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JUNE, 1929

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VOLUME XLIII    NUMBER 877

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Published monthly by  
THE OPEN COURT PUBLISHING COMPANY

337 East Chicago Avenue  
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*Subscription rates:* \$2.00 a year; 20c a copy. Remittances may be made by personal checks, drafts, post-office or express money orders, payable to the Open Court Publishing Company, Chicago.

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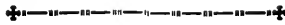
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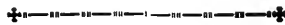


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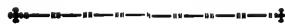


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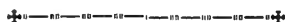
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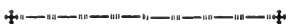
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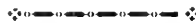
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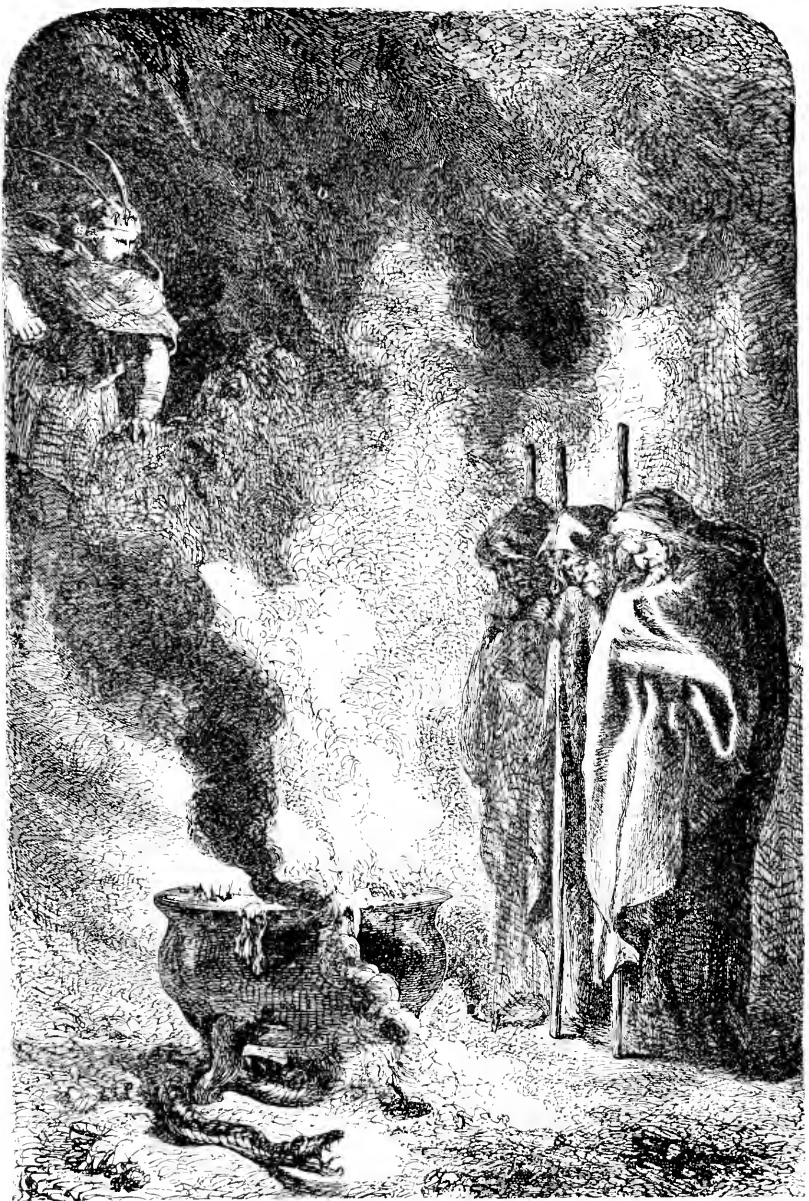
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# THE OPEN COURT

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE

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Volume XLIII (No. 6)      JUNE, 1929

Number 877

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## THE FORM OF THE FIEND

BY MAXIMILIAN RUDWIN

THE Devil has assumed many forms and worn many costumes. Hundreds of books, pictures and prints depict his Infernal Majesty in almost as many different disguises as there are stars in the sky. Satan is a polymorphous individual. He is the equal of Jupiter in the art of physical tergiversation, having a capacity for almost endless variations and transmutations, which he uses to the great perplexity of mortals. As successor to Hermes, he has also inherited the Greek god's ability to contract and expand at pleasure. Indeed, if we credit all the accounts of the forms in which the Fiend has shown himself on earth, he is a quick-change artist of first-rate ability.

The Devil as a fallen angel is, naturally enough, "a spirit in form and substance,"—but he has been granted the power of manifesting himself to the eyes of man in a material form as far back as the first century of the Christian era. As the adversary of corporeal saints, he necessarily and unmistakably became more material than he had been as the shadowy opponent of the spiritual angels. Although in reality incorporeal, he can, of his own inherent power, call into existence any manner of body that it pleases his fancy to inhabit, or that will be most conducive to the success of any contemplated evil.

It has been said that the Devil can manifest himself to the eyes of man in any form which exists "in the heavens above, in the earth beneath, and in the waters under the earth." He can, first of all, still manifest himself in his former rôle as an angel. St. Paul warns us that Satan can transform himself into an angel of light (2 Cor. xi. 14), and St. Thomas, commenting on the words of the great

Apostle, teaches that the higher natural qualities of the angels have not wholly been withdrawn from the fallen spirits.<sup>1</sup>

But this is not all. In order to mislead mankind, the Devil can even appear, according to Thomas Cranmer, author of *A Confutation of Unwritten Verities* (16th cent.), in the likeness of Christ. It is known that the Devil manifested himself to the Deacon Secundullus first as an angel and later as Christ himself.<sup>2</sup>

As a general thing, however, the Devil seeks his models among men. He has at his command, as Timon of Athens has said, "all shapes that man goes up and down in." He can appear in the form of either sex. The Fiend figured in human form when he approached the hermits of the Thebaid. The earliest known representation of the Devil in human form is found on an ivory diptych of the time of Charles the Bald (9th Cent.). In Thomas Middleton's *Witch* (p. 1778), Hecate speaks of a custom that witches have of causing their familiar spirits to assume the shape of any man for whom they have a passion.<sup>3</sup>

But incarnation in a human body is not sufficient for Satan. The forms of the whole of the animal kingdom seem also to be at his disposal. He can adopt, in fact, the form of any animal he wishes—from a worm to an eagle. Indeed, one of the most significant elements of demonology is the persistence of the animal character in which the Devil appears. But not content with known animal forms, he even seeks further to assume incredible and impossible shapes. Popular fancy assembled, in fact, the repugnant parts of all known living beings and fashioned the Devil out of them. In order to frighten the good Christians, the Fiend had to possess a form which was particularly suited to instil terror into their hearts.

The Devil, whom our medieval ancestors detected so unerringly and feared so mortally, was a compound of all the contortions and distortions known to exist among living things on this earth. Our pious forefathers imagined him who "one day wore a crown under the eyes of God" in as horrid and hideous a form as fancy could

<sup>1</sup> Consult the authorities quoted on this matter by Anatole France in his novel *la Révolte des anges* (1914). A contemporary Polish novelist, Kornel Makuszyński, says in his recent story "Another Paradise Lost and Regained" (1926): "It is one of the most ancient and common of hellish tricks for a devil to take the shape of an angel."

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Wilhelm Fischer: *Aberglauben aller Zeiten* (Stuttgart, 1906-7), I, 55.

<sup>3</sup> Norman Douglas in his novel *They Went* (1921) offers an interesting variant in the person of Theophilus, the Greek merchant.



WITCHES CELEBRATING WALPURGIS NIGHT  
(By Franz Simm)

render it. Like the Greek Gorgon, the Christian Satan was meant to represent, as Anatole France has said, the sympathetic alliance between physical ugliness and moral evil. The grotesque paintings of the Devil in the medieval cathedrals were enough to scare even the Devil himself.<sup>4</sup> Daniel Defoe has well remarked that the Devil does not think that the people would be terrified half so much if they were to converse with him face to face. "Really," this biographer of Satan goes on to say, "it were enough to fright the Devil himself to meet himself in the dark, dressed up in the several figures which imagination has formed for him in the minds of men."

If you wish to see the Devil in his genuine form, we are told in Gogol's story "St. John's Eve" (1830), stand near a mustard seed on St. John's Eve at midnight, the only evening in the year when Satan reveals himself in his proper form to the eyes of man. Sir John Fraser suggests, in his *Golden Bough* (1911-1914), that this prince from a warmer climate may be attracted by the warmth of the mustard in the chilly air of the upper world.

