance which combines with the primitive colour to give a new tone which is impossible to localise. But, if the operation is not well done, the primitive colouring will still dominate in parts. It is the same with our self which is never fully socialised. It defends itself against the external input that presses upon it and, from time to time, manages to free itself more or less from it. The individual self and the social self are not the same,

thus two separate realities. It is the individual self that becomes social, but without losing its primary nature.

We already know that the unity of man is not broken by a complexity which constitutes, on the contrary, the factor of the dialectical movement without which we would not evolve and, consequently, we would not be. The individual and the social are two essential data of our personal synthesis, i.e. two dimensions, of overcome antagonisms of the integral man.

At the end of this chapter, we may consider our quest to be over. Indeed, we have grasped our nature - and, by extension, human nature - in all its profound reality, and we can define ourselves as a unitary being, with multiple and contradictory tendencies, which creates its autonomous duration in dependence on its hereditary endowment, its cosmic framework, its sexual complement and its social milieu.

Such a result is, however, not entirely satisfactory, since we are not limited to a vegetative life: our duration has other consequences than its own preservation.

## **CHAPTER VII HUMAN ACTION**

### **91. THE ACT**

In our double cosmic and social framework, we develop our existence as a functioning biopsychic being. Our life is thus presented to us as an uninterrupted "becoming" in continuous confrontation with the environment.

However, to consider exclusively the constant flow of our duration is by no means sufficient to give us a complete idea of ourselves. When we read the biography of a great man, the personal continuity of the subject is obviously not excluded, but it is not the subject of the story. On the contrary, we are told of successive acts which undoubtedly imply duration, but are distinguished from it.

However, it is not possible for us to consider our actions as an organised and relatively autonomous series, forming a kind of upper layer of our being. Indeed, they are not linked to each other in a causal chain.

that is proper to them. Each one sprouts in isolation from our duration like the bud of the plant. Or, more precisely, the act is that very duration insofar as it "throws a cast" out of its intimate flow and externalises itself. It is an excrescence of duration, let's put it that way. What we call the link of our action is nothing but the very continuity of our biopsychic "becoming", a continuity which is not underlying but immanent to each of our acts, and which gives it its causal value in the whole of which it is a part.

For this very reason, the act includes in itself all our past and all our impetus. It is not only a manifestation, but also an expression of our self in the face of given inner or outer circumstances. It affirms us in our integrity in relation to the rest of the cosmos, even if it has no efficacy and does not correspond to a will to transform our frame. The purpose of the act is generally to adapt us, by modifying it, to our environment, which does not only mean taking the necessary measures to enable us to continue living, but also to impose ourselves on the external world in order to arrange it to our convenience.

But this is not always the case: the athlete in the stadium is as active as the lumberjack chopping down a tree or the savage picking a banana for food. Is his act useless? Yes, certainly, if we consider its lack of cosmic result. But the "useless" act nevertheless has a meaning. It responds not to pressure from the environment, but to an inner need. It is an expression of deep vitality, i.e. the satisfaction of a need to adapt to ourselves, i.e. to re-establish our dynamic equilibrium by the expenditure of our excess energy and the harmonious functioning of our organs of action.

In both cases, the act is always the provisional point of arrival of our personal dynamism. Our duration does not therefore progress only in a continuous flow: it forms waves that sometimes project themselves onto their shores, whose structure they modify, and sometimes limit themselves to their own movement. Action is indispensable to us. It is a requirement of our nature. A complete biopsychic ataraxia would mean a purely vegetative duration that we cannot even conceive of, as far as we are concerned.

## **92. INTENTIONAL VALUE OF THE ACT**

Thus, the act has, above all, a vital value. It is neither a luxury nor a fantasy. Our being and our action are only two aspects of our biopsychic whole or, better still, our being is only an abstraction constructed on the basis of our permanence in "becoming", i.e. in a dynamism of which the act is the "borderline" point of arrival, i.e. the expressive or dominating outbreak.

Action, therefore, is as natural to us as life, since it manifests whatever, in our rhythm of life, exceeds the minimum necessary to our

existence, as we observe it in the dream. For it and in it, on the other hand, the totality of our currents of duration are conjugated. It bears witness to our unitary functioning, since it is not possible to separate thought from it. Moreover, the act constitutes a harmonising factor of our biopsychic "I" insofar as it requires precisely this conjugation of all the forces which, in other circumstances and while remaining, of course, united and interdependent, nevertheless possess a certain individuality.

The "rêveur" does not act, for the simple reason that his thought floats at the mercy of parasitic images, and that his being lacks the necessary tension. But build him up to action in any event and he will recover, that is to say, he will concentrate his inner dynamism and direct it towards the indispensable gesture. Only the purely automatic act, the product of a habit acquired from previous concentrations, escapes to some extent from such a unifying demand.

In all cases, the act is born of the harmony-creating tension that is its final cause. Independently, therefore, of its possible external creative value, the action has a personal value of harmonisation and expression. It always adapts us to ourselves and often to our environment. It is in action that we complete ourselves and through it we show not only what we are, but also what we can do. It enables us to measure ourselves against the outer cosmic world and the outer social world, and to impose ourselves to some extent on them.