The Devil, in fact, is very sensitive in regard to the unflattering portrayal of himself by the good Christians. On a number of occasions, he has expressed his bitter resentment at the ugly form given him in Christian iconography. A medieval French legend relates the discomfiture of a monk, who was forced by the indignant Devil to paint him in a less ugly fashion. Lucifer also appeared once in a dream to the Florentine painter Spinello Spinelli to ask him in what place he had beheld him under so brutish a form as he had painted him. This story is told in Giorgio Vasari's *Vite de' piu eccellenti pittori, scultori et architetti* (1550) and retold by Anatole France in his story "Lucifer" (1895).<sup>5</sup>

It makes us, indeed, wonder why the Devil was always represented in so repugnant a form. Rationally conceived, the Devil should be by right the most fascinating object in creation. One of his essential functions, namely temptation, is destroyed by his hideousness. To be effective in the work of temptation, a demon

<sup>4</sup> On the Devil in medieval art, consult Emil Mâle's three volumes: *l'Art religieux du XIIe siècle en France*; *l'Art religieux du XIIIe siècle en France*; *l'Art religieux de la fin du moyen âge en France*, and Maurice Gossart: *la Peinture des diableries à la fin du moyen-âge*; Jérôme Bosch, "le faiseur de dyables," de Bois-le-Duc (1907).

<sup>5</sup> In his story "les Blattes," Anatole France also expresses the fear of an Italian painter that he may have incurred the Devil's displeasure by the manner in which he presented him on the cathedral doors and church windows.

might be expected to approach his intended victim in the most fascinating form he could command.<sup>6</sup>

The fact is that the form given the Devil in Christian iconography has an historical foundation. It has been derived from the fabled gods of antiquity. The medieval monster is an amalgamation of all the heathen divinities, from whom he derived, especially of those gods or demons which, already in pagan days, were inimical to the benevolently ruling deities.

Indeed, a great number of sacred animal representations will be found in most of the religions of antiquity. The gods of India, Egypt, Assyria, Babylonia, Greece and Rome were worshipped under the form of the animals which were supposed to possess the qualities for which they were revered. At a later period in the history of religion, the divinity was partly humanized; and a human deity was conceived with certain animal parts to represent the form under which he had originally been worshipped. Later on, all vestiges of the ancient animal forms were discarded, and the deity emerged in full human form. This evolution accounts for the fact that the Devil has appeared to our ancestors in full animal form, in a form half animal and half human, and finally wholly human.

As a matter of fact, every animal form that was assumed by the gods in antiquity has had its body occupied by the Devil.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, the Devil's representation in the form of certain animals is the result of a literal interpretation of a figurative scriptural expression. The medieval writers had a tendency to convert symbols and metaphors into facts. If the Devil is called in the New Testament a roaring lion, a dragon, a serpent, a wolf, a dog, it was instantly supposed that he was in the habit of actually assuming the forms of these animals.

The elephant, which was sacred to the eyes of the Buddhist, had its body inhabited by the Devil. The bull was diabolized for the

<sup>6</sup> The Devil, it should be added in all truthfulness, appears on certain occasions also in an agreeable form. Anatole France tells us that "the Devil... clothes himself in divers forms, sometimes pleasing, when he succeeds in disguising his natural ugliness, at other times, hideous, when he lets his true nature be seen" (*la Rôtisserie de la Reine Pédauque*, 1893). William Shakespeare has also remarked that "the Devil hath power to assume a pleasing shape" (*Hamlet*, II, ii, 628-9).

<sup>7</sup> The animals which were diabolized by the early Christians on account of their associations with mythological personages or ideas should not be confused, however, with those animals which, owing to the fact that they possess qualities inimical to man, were already feared as demons in the animistic religions.

reason that he was venerated by the Egyptians. As successor to the Egyptian Seth, Satan also appeared in the form of a pig. The fox, which was sacred to certain ancient divinities, was likewise considered as the Devil's incarnation. The bear was for similar reasons one of the Devil's medieval metamorphoses.

The representation of the Devil in the shape of a goat goes back to far antiquity. Goat-formed deities and spirits of the woods existed in the religions of India, Egypt, Assyria, and Greece.<sup>8</sup> The Assyrian god was often associated with the goat, which was supposed to possess the qualities for which he was worshipped. This animal was also connected with the worship of Priapus, the Greek god of vegetal and animal fertility. The goat was similarly sacred to the Northern god Donar or Thor, whom, as Jacob Grimm says, the modern notions of the Devil often have in the background. Thor's chariot was drawn by goats. As the familiar of the witch, the Devil appeared in the form of a goat as well as in that of a dog. Esmeralda's goat, in Victor Hugo's novel *Notre-Dame de Paris* (1831), was believed to be her familiar demon. French witches were often thought to slip into the skin of a goat to identify themselves with their goatish god. Satan presided at the Witches' Sabbath in the form of a black buck. The goat, in the grand scene of the Last Judgment, is also the symbol of the slaves of sin.<sup>9</sup>

The dog has always been one of the Devil's favorite metamorphoses, especially as the familiar of the witch or wizard. The Devil had already been represented as a dog in the Bible (Phil. iii. 2; Rev. xxii. 15). He is, therefore, called hell-hound in the medieval mysteries. Mephistopheles appears to Faust in the form of an ugly dog, "a fit emblem," as Conway says, "of the scholar's relapse into the canine temper which flies at the world as at a bone he means to gnaw."<sup>10</sup> Cornelius Agrippa, the sceptic philosopher, who was considered a magician in the Middle Ages, was also attended by a devil in the shape of a black dog.

The Devil as guardian of hell was also equated to Cerberus and inherited the latter's triple head. Many mythologies, in fact, show

<sup>8</sup> On the relation of satyrs to goats see Sir John Frazer's *Golden Bough*, vol. VIII, pp. 1sq.

<sup>9</sup> The creation of the goat has also been ascribed to the Devil. Hans Sachs has written a farce entitled "The Devil Created Goats" (September 24, 1556). Engl. Transl. in Wm. Leighton's *Merry Tales of Hans Sachs* (London, 1920), pp. 129-131.

<sup>10</sup> Moncure Daniel Conway: *Demonology and Devil-Lore*. 2 vols., 3rd ed., New York, 1889.

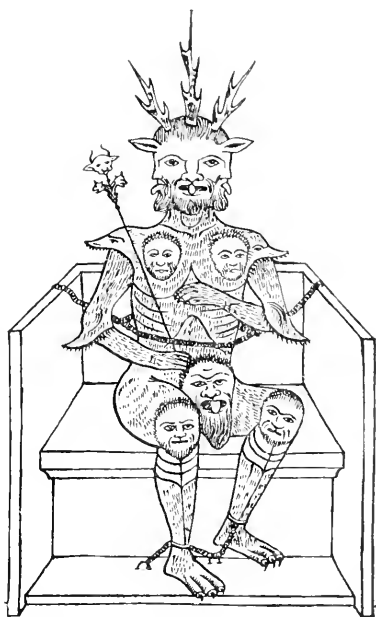


tricephalic gods of the underworld. The Devil's trinitarian head recalls Typhon of the Egyptians, Hecate of classical mythology, Hrim-Grimmir of the Edda and Triglaf of the Slavs.<sup>11</sup> The Dantean Dis has three faces: one in front, and one on each side. The middle face is red, that on the right side whitish-yellow, that on the left side black.<sup>12</sup> The trinity idea of the Devil was in-



#### THE TRINITY

From a painted window of the sixteenth century in the church of Notra Dame at Chalons, France.



#### THE TRINITY OF EVIL

From a French MS. of the fifteenth century, preserved in the Bibliothèque Royale at Paris.

terpreted by the Church fathers as Satan's parody of the trinitarian God-head. The Devil is described as a three headed monster in the Gospel of Nicodemus (3rd cent.) and in the Good Friday Sermon of Eusebius of Alexandria, who addresses him as the "Three-headed Beelzebub."

The Devil inherited the form of a crow or black raven from

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Paul Carus: *History of the Devil and the Idea of Evil* (Chicago, 1900), p. 249.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

Odin, who, in Scandinavian mythology, had two ravens perched on his shoulders. Mephistopheles, in Goethe's *Faust*, is accompanied by two crows (i. 2491).