On the one hand, then, the act contributes to the functioning of the biopsychic complex, the subjective expansion of which it provokes and marks. On the other hand, it is the indispensable vehicle of our objective affirmation and constitutes the means by which we perform our function within our framework.

It is not enough, therefore, to say that we are a being that acts. It must be added that we are, in the first place, a being of an active nature and that action is essentially foreseen by our directive intention. It is neither an accident imposed from outside, nor the parasitic explosion of a poorly controlled dynamism. Bergson says that the act detaches itself from our duration like the fruit of the tree. Nothing could be more accurate, as long as it is clear that there is no automatism here, but that it is, on the contrary, a biopsychic intellectual process, and that the dynamism in which the act is realised is intentional.

The fruit falls off under its own weight, and thus loses the vital contact it had with the plant of which it was a part. The act prolongs our being, without any break in continuity and without our duration ceasing to "circulate" in it. It is not emanation, but projection of our self and voluntary realisation of our intentional impetus.



### 93. MORAL QUALIFICATION OF THE ACT

Now that we have briefly defined the nature of the act and clarified its value in the light of our previous analyses, we have to return to experience.

Let us note first of all that in it, our act appears to us first and foremost as an objective fact. The gesture we have just made is obviously ours, but its value as an expression of our self, as we have established it, escapes us. On the contrary, we qualify it in itself, as we would an act of another person. We call it powerful or weak, effective or useless. We study its movement and its result. For some of our acts, our opinion goes no further. But for others, on the contrary, we add an affirmation of a particular kind: "this is right" or "that is wrong", a qualification that we call moral without knowing exactly what it is and which, strangely enough, does not seem to be based on any criteria whatsoever. At most, we establish a comparative gradation between our various real or theoretical acts.

Good and evil are by no means definite concepts. They are nothing but words, charged with an unanalysed meaning which imposes itself on us intuitively. From there to saying that it is unanalysable, there is only one step, which many moralists have unwisely taken. But since a semblance of an explanation, some "dormitive virtue", is always needed for intellectual impotence, whether justified or not, some have gone in search of a saving expression in everyday language.

Just as we know the sensible world and know ourselves through our psychic consciousness, we would know good and evil through a moral consciousness, that is, through a kind of autonomous faculty of our being that would direct us, or at least point us in the right direction. Unfortunately for idealist philosophers, this transposition is not at all valid.

The affirmation of the existence of our psychic consciousness is not arbitrary. We know that it corresponds to our rational activity, that is, to the illumination, by a particular form of our intelligence, of the images which are useful to our adaptation to ourselves and to the world. And we also know that in this way reason allows itself to deliberate its judgements, the adaptive criterion of which we know.

The same is not true of "moral conscience". It is not a conscience, since the moral affirmation does not proceed from any deliberation, unless it is merely a comparison between the present act and other previously qualified acts. There is nothing moral about it, or at least we cannot attribute such a character to it, since it is precisely in so far as the affirmation arises in our psychic consciousness in the form of an indeterminate image and even only the word which expresses it that we are unable to specify the criterion which would enable us to recognise a minimum of autonomy for it.

We are therefore obliged to admit that the moral qualification of the act comes from an intuitive and therefore subconscious movement.

But intuition is nothing new to us. It is a familiar form of our intelligence, acting in the lower layers of our psychic duration. The moral affirmation emerges, already constituted, from our subconscious into our conscious. And since it is a comparative qualification of a criterion which, however ignored it may remain, nevertheless exists, since it is not possible to distinguish without a standard, moral intuition is nothing but a judgement.

There is, therefore, no such "moral conscience". What we call it is not a particular faculty of our inner life, but simply our intuitive intelligence which pronounces value judgements on our actions, according to a criterion which we do not know at the moment.

#### **94. PERSONAL VALUE OF MORAL QUALIFICATION**

What makes the discovery of such a criterion difficult, and has also caused the failure of the schools which, in order to avoid falling into transcendental idealism, sought in pleasure or utility the law of our moral judgements, is the eminently subjective character of any qualification in this domain.

The act we consider meritorious, our neighbour will judge particularly shameful. That which we agree to call "moral sense" varies, not only with individuals, but also with ages, civilisations and races. From such diversity of appreciation of the same fact flows the vanity of all the efforts made to reduce to a single factor the innumerable personal causes of our acts. But this is by no means a denial of ethics, but at most a failure of scientism and the abusive spirit of simplification.

In reality, the more materialistic philosophers seem to have reasoned under the rule of the old Platonic idealism. They searched in man, and no longer in another world, for Good and Evil. And having failed to discover them, they concluded by affirming the non-existence of a "Mora", which they considered possible only in the form of an immanent absolute, the expression of an autonomous consciousness of a particular type.

On the other hand, we can only find an answer to the problem of moral affirmation in the relativity of the notions of good and evil. It is enough, in fact, to ask ourselves what good and evil are relative to for the reality to be clear from the facts.

The notions of right and wrong are relative to the personality of the subject. The criterion of the moral act is simply what we are, or, if one prefers, the values that are ours, and which we have abstracted from the multiplicity of our

tendencies. We judge our own actions and the actions of others according to whether or not they correspond to our personal synthesis, as we affirm it at the precise moment when we say: this is right, or: that is wrong.

If our directive intention were monolithic, there could obviously be no negative qualification of our own actions. But we know that our duration is constantly evolving and complex. Hence the possibility we have of judging the act we have committed before, and even the act we are committing, as bad. There are, therefore, no objective moral values in us that serve as inner beacons for our conduct and judgements, and whose indications are captured by the moral conscience. In reality, it is our psychic conscience - or subconsciousness - that makes its judgements according to the personal data it possesses.

However, let us not believe that our moral affirmations are as unstable as one might think when considering the perpetual "becoming" of our duration. There are in us dynamic constants, which constitute the permanent features of our personality insofar as it is specific as well as particular. These constants have been maintained throughout our history, and their very permanence has made them crystallise in conceptual images, always more or less present in our psychic life.

It is these images that serve as our moral criteria. Or, more precisely, it is these images, divided into positive and negative ones, that constitute the scale of values according to which we make our ethical judgements.

## **95. PERSONAL AND SOCIAL MORALITY**

This analysis of ours clearly shows us the reason for the failure of the makers of moral systems. The values according to which we judge our actions and the actions of others constitute a strictly personal set, even though some of them derive from the nature of the species and are therefore common to all human beings.

Not only do certain values correspond to our own personality, but they also influence the others with which they form a whole. Moreover, these value-images do not all intervene at the same time and with the same vigour in our judgements. One or the other dominates according to the appeal that is made to it and which depends both on our deep biopsychic state and on the imaginal system that expresses the act in our consciousness. On the other hand, these fixed values are not the only elements that form our judgement, and less common but just as powerful, and sometimes more powerful, tendencies can mingle with them and even supplant them. It is also possible that values and tendencies do not harmonise, and that we find ourselves faced with several criteria

contradictory claims to predominance in our decision, each claiming to belong to us as legitimately as the others.

This is particularly the case with regard to so-called social morality in its more or less marked opposition to personal morality. It is not, of course, a question of the legal norms which society coercively imposes on us, but of those which we have accepted and incorporated into our psychic life. They constitute value-images which not only, at least in the first analysis, come from our social environment and not from ourselves, but also have the task and effect of limiting the personal determination of our actions and judgements. Hence the frequent clash that often shocks us, and this sort of inner struggle between two contradictory criteria, one of which, paradoxically, we consider to be foreign, even though we feel its pressure and accept that it weighs on our decision.

It is no exaggeration to say that we take an ambiguous attitude towards social value, at first sight difficult to explain. Logically, we should apply our moral judgement to it, and not judge our actions in its light, as is often the case, or not even take it into account. But, in reality, social value is not truly alien to us, nor does it appear to us as such, for the simple reason that it is, by nature, immanent to the political being that we are. Therefore, we accept the "prefabricated" normative images that emanate from our social environment and we elaborate others, with the help of the elements that our experience of collective life supplies us with, because our nature not only tolerates them but also demands them.

On the other hand, once they have been incorporated into our psychic duration, these value-images no longer constitute foreign elements, since they have been adapted to our being and assimilated by it. They are part of ourselves and in this character they intervene in our judgements.

It is no less the case that, by their origin and nature, they are different from the other values to which we refer. We are essentially a political animal, but not a member of this or that collectivity. The principle of social value is therefore natural, but not such a value born of such a communal modality. On the other hand, we are both personal and social, and the antinomy, being immanent to ourselves, is all the stronger.

Of course, the two scales of values can complete each other in perfect harmony, as is the case with those who have a predominant political orientation. They can also be so unbalanced that one crushes the other without real conflict: this is the case both with the strong personality and with the man in the street. Finally, they can oppose each other in us in a struggle for predominance, and tear us apart in contradictory tendencies. The crisis is then identical with that which arises from the inner opposition of two personal criteria.

## 96. MORAL JUDGEMENT

Although some basic rules form the substratum of natural moral life, their combination into a personal set of values in which social data play their part makes it impossible to establish a general code of conduct on which to base our judgements. The variability of our duration does not even allow us to consider the scale of values that we recognise as ours at any given moment as fully representative of us.

In such conditions, what is ethics reduced to? To the simple technical process of the judgement of the act, by dialectical confrontation with our personality as it is affirmed at a point in our duration. We qualify past or present action, and foresee future action, with respect to our values fixed in images, or to our predominant tendencies at the moment. Therefore, the only constant criterion of moral judgement is not a value-pattern, but simply the adaptation sought. We regard as good what is adapted or capable of being adapted to what we are, or at least to what we believe ourselves to be, and as evil what is opposed to our own fulfilment, or at least to the image we have of it. The altruist who acts out of selflessness and the egoist who acts out of self-interest obey opposite values, but their morals are identical, and always aim to conform their attitudes to their personal goals.

It remains for us to define this moral adaptation which is, at least at first sight, very different from the one we have encountered in our analysis of psychic life, since it is not a question here of incorporating an image, i.e. a complex of relations, into the rhythm of our duration, but of comparing an act with a value - or a tendency - which presents itself, to our conscious or subconscious mind, in the form of an image.