The dove, which was a sacred animal in the pagan period, was, in Christian days, gradually invested with something of the evil character of the Tempter of Job and came very nearly to represent the old fatal serpent power. This creature was sacred to all Semites, who revered it as the reincarnation of their beloved dead, and who, for this reason, avoided eating or even touching it. The Romans also held the dove in veneration and offered it as a sacrifice to Venus.

The bat, on account of its ugly form, was especially fit to offer its body for habitation by the Devil. In Anatole France's story "Le Grand St. Nicolas" (1909), six devils appear in the form of bats.

The rat or mouse was also among the Devil's metamorphoses. It will be remembered that Mephistopheles calls himself in Goethe's *Faust* "the lord of rats and mice." (i. 1516). An imp of hell jumps out of the mouth of the witch, with whom Faust dances in the Walpurgis-Night, in the form of a little red mouse (*ibid.*, i. 2179). In the Middle Ages, the soul was often represented as leaving the body in the form of a mouse. The soul of a good man comes out of his mouth as a white mouse, while at the death of a sinner the soul escapes as a black mouse, which the Devil catches and carries to hell. The Piper of Hamelin, in the legend well known to the English world through Robert Browning's poem "Pied Piper of Hamelin" (1843) and Miss Josephine Peabody's play *The Piper* (1909), who carried off one hundred and fifty children when the inhabitants of Hammel in Saxony refused to pay him for ridding them of the rats which had infected their town, was, according to Johannes Wierus and Robert Burton, none other than the Devil in person; and the rats which he charmed with his music into following him were human souls. Death, the Devil's first cousin, if not his *alter ego*, similarly has the souls, in the Dance of Death, march off to hell to a merry tune on his violin.<sup>13</sup>

The form of the fly for the Fiend was suggested by Ahriman, the Persian evil spirit, who is the ancestor of our Devil and who entered the world as a fly. The word *beelzebub* means in Hebrew "the fly-god." In Spencer's *The Faerie Queen* (1590-96), Archimago summons spirits from hell in the shape of flies.

<sup>13</sup> On the Devil in the form of a mouse, see M. Barth's article "Dämonen in Mäusegestalt" in the *Kölnische Volkszeitung* of February 7, 1917.

The cat, which was considered in Egypt as a guardian genius, a friend of the family, and a slayer of evil things, has been a representation of the Devil in all Christian lands. Bast, an Egyptian goddess, was figured with the head of a cat. Inasmuch as this animal was sacred to the ancient Egyptians, it naturally enough became a devil to medieval Christians. The cat, which drew the wagon of Freya, became the Devil's pet animal, after the Scandinavian goddess had turned as Frau Holle into the Devil's grandmother. The witch was believed to transform herself into a cat.

The belief in the diabolical character of the cat has persisted to this day and has even been shared by a great number of modern poets. Goethe, the German poet and sage, openly said that he believed black cats were of the Evil One. The French diabolists Baudelaire and Huysmans adored this animal. Verlaine, in his poem "Femme et chatte" (1866), represents the cat as the impersonation of the Devil, and woman as very much akin to the two. "The cat," Théophile Gautier has said in his essay on Baudelaire (1868), "has the appearance of knowing the latest sabbatical chronicle, and he will willingly rub himself against the lame leg of Mephistopheles."<sup>14</sup>

The dragon is a frequent diabolical figure in medieval literature. The basis of the conception of the Devil as a dragon is in the Book of Revelations (xii. 3, 7, 9). The Devil appears as a dragon in Michelet's story "Madeleine Bavent." In Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* (1678), the devil Apollyon is a winged dragon covered with scales, and belching fire and smoke. The Devil appears in the form of a dragon in the pictorial representations of the combat between St. Michael and the leader of the rebel angels by Raphael in the Louvre, by Luca Giordano in the Belvedere of Vienna, by Schongauer in the Cathedral of Ulm, by Jacobello del Fiore in Berlin and by Mabuse in Munich. In the Faust-book, Faust flies in a dragon-drawn chariot through the air. In Calderon's play *el Magico prodigioso* (c. 1635), Satan appears in the end as a dragon.<sup>15</sup>

The basis of the conception of the Devil as a worm is in the

<sup>14</sup> On the cat, cf. Anne Marks: *The Cat in History, Legend and Art*, London, 1909; Champfleury (pseud. of J. H. Fleury): *The Cat Past and Present*, translated from the French by Mrs. Hoey, London, 1885; A. M. Michelet (Mme Jules Michelet): *les Chats*, Paris, 1909. Mr. Carl Van Doren has recently published in New York two anthologies of cat stories.

<sup>15</sup> On the dragon, consult the following two recent books: G. Eliot Smith's *The Evolution of the Dragon* (1919) and Ernest Ingersoll's *Dragons and Dragon Lore* (1928).

passage "their worm shall not die" (Is. lxvi. 24; cf. Mark ix. 44, 46, 48), which has been applied to the chief of the evil spirits.

The representation of the Devil in the form of a wolf is the result of a literal interpretation of the biblical phrase "grievous wolves enter in among you" (Acts xx. 29).

Notwithstanding the biblical comparison of the Devil to the most courageous and ferocious of all wild beasts (1 Peter v. 8), representations of the Devil in the form of a lion were not popular out of respect for "the lion out of the tribe of Judah" (Rev. v. 5). The substitution of the dragon or the serpent for the lion as a general representation of the Devil was, furthermore, made necessary in certain countries by national respect as well as by Christian tradition. In the play *Pyramus and Thisbe* written by Rederijker Goosen ten Berch of Amsterdam, a lioness, appearing in a silent rôle, is however, interpreted as the Devil.

The Devil's simian aspect is of patristic origin. It comes from the fact that the Church fathers called Lucifer an ape on account of his efforts to mimic the Lord. When they noticed the similarities between the observances of Christians and pagans, they explained them as diabolical counterfeits. They believed that the Devil, whose business it always is to pervert the truth, imitated the sacraments of the church in the mysteries of the idols. The patristic appellation for the Devil as *simia Dei* was taken literally by later writers, and the Devil was represented by them under the form of a monkey.

Of all representations of Evil, that of the serpent is common to all countries, all peoples, all times and all religions. The serpent as an autumnal constellation figured among all races as an enemy of the sun-god or light-god. Moreover, the serpent, of old the "seer," was, in its Semitic adaptation, the tempter to forbidden knowledge. Satan played this part to our ancestors in the Garden of Eden. He appears in the traditional shape of the serpent in Dante's *Purgatorio* (viii. 98f.) Milton similarly mentions the infernal serpent (*Par. Lost* i. 34). A legend of the Devil in the form of a serpent will also be found in the *Dialogues* of St. Gregory the Great (593-94). Paphnutius, in Anatole France's novel *Thais* (1890), sees Lucifer as "the serpent with golden wings which twisted round the tree of knowledge its azure coils formed of light and love." In Goethe's *Faust*, Mephistopheles calls the serpent his aunt (i. 2049).

The Devil may owe his office as guardian of treasures to his

identification with the serpent or dragon. In Hindu mythology, homage is paid the serpent as guardian of treasures. The idea that demons are guardians of treasures is especially prevalent in the Orient. Furthermore, the Devil, who dwells in the bowels of the



THE GOOD LORD AND THE DEVIL  
(In Goethe's Faust, by Franz Simm.)

earth, was soon regarded as the guardian of all subterranean treasures and as the possessor of unlimited wealth. It is believed in many European countries that treasures can be found on St. John's Eve by means of the fern seed. Treasures also bloom or burn in the earth and reveal their presence by a bluish flame on Midsummer Eve.

The idea of the Devil, in the representation of the temptation of Eve, as a serpent with the head of a woman is not earlier than the Middle Ages. According to the Venerable Bede, Lucifer chose to

tempt Eve through a serpent which had a female head because "like is attracted to like." Vincent de Beauvais accepts Bede's view on the female head of the serpent in the Garden of Eden. Pierre Comestor, in his *Historia scholastica* (c. 1176), concludes from this fact that, while the serpent was yet erect, it had a virgin's head. In the temptation scene of the medieval mystery plays, Satan usually appears as a serpent with a woman's head. Raphael, in his representation of the combat between St. Michael and the Devil, likewise represents the latter as a serpent with a woman's head. Ruskin shows an unfamiliarity with medieval literature and art when he states that the serpent in Paradise was for many centuries represented with the head of a man. In Grandchamp's painting of the Temptation, however, the serpent has the head of a handsome young man.