Let us ask ourselves, however, in what does this act, which constitutes one of the two terms of the dialectical confrontation, consist? Whether it is a past or present act on which we form a judgement, or a projected act, it is obviously not the dynamic complex to which it is reduced that emerges in our psychic thought, but the memorial image of this complex or an imaginative composition of the one we envisage. In both cases, the comparison which constitutes the central phase of the judgement is thus made between two images, and the moral affirmation which concludes it expresses the adaptation or maladaptation of the order of the representative image to the order of the criterion-image.

The process is identical to that of the mechanic who judges the possibility of fitting a gear wheel to an engine, except that we are our own mechanic. It is our rational or intuitive intelligence that takes hold of the dynamic image, analyses it, confronts it with the value-image or the tendency-image, and finally concludes by an assent or a refusal that our moral qualification expresses.

It even happens that reason and intuition deal at the same time or successively with the same act, and that their decisions do not coincide. The criterion-image does not necessarily manifest itself with the same power in the various layers of our duration. Subconscious and conscious can have scales of values that do not entirely coincide, since our reason, as long as it is not curdled, constantly elaborates, by deliberation, new patterns, while our intuition works on the basis of natural and memorial data, solidly rooted in our duration. But in both cases the intellectual process is the same: between intuitive judgement and reflective judgement there is no difference of nature, but only of consciousness and time, that is to say, of modalities.

It is also possible that our moral judgement contradicts the aesthetic judgement we form about the same act, which is based on an adaptive comparison of the order of the image we make of it and the rhythm of our duration. Nothing surprising in this, since one of the terms of the dialectical movement is different, value-image in one case and rhythm without criterion in the other. This in no way prevents beauty from constituting a legitimate moral value for us. But what we call beauty is then an abstract image, formed from numerous previous aesthetic experiences and which serves us, like any other, as a factor of comparison.

## **97. MORAL AFFECTIVITY**

The intellectual dialectic, the process of which we have just described, does not account for the phenomenon of moral affirmation in all its complexity. We do not judge the value of the act coldly, for the simple reason that the logical operation we have described is neither foreign nor indifferent to us. It is not just a matter of comparing two elements, as the chemist or the grocer does when weighing a product. The weighing that we use is internal and personal to us, and the judgement that we express is of primordial importance to us, since the acceptance or rejection of the dynamic image that the act of weighing represents in our lifetime depends on it.

Thus, we are directly interested in the outcome of our moral affirmation which marks the adaptation or maladaptation of the act to our self. It is therefore not surprising that the positive judgement is accompanied by a feeling of satisfaction, and the negative judgement by an inner discomfort that can go as far as disgust. This satisfaction and this discomfort are nothing more than the particular aspects of pleasure and pain that derive from any adaptive judgement.

Moreover, we do not know the phenomenon of the incorporation of the moral image into our inner life only through its sentimental colouring, in the sense that psychology gives to the term. We also apprehend it directly when we become aware, thanks to the emotion experienced, of the double movement of psychic relaxation and tension which expresses the intensity of our

adaptive activity or, more precisely, the variations of this intensity. Let us note that emotional shock and exaltation do not correspond, term for term, to the discomfort and satisfaction felt in the face of the object of our moral judgement. Our emotion is as vivid and as violent in the displeasure that comes from our rejection of the act as in the contentment born of its acceptance. Moral feeling expresses the identity or opposition of the act and the image-pattern, whereas emotion represents the moral affirmation itself, regardless of its content.

The psychic relaxation, which constitutes the first phase of any emotional movement, is only the consequence of the confusion produced by the problem posed, i.e. by the irruption of a dynamic image whose value we do not yet know. The tension that follows marks, on the other hand, the effort of the search for a solution. We see here clearly how emotion is linked to moral judgement or, more precisely, how it is penetrated by it.

Does this mean that the emotion depends entirely on the judgement, and is all the more intense the more conclusive the decision expressed? Not at all, and we would even write: on the contrary. For moral emotion is foreign to those who possess principles sufficiently firm that there is never a problem for them, and they form their judgement without hesitation or disturbance of any kind. This is a very exceptional case, and we find it only in people who, in a previous struggle, have overcome all ethical concerns and have forged a rigid line of conduct and an immutable scale of values in their efforts. Judgement then becomes a habit, and its intellectual process develops automatically without much demand for affectivity.

## **98. THE BODY, SUBSTRATUM OF MORAL AFFIRMATION**

Moral affectivity provides us with a new proof of the error of dualistic philosophy. If there is one phenomenon in us which belongs to the "soul", it is undoubtedly the moral affirmation. It is undoubtedly moral affirmation. Now we have just seen that it implies an emotional movement, that is to say, an awareness of the bodily modifications brought about by the judgement itself, and it implies it not as a superfluous ornament, but as an essential datum.

Indeed, even in the case of automatic judgement, emotion is present in memorial form, since it plays its fundamental role in the formation of habit. Moral emotion, on the other hand, is not an epiphenomenon without interest or real action. On the contrary, it acts powerfully upon us. From it, much more than from the cold process that guides it, we receive the impetus that impels us to act or to refuse to act, and makes us adopt an energetic attitude towards ourselves and towards our fellow men. Our body thus plays an effective part in the movement of our moral affirmation. But this is not its only role in this domain.

We have already seen that the image-patterns which constitute our scale of values express our ego and are the product of our personal history. Consequently, our organism contributed to their elaboration or, more precisely, was the substratum of biopsychic duration within which our values were formed. This conclusion goes much further than the mere particular repetition of the previously established general rule of the unity of our personal activity.

Indeed, if our body participates in our ethical life and intervenes, not only in our affirmation, but also in the creation of the fixed data of our affirmation, we must recognise a positive moral value in it. Far from being the cause of evil as taught by the Puritans, the last Jansenists and the disciples of M. Maritain, the body provides us, on the contrary, with the solid functional basis which is indispensable to our moral judgements.

Ethical dualism is worth no more than the psychological dualism on which it is founded. It presents ethical life to us as a constant struggle between the body and the spirit, and the good as a victory of the spirit over the body. It causes a tearing apart of our being, creates inner disharmony, and a real drying up of our moral activity theoretically reduced to an intellectual asceticism, denying the vital bodily forces which constitute the dynamic substratum of our life. We say : theoretically, since, in fact, the organism continues to function. But, arbitrarily and artificially, it is regarded with suspicion and, as far as possible, abhorred and despised. The values that come from it are rejected, while they are still offered as positive realities of the life that goes on.

The result is a sick morality without the justification of illness, and a distorted conception of human nature. Today's man, a victim of dualistic morality, operates in a perpetual inner contradiction between what he really is and the Manichean theories that are imposed on him in the form of ideas and customs. He is afraid of a body which he nevertheless feels to be a fact of his life, and he is ashamed of it even though he cannot dream of suppressing it. Hence, in the best of them, a puritanical ethic which diminishes them and, for the most part, restlessness and hypocrisy.

Particularly characteristic of such a double consequence is the contemporary false modesty. The naked body is an object of scandal, and life-transmitting organs are called "shameful parts". Are we morally superior to our ancestors of the Middle Ages who depicted man as God created him in the sculptures and tapestries of their cathedrals? It does not seem so.

Moreover, it is not plausible that by disregarding some of the values that arise from our being as it is and should be, we can have a moral life that contributes to our harmony and fulfilment.



## 99. VOLUNTARY CONDITION OF THE MORAL ACT

It is no longer possible to regard our body as a foreign and hostile power, which would exert an unhealthy pressure on our moral activity and drag us towards evil. For that to be admissible, it would be necessary for our valid personality to be limited to our reason. Now, if our rational judgement can to some extent oppose the decisions born in the lower layers of our duration, the emotional factor of its process forbids us to isolate it from the rest of our being and, above all, from an organism indissolubly linked to our cenesthetic duration.

Our body has neither the power nor the autonomy indispensable to an intervention which dissociates us from our unity of action. Even if we were allowed to consider certain values-patterns as the exclusive expression of our organic substratum, systematically opposed to "spiritual" values, which is not the case, nothing would authorise us to reject them as evil, let alone to exclude them from our self.

It is true that we create not only our moral standards but also their hierarchy. It depends on our personality whether this or that category of values prevails in us. It is therefore legitimate for some to subordinate their patterns of more immediate bodily origin to other data of their ego. But we cannot in any case divide the values that express a being whose parts all belong to us equally into two opposing groups, nor can we therefore exclude or try to exclude one of them.

In fact, hostility towards the body is linked to the conception of an autonomous moral conscience, from which would proceed an indisputable imperative, of a rational or ineffable nature, which could not admit the introduction into our ethical life of data foreign to it. Such a theory is obliged, in order to preserve its monolithic character to the moral affirmation and the process from which it arises, to deny the inner struggle whose existence we have ascertained in the course of our analysis, and to reject one of the groups of factors outside the self, or at least outside the valid self. It thus assimilates the inner forces, which participate in the normal dialectical movement of our judgement, to the external pressures which constrain us to adopt an attitude contrary to our will, or at least to what, without them, would be our will.

Moral idealism thus goes so far as to discard and even combat everything that comes from the deepest strata of our being in favour of a mythical faculty which, in fact, is more or less confused with our reason or our subconscious intuition, stripped of the elements indispensable to their normal functioning and distorted by the belief in an infallible and disembodied inner voice. Since we have already seen that moral affirmation only makes sense if it responds to our entire personality, i.e. if it is confused with our will, as we defined it above, it follows that our decision is free insofar as it is the product of a personal synthesis.

The idea is not the result of the pressure exerted by an idea that imposes itself on us but cannot become ours, since it provokes, by its acceptance alone, a rupture and a dissociation of our ego.

True and valid freedom depends on the voluntary respect of our purpose of self-realisation. It does not consist, then, in a possibility, given to us by our environment, to direct ourselves according to our fancy of the moment, but, on the contrary, in the inner obligation to act according to what we are, and not according to what we believe ourselves to be. This is the reason why there is no man less free than the Puritan who, guided by a belief foreign to his nature, eliminates from his moral life the fundamental data of his unknown real being.