When the Devil was later figured in human form, he was given the head of an elephant, a camel, a pig, or a bird covered with thick locks resembling serpents, the ears of an ass, the mouth and teeth of a lion, the beard of a goat, the horns of a goat, a bull, or a stag,<sup>16</sup> the wings of a bat, the long tail of a dragon, the claws of a tiger, and the foot of a bull, a horse, a goat, or a cock. The Ethiopic devil's right foot is a claw, and his left foot a hoof.

The Devil inherited his bull-horns and bull-foot from Dionysus, his horse-foot from Loki and his goat-foot from Pan. He borrowed his snaky *coiffure* from the Erinyes and his batwings from the Lemures, and shares his elephant-head with Ganesa, the Hindu god of wisdom, and his dragon-tail with the Chimera.

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The Devil appears in many colors, principally, however, in black. The black color presumably is intended to suggest his place of abode. Racial hatred had, however, much to do with the dark description of the Devil. There is no warrant in biblical tradition for a black devil. Satan, however, appeared as an Ethiopian or Moor as far back as the days of the Church fathers. Descriptions of the Devil as black in color will be found in the Acts of the

<sup>16</sup>The Devil's horns are first mentioned in the *Vita S. Antonii* by St. Athanasius (4th cent.). Mr. R. Lowe Thompson, in his recent *History of the Devil* (1929), traces the Devil's horns to the dawn of history. He sees in the medieval demon the successor to Cernunnos, the ancient Gallic god of the dead. Adam Hamilton published anonymously a very clever essay entitled *Where Are my Horns*, in which Lucifer himself addresses the readers.

Martyrs, the Acts of St. Bartholomew, and in the writings of Augustine and Gregory the Great. A black face was a permanent feature of the medieval representations of the Devil. "Of all human forms," Reginald Scot tells us in his *Discoverie of Witchcraft* (1584), "that of a Negro or a Moor is considered a favorite one with the demons." Satan figures as king of the Africans in John Bunyan's *Holy War* (1682). In modern literature, the Devil appears as a Black Bogey, among others, in Washington Irving's "The Devil and Tom Walker" (1824), in Robert Louis Stevenson's "Thrawn Janet" (1881) and in Anatole France's *le Livre de mon ami* (1884). It is a common belief still to-day in Scotland that the Devil is a black man. The term "Printer's Devil" is usually accounted for by the fact that Aldus Manutius, the great Venetian printer, employed in his printing shop toward the end of the fifteenth century a black slave, who was popularly thought to be an imp from hell. We now recall the popular saying that the Devil is not so black as he is painted. Even the devout George Herbert wrote:—

"We paint the Devil black, yet he  
Hath some good in him all agree."

It should, however, be added in all truthfulness that whereas the Devil shows himself as a Negro among white men, he appears as a white man among the negroes. Many tribes of Western Africa, as a matter of fact, represent the Devil as white.

The Devil also appears to us in flaming red colors, whether he wears tights or not. Satan is portrayed in popular imagination as a sort of eternal salamander. He was described already in the New Testament as a fiery fiend. Red was considered among all Oriental nations as a diabolical color. Agni, one of the chief gods mentioned in the Indo-Aryan sacred books, is described as red in color. Brahma of the Hindus was also represented as of a red color. Hapi, god of the Nile, is also figured red in color.

The Devil also appears in yellow and blue colors. Yellow was considered, from antiquity, the color of infamy.<sup>17</sup> The blue devil is a sulphurously constituted individual. When the Englishman suffers from melancholy, he believes himself to be possessed by the "blues," *i. e.* the blue devils.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>17</sup> In Lenau's drama *Faust* (1835), the Devil is a gypsy for reasons other perhaps than the color of his skin.

<sup>18</sup> Luther remarked that the Devil was a mournful character and could in no way endure light, cheerful music.

As a matter of fact, the Devil appears in any color that has an unpleasant look or suggestion. "As white as the Devil," say the Orientals, for whom white is the color of death and mourning. "As green as the Devil," says the Spaniard inasmuch as green was a sacred color to the Moors. "As yellow as the Devil," say the Italians, who do not like this color. The French swear-word *sacré bleu*, however, has no diabolical connotation. It is a euphemism for *sacré Dieu*. The French expression *le diable vert* also has no reference to the Devil's color. Gérard de Nerval has written a clever story "le Diable vert" (1849) in explanation of this expression.<sup>19</sup>

The Devil usually has saucer eyes all black without any white (Mérimée, *Lettres à une inconnue*, xxv). In Charles Nodier's story "le Combe de l'homme mort" (1832), he has little red eyes, more sparkling than red-hot coals. In Russian iconography, the all-seeing spirit of evil is represented as covered with eyes. Edgar Allan Poe, in his story "Bon-Bon" (1835) and Charles Baudelaire in his prose poem "les Tentations, ou Eros, Plutus et la Gloire" (1863), on the other hand, represent the Devil as an eyeless monster.

The Devil is usually figured in a lean form. His hands are long and lean. His face is generally as pale and yellow as the wax of an old candle and furrowed by wrinkled lines. The cadaverous aspect of the Devil is of old antiquity. With but one exception (the Egyptian Typhon), demons are always represented as lean. "A devil," said Cæsarius of Heisterbach of the thirteenth century, "is usually so thin as to cast no shadow" (*Dialogus miraculorum*, iii). This characteristic of the Devil is a heritage of the ancient hunger-demon, who could not be felt, because his back was hollow, and, though himself a shadow, cast no shadow. The Devil was reputed, however, to cast his own shadow in Toledo, the immortal home of magic. In the course of the centuries, though, the Fiend has gained flesh.

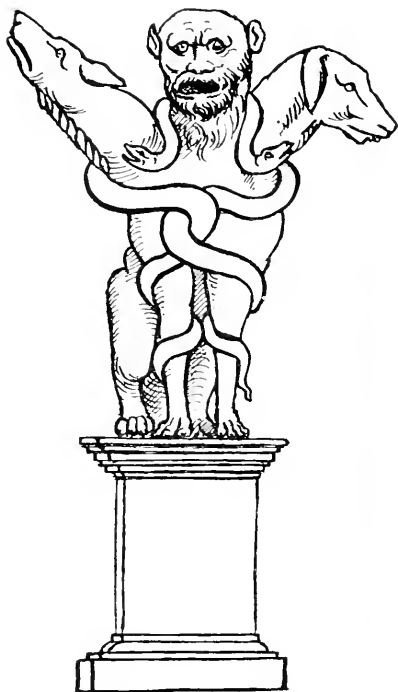
Hairiness is a pretty generally ascribed characteristic of the Devil. He has probably inherited his hairy skin from the fauns and satyrs. Esau was also believed to have been a hairy demon.

The Devil was often represented with a long beard, but long bearded devils are more common in the representations of the Eastern church. Diabolus was formed in the image and likeness of the Greek ecclesiastic, whose crook he often carries in his hand on

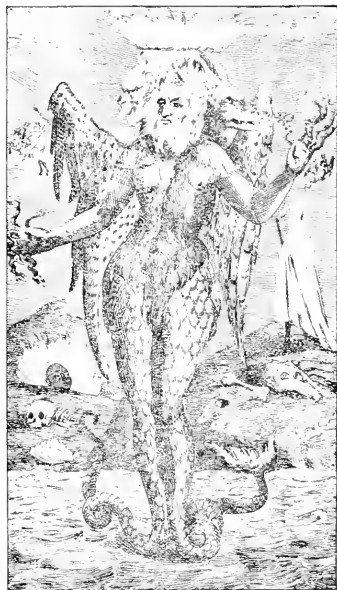
<sup>19</sup> For the correct explanation of this expression consult Littré's dictionary.



cathedral doors or church paintings. Satan is known to affect ecclesiastical appearance, as will be seen further in our discussion.



THE THREE-HEADED  
SERAPIS



AZIEL, THE GUARDIAN  
OF HIDDEN TREASURES.

Moreover, as the counterpart of the monarch of heaven, the monarch of hell must needs also have a long beard. Pluto has a long beard descending over his chest in Tasso's poem *Gerusalemme liberata* (iv. 53).

The Devil's beard as well as his hair is usually of a flaming red color. Satan and Judas were both represented on the medieval stage with red beards. The Devil has flaming red hair in Nodier's story already mentioned. In Egypt, red hair and red animals of all kinds were considered infernal. Typhon, the evil spirit in Egyptian mythology, has red hair. Thor or Donar, in Scandinavian mythology, also has a red beard, although this, of course, represents the

lightning.<sup>20</sup> Red hair is down to the present day a mark of a suspicious character.

The Devil is often represented with a hump. This deformity was caused, according to the account given by Victor Hugo in his book *le Rhin* (1842), by the fact that, in escaping out of the sack in which the Devil carried them on his back to hell, the human souls left behind "their foul sins and heinous crimes, a hideous heap, which, by the force of attraction natural to the fiend, incrustrated itself between his shoulders like a monstrous wen, and remained for ever fixed." A book entitled *le Diable bossu* appeared at Nancy, in 1708, as a pendant to LeSage's novel *le Diable boiteux* published the preceding year.

The Devil often wears a suit of green cloth, as may be seen in Walter Scott's well-known ballad.<sup>21</sup> Shakespeare is of the opinion that the Devil wears black garments (*Hamlet* III, ii, 1223). In Poe's story "Bon-Bon" already mentioned, the Devil wears a suit of black cloth. The color of his garments has, however, also been red, bistre and golden. In Goethe's *Faust*, Mephistopheles appears in a scarlet waist-coat and tights (i. 1536 and 2485). In Nodier's story already mentioned, the Devil is dressed in a doublet and breeches of scarlet red and wears on top of his head a woollen cap of the same color.

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In our own days, the Devil has turned human, all too human for most of us. He no longer appears in the gala attire of tail, horns and cloven foot, with which he used to grace the revels on the Blocksberg. "You fancied I was different, did you not, Johannes?" Satan asks the little Dutch boy in Frederik van Eeden's novel *De kleine Johannes* (1887). "That I had horns and a tail? That idea is out of date. No one believes it now." The Devil now moves among men in their own likeness, but "the kernel of the brute is in him still." His diabolical traits appear no longer in his body, but in his face; you can see them there, although he does not mean you should.

But although the Devil can now discard his animal parts, he

<sup>20</sup> On red hair as a diabolical characteristic, see E. L. Buchholz: *Deutscher Glaube und Brauch im Spiegel der heidnischen Vorzeit* (Berlin, 1867), II, 218-25.

<sup>21</sup> The story of this ballad is given towards the end of this article.

cannot rid himself of his limp, which is the result of his cloven hoof or broken leg. He still limps slightly, like Byron, no more and no less.<sup>22</sup> But notwithstanding his defect in walking, he steps firmly on this earth. The traditional explanation for the Devil's broken leg is his fall from heaven. This idea was suggested by the scriptural saying: "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven" (Luke x. 18). One of the most striking indications of the fall of the demons from heaven is the wide-spread belief that they are lame. This idea has probably been derived from the crooked lightnings. Thoth, Hephaistos (=Vulcan) Loki, Wieland, each had a broken or crooked leg. Asmodeus, in LeSage's novel *le Diable boiteux* (1707), appears as a limping gentleman, who uses two sticks as crutches.<sup>23</sup> He ascribes, in this book, his broken leg to a fight with a brother-devil and his subsequent fall. According to rabbinical tradition, this demon broke his leg when he hurried to meet King Solomon. Victor Hugo, in *le Rhin*, offers another explanation for the lameness of Asmodeus. According to this writer, a stone crushed the demon's leg. In Maupassant's story, "la Légende du Mont St. Michel" (1882), Satan had his leg broken when, in his flight from St. Michael, he jumped off the roof of the castle, into which he had been lured by the archangel.

The Devil is now clad in the costume of the period. He has on clothes which any gentleman might wear. The Devil is very proud of this epithet given him by Sir John Suckling ("The prince of darkness is a gentleman" in *The Goblins*) and by William Shakespeare ("The Prince of demons is a gentleman" in *King Lear*); and from that time on, it has been his greatest ambition to be a gentleman, in outer appearance at least: and to his credit it must be said that he has so well succeeded in his efforts to resemble a gentleman that it is now very difficult to tell the two apart. Satan wears with equal ease an evening suit, a hunting coat, a scholar's gown, a professor's robe (as in the paintings of Giotto's school), or a parson's soutane.

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<sup>22</sup> Heine in his poem "Ich rief den Teufel und er kam" (1824), is of the opinion, however, that the Devil has finally succeeded in correcting his defect in walking. Mephistopheles retains, however, his limping leg in Goethe's *Faust* (i. 2498).

<sup>23</sup> The mother of the Devil is named, in the Alsfeld Passion Play of the end of the 15th century, Hellekrug (Höllenkücke) for the reason that she walks on crutches.

The Devil loves to slip into priestly robes, although it cannot really be said that he is "one of those who take to the ministry mostly." In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, Satan is frequently shown under the garb of a monk. The Devil disguised as a monk has assumed a national character in Spain. The most characteristic treatment of the Devil in Spain is the play *el Diablo predicador* attributed to Belmote of Cello, in which Lucifer is forced to turn Franciscan monk. The conception of the Devil as a monk in the Germanic countries after the Reformation was principally the result of the Protestant anti-clerical sentiment. Luther declared, in fact, that the true Satanic livery was a monk's cowl. Satan is disguised as a monk in John Bale's biblical drama *The Temptation of Jesus* (1538). Mephistopheles, in the Faust-book, appears first to Faust in the guise of a monk. In Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus* (c. 1589), Mephistopheles takes the form of a Franciscan monk. In the "Temptation of Jesus" by Lucas van Leyden, the Devil is habited as a monk with a pointed cowl. In Anatole France's stories, the Fiend often borrows the appearance of a monk.<sup>24</sup>

Satan is known to have occupied pulpits in many parts of Christendom. The Fiend is even famed as a pulpit orator. His speech to St. Guthlac, the Irish St. Anthony, is not, as has been somewhere stated, the only extant instance of a diabolical sermon. Among others, the Devil is said to have preached a sermon in the Church of North Berwick. Lord Morley recently related the French story of the monk, who was a particular friend of the Devil and who had him occupy his pulpit.<sup>25</sup>

The Devil has now added to the charm of his exterior, already conferred upon him by Milton, a corresponding dignity of bearing

<sup>24</sup> On the Devil as a monk, read the interesting essay by Georg Ellinger: "Ueber den Teufel als Mönch." *Zeitschrift für vergleichende Literatur-Geschichte*. N. F. I (1887-8) S. 174-81.

<sup>25</sup> The story as quoted by John O'London (pseud. of Wilfred Whitton) in a recent number of the *New York Times Book Review* runs as follows: A certain French monk, who was a particular friend of the Devil, was one Sunday morning too ill to preach, and as Diabolus chanced to appear that morning in the sacristy, he asked that obliging personality to occupy his pulpit for the special edification of his congregation. The Devil preached a most masterly sermon, covering himself with shame and confusion. "How now?" said the monk when the Devil came down, "you have pretty nearly ruined yourself with that sermon." "Oh! dear no," answered the Devil, "no harm done, no harm done; there was no unction in it." Richard Taylor's book entitled *The Devil's Pulpit* is a work on religious origins, which caused a great stir in England upon its publication in 1830. The Reverend Mr. W. S. Harris published in Philadelphia, in 1903, a book of *Sermons by the Devil* illustrated by Paul Krafft and others.

and nobility of sentiment. Marie Corelli, in her novel *The Sorrows of Satan* (1895), describes the Devil as of extraordinary physical beauty, fascination of manner, perfect health, and splendid intellectuality. In fact, he is represented by her as "a perfect impersonation of perfect manhood." The modern French writers also have a rather flattering opinion of the Devil. Georges Ohnet, in his novel *L'olonté* (1889), describes his villain, Clément de Thauziat, as "resplendent in Satanic beauty." Anatole France represents the fallen angel as "black and beautiful as a young Egyptian ("l'Humaine tragédie," 1895).

The Devil manifests himself to us now as a well-bred, cultivated man of the world. In appearing among us, he generally borrows a tall handsome figure, surmounted by delicate features, dresses well, is fastidious about his rings and linen, travels post and stops at the best hotels. As he can boast of abundant means and a handsome wardrobe, it is no wonder that he should everywhere be politely received. In fact, as Voltaire has already said, he gets into very agreeable society. His brilliant powers of conversation, his adroit flattery, courteous gallantry, and elegant, though wayward, flights of imagination, soon render him the delight of the company in every *salon*. In Heine's poem already mentioned, the Devil, by grace of the prelates of the Church, is at present the most admired personage in every court and fashionable drawing-room in Christendom.