## **100. MORAL RESPONSIBILITY**

Moral freedom, in fact, cannot be assimilated to a simple theoretical possibility of choosing between what is permitted and what is forbidden, while a barrier, internal or external, prevents any truly personal decision. The very notions of permitted and forbidden imply a law, legitimate or not, and therefore coercion. Genuine freedom is a power to act according to our nature, and according to our ideas insofar as they do not contradict our deep personality.

It is therefore far from absolute, for we can act only in the light of our dependence, and we have seen how close this dependence is. Not only does our environment exert a pressure on our "I" which modifies our evolution and shapes us, but also all our eventual possibilities are inherited. Therefore, we are not free to be other than what we are, and our personality is "compulsory". We are predestined, not in the theological sense of the word, of course, but in the natural order: predestined by our very being. We act only within the framework of such self-determination and our power, and then our freedom, depend on a potentiality which we certainly do not choose and on conditions of development of which we are only to a small extent masters.

For this very reason, our moral responsibility loses the meaning generally attributed to it by common thinking. It cannot be linked to an absolute freedom of choice that we do not possess, nor to a moral conscience that is only a myth. The only serious basis for our responsibility lies in our personal autonomy.

But the consequences of such a conclusion take on paradoxical appearances. The congenital madman is no less responsible than the born criminal, since both are merely realising their tendencies. Only the accident that hinders our normal development is likely to reduce our responsibility. It will be replied that non-accidental insanity is also abnormal. But this last term is essentially relative: abnormal in relation to whom or to what? When we speak of

of our normal development, i.e. an evolution in accordance with the potential possibilities that constitute our personality. In this sense, the congenital madman is perfectly normal and coherent with himself. But he is obviously abnormal with respect to the general laws of the organisation of the human being. Shall we say, then, that only those who are well constituted are responsible? This may be a criterion of normality for the doctor and perhaps for the judge, but certainly not for the moralist. For it would take away any ethical character from a notion that would find its basis outside the personality.

Moral judgement is always subjective. Far from being distorted by the personal values-patterns we create, it is on the contrary essentially linked to them. Moral responsibility, therefore, can only be for us a vindication of our voluntary acts and their consequences. Only such a conception accords with the facts of our hereditary predestination and self-determination.

## **101. THE PASSION**

We are responsible for our being - and only for our being - as it is and not as it ought to be according to this or that extraneous criterion. If this were not so, we would have to reduce our responsible activity to only that which emanates from rational judgements formed according to a scale of values established only by our reason, and even by a disembodied reason.

But such a reduced activity does not exist. Although it enjoys a certain independence, our rational life cannot be detached from the lower layers of our duration. Therefore, it is not impartial, even if it presents itself as a censor of our actions. It depends on the "raw material" which rises from the depths of our being, and from which it draws its moral standards.

Moreover, our judgements, as we have already seen, are not necessarily conscious. Therefore, if we consider the madman irresponsible, we must adopt the same attitude towards the passionate, that is to say, towards ourselves, whoever we are. This implies not only the rejection, outside our self, of our whole deep life, but also the "legalisation" of our inner imbalance, by applying to our moral activity the easy but erroneous psychology of the struggle between reason and passion.

Now, on the one hand, as we have just seen, our rational intelligence does not operate as a "control" apparatus external by its nature and function to the products it examines. On the other hand, our reason is only a particular form of our intentional intelligence, according to which we act and judge. Passion is an emotional movement triggered, no longer by a passing image, but by a fixed idea based on a fundamental tendency of our ego. Therefore, from all points of view, it is intellectualised. It does not break

our inner balance, unless it takes a pathological form, but strives, on the contrary, to re-establish it. It expresses a process of adaptation to ourselves, which belongs to our personality. It is thus an effort to realise our guiding intention, which reveals itself to us in a new but authentically our own aspect.

Where, then, does the resistance which our reason generally puts up to it, at least at first, come from? From the simple fact that passion is new in its conscious expression, and tends to introduce into our higher psychic life values hitherto unknown, or rejected, which clash with the established system, i.e. with habits.

The rational condemnation of the act born of our passion is the product of a reminiscence of our history. This does not mean, moreover, that reason must necessarily bow to the new value that is trying to impose itself, since the tendency that drives our passion may be only secondary and even parasitic, and therefore incapable of destroying a moral order that truly corresponds to our deepest nature. But if, on the contrary, our passionate impulse expresses a fundamental datum of our ego, a datum which only lacks an object to manifest itself, then the old system collapses and our reason becomes the faithful servant, sometimes even against logic, of our effort, recognised as legitimate and valid. It may retain its capacity for analysis, but it no longer stands in the way of our search for personal equilibrium.

Our inner ethical and psychic harmony does not come, therefore, from a rational crushing of our passions, but from a perfect matching of the values that govern our moral affirmations and the intentional forces of our biopsychic being.

Let us not forget, our value system cannot be assimilated to the weights on the scales. There is no "Office of Weights and Measures" of moral life, nor is it conceivable, for the simple reason that moral life is strictly personal. Our values are only patterns for us, and it is we who create them. They are the product of our activity before they are its law, always subject to abrogation.

## **102. THE MORAL ABSOLUTE**

This is not a defence of ethical individualism. Undoubtedly, our value-patterns are subjective. There is no Idea of Good that penetrates, enlightens and guides us, nor is there a specialised conscience that receives it. Our values are personal, insofar as they are born of our history.

But this in no way means that they arise from the fantasy game of an absolute freedom which, as we know, does not exist. Nor does it mean that we possess them exclusively, but simply that they present themselves in us with nuances and according to a hierarchy that are peculiar to us. For them to belong to us as our own, we would have to be a prototype being, unique in our kind.

Now, we are distinguished from other men by our personality, but we have with them a common structure and a common functioning, to which correspond equally common values. Our moral standards can, from this point of view, be compared to our organs; they have their own modalities, but they have no less a basic structure and a schematic functional movement similar to those of any other member of the species. However, these organs are really and exclusively ours. Likewise, our scale of moral values is based on a specific common background.

Nothing could be more natural, since we have already seen that it expresses us as we are in our active relations with the outside world. Before being So-and-so, with his personal characters, we are a man with his specific characters from which our scale of values emanates on the one hand. This analysis is very important, because it shows us that we are similar to others in being personal and that the values common to all men arise from our subjective self. Therefore, there is no contradiction between the inner character that we have recognised in our moral standards, and the fact of inductively establishing a moral law which, of course, will not bind the individual but will represent the norm of his conduct. Since, on the other hand, we are not only man and person, but also members of a lineage, a social stratum and a race, it is not possible to reduce ethics to general human values and individualised values. We must also consider the values that express the biopsychic differentiation of groups.

It follows that morality, which had first appeared to us as a strictly personal and changing order of action, now asserts itself, but always in ourselves, as a pyramidal set of increasingly generalised values. One point in our earlier analyses prepared us for such a verification.

Indeed, we have already seen that there are personal ethical constants in us that are maintained throughout the historical evolution of our ego. These constants correspond, of course, to the data of our being which remain unchanged throughout our life. The first of these data are those which constitute the structural and functional basis of our nature, and this basis is specific. Then, there are values in us which we create but which we cannot not create because it does not depend on our particularities of nature or our history that we are constituted as a man and belong to such and such a race, such and such a social stratum and such and such a family. While it is true that there are

As many moral values as individuals, there are logically inherited group values and a specific system made up of some basic general values.

The individual who rejects human moral law and those of the groups of which he is a part is thus a self-denying abnormal. The rules of our action are as strict and binding as the laws of our existence. And our action depends on our whole being and not only on what, in it, is strictly peculiar to us.

### **103. MORAL EFFORT**

This does not mean, however, that common values do not impose themselves on us as transcendent ideas, but belong to us as our own and emerge from us. What we have in common with other human beings or with the members of this or that political or social group are not really values, but the characters from which these values have emerged.

These characteristics are not general but by their essential nature. Their qualitative modalities remain personal, as does the degree of intensity of the drive for self-realisation which is confused with moral effort. This last point is of particular importance, since not only does the whole of our moral affirmations depend on this effort, but also a certain number of basic values, which we could call dynamic, derive from it.

Moral effort is usually considered either as a faculty in the service of the supposed moral conscience, or as an aspect of the autonomous will guided by reason. Hence the widespread theory that moral activity consists in overcoming one's self for the sake of a transcendental or social good. We already know that moral conscience exists only in the autonomous will and that, moreover, our moral life is not differentiated in our psychic life of which it is a part, but by its own adaptive modalities. Thus, moral effort is reduced to our personal duration, insofar as it affirms itself in relation to our pre-existing values or to those it creates in the course of its own development.

The term overcoming is therefore ambiguous. It is true that we overcome ourselves only by the fact of our evolution. But such a temporal movement is not at all a crushing of what we are for the sake of what we "become", but, on the contrary, a progressive realisation of our being according to its own values. Our self-realisation is, at the same time, a self-valorisation. We are our own moral standard, not only in the sense that our history creates our values, but also in the sense that our self as a whole constitutes the first of our values.

Selfishness is nothing but the intentional tendency that makes us judge the rest of the world in relation to ourselves. The term does not, therefore, legitimately possess the pejorative meaning usually attributed to it: our selfishness is worth what we are worth, and, despite the paradoxical aspect of the statement, it is quite accurate that sacrifice is the selfishness of the altruist and the hero.

Likewise, the sense of honour is only the awareness of our personal worth, and the intention to respect it and to make it respected. Honour is therefore a standard of conduct that comes from our moral effort. We can say the same of the heroism which is linked to it, since, acting according to its criterion, we prefer our courage to an existence which, without it, would no longer have any meaning for us. To renunciation we prefer abandonment and decadence, death in the gesture that fully expresses us at the height of our power. Heroic death is completion, in both senses of the word, while the denial of our values would be a denial of our fundamental self.

Hence the two complementary phases of moral effort. It is, in the first place, a factor of self-control, in the full sense of the expression; not simply rational "control" of our actions, but perfect subjection of our activity to the values which legitimately represent us. Secondly, it is a force for projecting our authentic self beyond the simple concern for defence and material preservation, and thus subordinates our life to our reasons for living.