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When the Devil wishes to tempt a man in the flesh, he approaches him in the form of a beautiful girl. The belief prevailed in the Middle Ages that the Devil is often manifest on earth clothed in all the natural perfections of woman, inciting men to sin until their souls are by this means snatched from their bodies and carried off to hell. The French theologians call the Devil incorporated in a woman "the beautiful Devil." It was in this form that St. Anthony met the Tempter in the Thebaid. This may be seen in the paintings by Bosch, Altdorfer and Teniers. Temptation in the form of a woman is very common in literature as in life. There is an instance of it in Dryden's *King Arthur* (1691) and in a ballad by Walter Scott, the story of which runs as follows: Two hunters meet two beautiful ladies in green. One of the hunters goes off with one of the green ladies. The other gentleman is more prudent.

After a time, he goes in quest of his companion and discovers that he has been torn to pieces by the Devil, who had assumed so fascinating a form. Beelzebub transforms himself into a beautiful girl in order to bedevil a young man in Jacques Cazotte's romance *le Diable amoureux* (1772). Théophile Gautier, in his poem *Albertus* (1830), tells how the Devil disguised himself as a woman to tempt a painter of high ideals and finally twists his neck.

The Devil has evidently in modern times changed sex as well as custom and costume. Owen Meredith has said:

"The Devil, my friend, is a woman just now,  
'Tis a woman that reigns in Hell."

Victor Hugo similarly believed that the Devil is now incarnated in woman, as may be seen from the following line:

"Dieu s'est fait homme: soit. Le Diable s'est fait femme"  
(*Ruy Blas*, 1838).

The belief in woman as the incarnation of the Devil was current until recent times in all Catholic countries. Prosper Mérimée speaks fully in the spirit of the Church fathers when he says: "Woman is the surest instrument of damnation which the Evil One can employ." St. Cyprian said: "Woman is the instrument which the Devil employs to possess our souls," and St. Tertullian addressed the beautiful sex with the following words: "Woman, thou art the gate to hell." "The eternal Venus," says Baudelaire, "is one of the most seductive forms of the Devil." The proverb says that the heart of a beautiful woman is the most beloved hiding place of at least seven demons.<sup>26</sup>

Modern artists frequently represent the Devil as a woman. Felicien Rops, Max Klinger, and Franz Stuck may be cited as illustrations.

<sup>26</sup> A recent volume of tales in verse by Mrs. Alice Mary Kimball bears the title *The Devil is a Woman* (Alfred A. Knopf).

# SUGGESTIONS OF OCCIDENTAL THOUGHT IN ANCIENT CHINESE PHILOSOPHY

BY J. K. SHRYOCK.

## PART I.

SOME of my friends who are interested in the history of thought think that there is little of value to the student in the philosophy of the east. This is natural enough as regards China, because the difficulty of the classical language deters all but a few from its study, and also because those who have devoted themselves to things Chinese have had little training except in linguistics. It requires a training in philosophy to understand the philosophic literature of any race, as well as a knowledge of the language, and this professional point of view is lacking in most of the translations of the Chinese classics which have appeared in western tongues. The result has been that we have thought of the Chinese as a practical people who were interested only in ethics, and have given little effort to speculative thought. That the rich mine of Chinese philosophy has recently been opened for us is due partly to European scholars like Professor Forke, of Berlin, and partly to modern-trained Chinese, like Dr. Hu Shih, whose history of ancient Chinese thought, which has not been translated, has begun a new era in Chinese writing. Only the surface of this mine has been worked, and there is a depressingly large field which awaits careful investigation by properly equipped men. With the exception of Dr. Henke and Dr. H. H. Dubs, Americans have had very little to do with the results until now, but it is to be hoped that we will develop scholars who may cope with the problems which wait solution. Already it is known that the Chinese have furnished a long line of thinkers who can challenge comparison with the best of any nation, and without a knowledge of whom no account of the search for truth is adequate.

The best known and the most interesting period of Chinese philosophy is that of the Chou dynasty, which lasted roughly from 1100 to 230 B. C. During the last three centuries of this dynasty the real power lay in the hands of feudal princes, whose quarrels kept the country in continual war and reduced the common people to starvation and brigandage, while the courts, cities and armies multiplied and flourished. In spite of the disorder, civilization advanced at the same time that morals declined, and the constant communication between the feudal capitals aided in the spread of ideas.

There was in China a class of men who were peculiarly fitted to advance the development of thought. These were the peripatetic scholars whose business was the science of government, and who wandered from court to court seeking employment from the feudal lords. These men were advisors and not fighters, owing their positions to their knowledge and mental ability. Nearly all the thinkers of the period came from their ranks, and most of them had practical experience in official positions, yet it is to their credit that a surprising number preferred their self-respect to honor and fame, resigning their posts when the ruler indulged in unethical conduct against their advice. The Chinese have always recognized the close connection between ethics and politics.

In their struggle to solve the problems of their own time they attacked questions which have arisen whenever men have reasoned about the universe and human existence. The main positions in metaphysics, epistemology, and ethics and even logic were taken and debated, while man after man elaborated and entrenched the teaching of his school in the light of criticism and argument. During the latter part of the period the city of Liang in the central state of Wei, where the dukes were patrons of literature, attracted a group of brilliant men whose solutions of the problems of philosophy often anticipated the best results of occidental thought. When their writings are put into the technical language of western scholarship, it becomes apparent that the human mind reasons in the same way when faced by certain difficulties, whether in China or in Europe, and that eastern Asia can lay claim to a line of thinkers who may be placed in comparison even with their contemporaries in ancient Greece.



## THE ABSOLUTE.

Chinese classic literature is not old, compared with that of Egypt and Mesopotamia. The three works generally accepted as the earliest are the *Book of History*, the *Book of Changes*, and the *Book of Poetry*. While there is considerable dispute concerning certain passages, the first of these may possibly contain material of the 18th Century B. C. but took its present form after the year 1000 B. C., and the second is attributed to the last quarter of the 12th Century, B. C.

The *Book of History* is an interpretation of the chief events in the ancient history of the Chinese in terms of a practical monotheism. Although lesser spirits, connected with mountains, forests and bodies of water are recognized and sacrifices to them recorded, throughout the book nothing occurs except by the will or command of Heaven. Another phrase is also used, which sinologues generally agree is equated to Heaven, Shang Ti, or the Emperor on High. The first term is impersonal in the sense of our Providence, while the second is usually translated by God, and they are used interchangeably. The ruler owes his position to the Decree of Heaven, the virtues and the social order have their origin in Heaven, dynasties change and calamities occur by the will of Shang Ti, and his decisions are shown by the course of history, through divination, by the words of great men who represent him, and by the desire of the nation as a whole. In the book no war, either civil or foreign, is declared to be a struggle between divinities. On the contrary, Heaven rules over all impartially, barbarians as well as Chinese, and the ruler of a new dynasty sacrifices to Shang Ti in the same way as the man he superseded. While this God cannot be called an impersonal absolute, there are almost no traces of anthropomorphism. His attributes imply personality, and he is supreme in the universe. This concept of God was embodied in the later Confucian tradition and is still of great influence in China.

*The Book of Changes*, however, gives a somewhat different picture. The work seems to be an attempt to solve the problem of the one and the many, based upon ancient geometrical figures, or trigrams, which had long been used for divination. The trigrams are formed of broken and unbroken straight lines. These lines, the eight trigrams, and further combinations of sixty-four hexagrams, represent natural objects and forces, as well as ethical qualities, and

by using them as a text, the authors have constructed a description of the universe which gives a large amount of moral instruction and a good account of the civilization of the period. The book contains the following sentence.

"Therefore Change has the Great Ultimate, which gives birth to the two Principles. The two Principles give birth to the four Images (or Forms). The four Images give birth to the eight Trigrams."<sup>1</sup>

The Great Ultimate is represented by an unbroken line, the Principles by two lines, one broken and the other unbroken, the four Images or Forms are combinations of two lines each, and it can be seen how the Trigrams, which stand for the sun, clouds, fire and so on, can be combined into a short-hand account of the universe, all developed from a single source.

There is nothing in the text which justifies equating the Great Ultimate to Heaven, and it appears to be an impersonal absolute. The passage is brief, and does not seem to have had much influence in the period which immediately followed, but it was seized upon by the scholars of the Sung dynasty in the 11th Century of our era and made the keystone of their system of thought. As 2000 years lay between the Sung thinkers and the authors of the Book of Changes, it is very uncertain whether their interpretation of the text existed in the minds of those who wrote it.

An attempt to construct an absolute which was more immediately effective was made by Lao Tzu in the 6th Century B. C. Lao Tzu's effort has been studied by European scholars more as mysticism than as philosophy, but it is a very respectable intellectual achievement. His problem is the old one, which he probably inherited from the Book of Changes, how to account for change by that which does not change, and for the particular by the universal. That the first serious attack upon this question should be a little vague is not surprising.

Lao Tzu's method is the use of antinomies. He couples opposite and mutually exclusive statements, asserting both to apply to his absolute, which he calls Tao. Tao has a name, and yet is nameless. Nameless, it originated Heaven and Earth; named, it is the mother of all things, and yet named and nameless, it is the same. It is existence and non-existence, which give birth to each other. Six

<sup>1</sup> *Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. 16. Chapter I "Chi Tsi Chuan."

pairs of opposites are given, such as length and shortness, which are opposed and yet unified because one requires the other. Good and evil, beauty and ugliness are relative, and the existence of one term implies the existence of the other. The statement that all things change is itself an unchanging rule. Tao is a flow and pervades all things. It is undefined and complete, existing before Heaven and Earth, weak and yet strong. It can be found and practised, yet no one is able to find or practice it. It is not knowledge, but rather a forgetting of wisdom, and yet it may be known. It does nothing, and so there is nothing which it does not do.

Tao, the word which Lao Tzu uses for the absolute, probably meant road or way originally, but by the 6th Century it had already acquired a philosophic meaning, and there are reasons for supposing that he was not unique in his application of the term. It is not the equivalent of Heaven, for it is distinctly said to have existed prior to Heaven, and it is not ethical, but superior to the distinctions of ethics. Benevolence and justice did not come into being until men had lost Tao, and this opposition to the virtues is characteristic of the later Taoist writers. Lao Tzu seems to have caught his inspiration from nature, which appears to produce the growth of plants and animals as well as the course of the seasons and the celestial phenomena without effort or disturbance.

Confucius was a younger contemporary of Lao Tzu. He adhered closely to the teaching of the *Book of History*, and the expression Heaven was constantly on his lips. As he added nothing to the Chinese conception of the absolute, no more need be said about his views except that opinions differ as to whether he was a complete agnostic, or believed in a personal God. Some of his followers incline to one side and some to the other, depending upon whether they regard Heaven as personal or impersonal. Their dispute with the disciples of Lao Tzu was ethical and epistemological rather than metaphysical. Both schools use the word Tao, but with the Confucianists the term stands for the moral order of the universe, which is quite different from the content given the word by Lao Tzu.

In the 5th and 4th Centuries B. C. Lieh Tzu and Chuang Tzu developed the teachings of their master, Lao Tzu, but without changing his position materially. Both seem to have been genuine mystics in the sense that they passed through an abnormal psycho-

logical experience in which distinctions were gradually obliterated until at last even that between subject and object disappeared, and they were united with the universe. Though there is no trace of such an experience in Lao Tzu himself, his doctrine lends itself easily to mysticism. However, ancient Taoist thought can hardly be said to be religious, since Tao cannot be called a god in any sense, and Taoism does not appear to have resulted in any religious behaviour nor cults before the 3rd Century B. C.

An interesting attempt to rationalize the belief in Heaven was made by Meh Ti in the 5th Century B. C. He is said to have been the first Chinese thinker to have used the syllogism and to have attempted proofs. His argument for the existence of God is doubtless the first appearance of the ontological proof.

"How do we know that there is a universal being. We know because Heaven eats universally. How do we know that Heaven eats universally ? It is said, 'Within the four seas, all people who eat grain never fail to feed sheep and cattle, and to prepare wine and rice for making sacrifices to Shang Ti and the spirits.'<sup>2</sup>

This may be expressed a little crudely, but the argument is clear. All men prepare sacrifices to Shang Ti, therefore all men have the idea of Shang Ti in their minds, and this universal conception is of the nature of proof. Meh Ti goes on to point out that unless Heaven and the spirits exist, the religious ideals of the people would be overthrown, and it would be "as though the sacrifices were poured into a dirty gully."

Meh Ti also uses the argument from design.

"For it is Heaven that created the sun, moon, stars and constellations, making them shine and duly follow their courses. By arranging the four seasons it regulates the lives of the people. By means of thunder, snow, frost, rain and dew, it quickens the growth of the five cereals and thread-giving flax. It planned the formation of mountains, rivers and valleys, producing wealth in manifold forms. It created rulers, princes and lords in order to supervise the morals of the people, rewarding the good and punishing the wicked."<sup>3</sup>

These arguments for the existence of God have had a varied history in the west and in China they were criticized by Wang Ch'ung

<sup>2</sup> *The Open Court*, May, 1928, "Meh Ti," by Quentin K. Y. Huang, p. 278.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* April, 1928, p. 234.

about the beginning of the Christian era. Meh Ti himself mentions those who doubted the existence of spirits, who appear to have been some of the followers of Confucius, but the reference is indefinite.

The influence of Meh Ti was indirect and he was neglected even by the Chinese until recently, when interest in his work has revived. The mystical teaching of Taoism could be understood by only a few, and in the Ch'in and Han periods it was perverted into a polytheistic religion which borrowed extensively from Buddhism and the popular shamanistic cults, Lao Tzu himself becoming a deity, but there continued to be real seekers after Tao, and the Tao Teh Ching is still a force in Chinese thought.

### THE THEORY OF IDEAS

The brief passage from the *Book of Changes* already quoted states that the two Principles give birth to the Images of Forms, and these in turn to objects. The word translated as Form is said in the same chapter to mean copy. Dr. Hu Shih interprets the text as showing that change and progress are due to ideas,<sup>4</sup> and the *Book of Changes* seems to imply that ideas or forms come before objects.

In Lao Tzu there is an important sentence bearing on this point.

"Tao is that which is vague and eluding. It is vague and eluding, yet there is the Form in it. It is vague and eluding, yet has an object in it."<sup>5</sup> A later commentator remarks that Lao Tzu was careless here, since the object obviously exists before the idea of it, but probably Lao Tzu knew what he was doing, which was in accordance with the *Book of Changes*. But it is not until Confucius that there is a clear doctrine of Ideas, which suggests Plato. Where Lao Tzu speaks vaguely of knowing beauty as beauty and goodness as goodness,<sup>6</sup> Confucius is quite definite. When asked what should be done first in administering the government, he said,

"What is necessary is to rectify names."

"Indeed," remarked Tzu Lu, "you are wide of the mark. Why must there be such rectification?"

The Master said, "How uncultivated you are, Yu. The superior man shows a cautious reserve in regard to what he does not know. If names be not correct, language is not in accordance with the

<sup>4</sup> Hu Shih, *History of Chinese Philosophy*. Section on the I Ching. The book has not been translated.

<sup>5</sup> *Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. 39. "The Tao Teh Ching," Chap. 21.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* Chap. 2.

truth. If language be not in accordance with the truth, affairs cannot be successful."<sup>7</sup>

Again, the Duke of Ch'i asked about government, and Confucius replied, "When the prince is prince, and the minister is minister; when the father is father, and the son is son."<sup>8</sup>

In another passage he exclaims, "A cornered vessel without corners! What a vessel!"<sup>9</sup>

These quotations show that Confucius considered the reality of sacrificial vessels, princes, ministers, fathers and sons to depend upon the degree to which they conformed to ideal patterns of these things which existed independently of their material copies. What a real ruler is does not depend upon any man conforming to that standard, but good government lies in an approximation to the ideal, or as Confucius puts it, in the rectification of names.

Mencius carried this principle to its logical conclusion. When asked whether it was right for Wu Wang to have killed Tsou, the last of the Yin rulers, he replied,

"He who outrages benevolence we call a thief; he who outrages righteousness we call a ruffian. I have heard of the cutting off of the thief and ruffian Tsou, but I have not heard of putting a sovereign to death."<sup>10</sup> In other words, although Tsou possessed the rank and title by inheritance, he was not really emperor because he did not possess the qualities Heaven had decreed for the position.

In ancient China, long before the period of the Chou philosophers, it had been the custom for princes to carry with them on military expeditions the tablets of their ancestors and of the Gods of the Land and Grain. Rewards were distributed before the former, and punishments inflicted before the latter, so that in time they came to symbolize the abstract virtues of benevolence and righteousness or justice, which are emphasized in the Analects. The peculiarly Chinese virtue which is rather lamely translated as propriety seems to have developed from the sacrificial ritual. Loyalty was a necessary accompaniment of the feudal system. These and other virtues appear as abstractions or universals from the time of Lao Tzu and Confucius onward, and more and more ethical dis-

<sup>7</sup> *Analects*, 13, 3. There are many translations of the *Four Books*, so these references are to the chapter and verse of the Chinese text.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 12, 11.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 6, 23.