On the one hand, the affirmation of our moral self; on the other hand, the risk in which this self is tempered and imposes itself on us as a condition of our existence. In the moral endeavour, our guiding intention presents itself in the qualitative aspect without which it would have no meaning, since the vital minimum already demands a functional hierarchy of values.

#### **104. SIN AND REMORSE**

On the other hand, we must not forget that our entire intentional activity is the product of our living duration and, for this very reason, complex. Our values are multiple and contradictory. The choice we make between them at each moment comes, except when moral habit intervenes, from a provisional combination of flowing data. In other words, the succession of our ethical judgements never forms a homogeneous series oriented by an exclusive value.

Not only does our moral duration evolve according to its own curve made up of movements of tension and relaxation, which constitutes one of the dynamic elements of our psychic duration, but it is also only the historical synthesis of all the tendencies which mutually influence each other in us at every moment of our life.

and dominate in turn. It turns out that the strongest moral personality, the one in which one value system generally prevails over all others, does not for that reason ignore sin, i.e. the act carried out according to another system, provisionally accepted out of intentional weakness.

The movement that leads us to sin constitutes a parasitic dynamism in the sense that it contradicts our line of conduct, but it belongs to us authentically and expresses a personal reality which, because it is habitually kept in the lower layers of our deep life, exists no less. In the natural sense of the word, we have, deep within ourselves, a devil always ready to insinuate himself into our moral life and divert it from its course, imposing on it values that cannot be incorporated into our dominant system. Succumbing to inner temptation not only produces an accidental act but leaves a trace in us that is difficult to erase: the memory of sin.

This is not just one image of memory among many others that obviously play their role in our life, as does our entire history. The memory of guilt is the object of a judgement formed according to our true moral personality. It remains with us, not only as an image of an act as pure dynamism, but also with the new ethical qualification we attribute to it. Hence remorse, or the feeling of our guilt towards the values we consider obligatory and of our betrayal of the legitimate purpose of our ego.

It has often been said that remorse is a morbid and unhealthy state, since the act thus judged in the second instance is a past event to which it is not possible to return. No doubt, the feeling of our weakness, if it becomes an obsession, can paralyse our moral activity and our activity without further ado, causing us to fall into a personality-destroying depression. But it is then a pathological state which arises not from the memory of guilt, but from a lack of moral tension which allows the reproached image to take on an abusive importance in the inner life.

In the healthy man, remorse is reduced to a lucid consciousness of past reality, and of its true value in relation to his personal line of conduct. The regret which sin inspires is but the affective movement which accompanies our retroactive judgement. Far from being harmful, remorse has, on the contrary, the effect of reordering our past according to our moral nature and, consequently, to our forgotten directive intention. The parasitic act takes on a valid meaning. It puts us on our guard, by its memorial presence alone, against a new fall. It serves us as a moral reactive. It forces us to recognise our inner complexity and our relative intentional weakness. The culture of remorse is morbid. But the awareness of sin is an essential factor in our realisation.



## 105. THE DESIRE FOR PERSONAL POWER

Healthy remorse is therefore not a retreat into the past, but a comparative projection of the past, i.e. our history, onto our present activity. It contributes negatively to the indispensable choice of values that will govern our action and, consequently, our personal affirmation. It is therefore a factor of vital progression. For our judgement is only the condition of the act by which we manifest our existence and our personal efficacy, i.e. our autonomy and our power. Hence, our moral activity is no different from our activity alone, and the act is a highly intellectualised externalisation of our integral self.

We must therefore deny any essential antinomy between life and morality. The judgement involved in the act does not act as a brake on our biopsychic dynamism. On the contrary, it constitutes an indispensable phase of choice, without which we would be reduced to the mere passive contemplation of a self that would be meaningless and not even viable.

The moral act - and there are no others - is not a luxury, but the fruit of our personal impetus, i.e. the result of our vital power that asserts itself in it. We reach here a fundamental datum of our being, which allows us to better grasp the true nature of our process of realisation. As a dynamic whole, we project ourselves both into the future - the elective development of our potential possibilities - and into the outside world, against which we have to impose ourselves in order to remain ourselves as much as possible and, by an adaptation of the environment, to reduce our adaptation to the environment to a minimum.

In our confrontation with the rest of the cosmos, two complexes of forces are at war. It is a question, on our part, not only of subsisting, but also of forming our framework and, in so doing, of demonstrating to ourselves our power of domination. Nothing could be more logical, since our duration is dynamic and all force, in us, is intentional, that is to say, it possesses a purpose which does not admit of an indifferent act.

Our will tends towards the realisation of our inner power, and the moral values according to which we act come, as we know, from the hereditary and historical being which this same will expresses. Our moral activity, therefore, is not superadded to our vital dynamism, but, on the contrary, is confused with it.

Our moral judgement is the factor of our personal coordination in the action that our will to power demands, that is, our unitary impetus of total affirmation in ourselves and in the outside world and, even more, of the creation of our self and of our work, in an intentional struggle of conquest that admits of no compromise or capitulation.

# **BERSERKER**

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## **BOOKS**

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