<sup>10</sup> *Mencius*, 1, 2, 8.

ussion centered about them. They were the backbone of the Confucian system, and were bitterly attacked by the Taoists.

The chief foe of virtue was the brilliant Chuang Tzu, who flourished about 300 B. C. Mencius had ascribed the virtues to Heaven, which had implanted them in the human heart as innate ideas or intuitions. A contemporary and friend of Chuang Tzu, named Hui, had discussed abstract nouns like hardness and whiteness, and what can be affirmed about them. Chuang Tzu attacks both on the ground that universals are only names, and that discussion of them is useless. There is no such thing as propriety in the abstract, for the old ways of Chou cannot be used in modern Lu.<sup>11</sup> All knowledge is relative. Suppose an eel and a man both slept in a damp place. The eel would draw the conclusion that dampness is an excellent thing, while the man would get rheumatism and claim the reverse.<sup>12</sup>

Unfortunately little of Hui Tzu has survived, so we have only the word of Chuang Tzu for their discussion. Mencius was dead. But Hsun Tzu, the last of the great Confucian thinkers of the ancient or Chou period, seems to have been so impressed with the attack of the Taoists that he abandoned the position of Mencius entirely and instead of making the virtues intuitions of heavenly law common to all men, he declares them to be nothing but artificial standards erected by society for its own purposes. Subsequent Chinese thought has generally held with Mencius and against Chuang Tzu and Hsun Tzu on the question of the virtues, and Hsun Tzu, although a Confucian, has not been honored with a place in the Confucian temples. But Chinese common sense has supported Chuang Tzu in his attack on universals other than the virtues, and today little is known except that the question was discussed. The orthodox Confucian position is that the virtues have their origin in Heaven, which has placed them in the human heart. How Hui Tzu and others thought of a stone as connected with the idea of hardness we do not know.

<sup>11</sup> *Sacred Books of the East*. Vol. 39, p. 353.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.* p. 191.

## PART II.

## THE NATURE

The Chinese character translated as Nature occurs in both the Book of History and the Book of Poetry.

"Men have no regard for their heavenly nature," complained the founder of the Chou dynasty.<sup>13</sup>

"Heaven gave birth . . . but the nature it confers is not to be depended on. All are good at first, but few prove themselves to be so at the last."

"Heaven, in giving birth to the multitudes of the people, to every faculty and relationship annexed its law. The people possess this normal nature, and they love its normal virtue."<sup>14</sup>

The Chinese point of view, whose antiquity is witnessed by these texts, is that all things were created with a certain nature or form or purpose appropriate to each, and that this nature is conferred by Heaven. In the case of men, this nature has generally been regarded as ethical.

Lao Tzu, however, taught that the purpose of man was to achieve or reach Tao. Tao was a respectable word already in general use, so that not even the conservative Confucius was shocked by it, but the way in which Lao Tzu employs the term is vague, to say the least. The opening sentence of the Doctrine of the Mean, which is attributed to the grandson of Confucius, appears to be an attempt to explain Tao by uniting it with the older conception.

"What Heaven has conferred is called the Nature. Tao is accordance with this Nature." In other words, man is made as he is by Heaven with a view to a certain end or purpose, and Tao is achieved when a man lives according to his nature and conforming to that purpose. This statement leaves the term nature undefined beyond saying that it is given by Heaven, and about the beginning of the 4th Century B. C. the Chinese were shocked—and they have not recovered from it yet—by a definition of the Nature in terms of a complete egoistic hedonism.

"Sorrow and grief," said Yang Chu, "are contrary to human nature; ease and pleasure are in accord with it."<sup>15</sup>

<sup>13</sup> *Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. 3, p. 120.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 410.

<sup>15</sup> *Wisdom of the East Series*, A. Forke, "Yang Chu's Garden of Pleasure," p. 64.



“Allow the ear to hear what it likes, the eye to see what it likes, the mouth to say what it likes, the body to enjoy what comforts it likes to have, and the mind to do what it likes.”<sup>16</sup>

Yang Chu is nothing if not consistent. The most extreme case in such an argument would be a man who takes pleasure in cruelty. Yang openly defends the two worst men in Chinese history, represented as monsters of lust and brutality, by saying that if it were their nature to behave in that way, and it gave them pleasure, they were right to do it. It is only fair to add that Yang himself appears to have been a very mild man who found his own pleasure in cultivating his garden. Yet such a theory demands an answer, and the right man was found in Mencius.

The attack of Mencius was both negative and positive. His destructive criticism, in which he mentions Yang Chu by name, is that Yang is hopelessly selfish, that his doctrine would destroy society and would result in a relapse into savagery.<sup>17</sup> Positively Mencius stated the famous doctrine which is the key to an understanding of Confucian ethics, that the nature of man is good. Just as water always seeks the lowest level, so men have a craving for virtue that is an ineradicable part of humanity.<sup>18</sup> Even the most depraved man cannot see a child about to fall into a well without feelings of sympathy and alarm.<sup>19</sup> Heaven has given to man a nature which is its own image, but which man himself corrupts. Mencius has a list of four virtues—the generally accepted number at present is five—which do not correspond exactly with any English words and are misleading when translated, so that they need not be enumerated. The important point is that Mencius holds that a man is benevolent and just, or at least recognizes these qualities as admirable, because he was made that way by Heaven. It is not the nature of man to desire sense pleasures as the chief good, but rather virtue.

Mencius was followed by the Taoist Chuang Tzu, who attacked the reality of universals, and pointed out that the virtues are only relative. A robber may be said to have all the virtues.

“That he knows there are valuables in an apartment shows his wisdom; that he is the first to enter it shows his courage; that he

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 43.

<sup>17</sup> *Mencius*, 3, 2, 9, 9, 1.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 6, 1, 2, 2.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 2, 1, 6, 3.

is the last to quit it shows his righteousness; and that he makes an equal division of the plunder shows his benevolence. Without these qualities no one has ever become a great robber."<sup>20</sup>

Hsun Tzu, who flourished during the 3rd Century B. C., closes the great creative period of Chinese thought. He abandoned the position that the Nature is good, taking the contrary view that it is evil. If men are naturally good, why is education necessary? What we actually observe, argues Hsun Tzu, is that children are naturally selfish, and have to be taught altruism, fair play and conformance with the rules of society. Education thus becomes largely corrective. Men are superior to beasts because they combine, specialize in their activities, and work for the common good. In order to do this they are obliged to subordinate their selfish interests in a way which is not natural, but must be taught. The virtues therefore become standards set up by society, or by the ruler as the head of society, and virtue itself entirely external and utilitarian.

There are two other views of the Nature possible. One was taken by a contemporary opponent of Mencius, named Kao, that it is neither good nor evil. The other was held by a Han thinker named Yang Hsiung about the beginning of the Christian era, that the heart of man contains the seeds of both good and evil, and that it lies with him how they are developed. The overwhelming weight of Chinese opinion has sided with Mencius, and his doctrine of the essential goodness of man's nature, which is also the nature of Heaven, is memorized by every Chinese schoolboy.

#### THE THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE

In the second chapter of the Tao Teh Ching, Lao Tzu speaks of knowing beauty as beauty and goodness as goodness. This seems to imply that both these concepts have a separate existence which we recognize. As to how we acquire such knowledge, Lao Tzu and the Taoists generally agree that it is by intuition. Without going outside his door or looking through his window, a man may see Tao and understand all things. Knowledge is to be gained neither by observation, nor by rational processes, for it is a forgetting of wisdom. This conclusion is natural to a mystic, because his approach to reality is through his peculiar experience, and that experience discards both observation and the labor of thought. An-

<sup>20</sup> *Sacred Books of the East*. Vol. 1, p. 283.

other metaphysical conclusion which is apt to result from a mystical experience is that the distinctions between things are not real. The Chinese do not go as far in this direction as the Hindus, but Chuang Tzu dreams that he is a butterfly, and on awaking wonders whether he is a man dreaming he is a butterfly, or a butterfly dreaming he is a man. The Taoists all teach that there is no absolute knowledge except the mystical knowledge of Tao.

Confucius was not a mystic but a man of affairs who cared little for metaphysics. He has no clear position as to how knowledge is gained and what it is, although his theory of ideas makes it evident that both objects and universals have an existence outside ourselves, and that the reality of the former is due to the latter. He emphasizes experience and study, and in teaching he lifted one corner of a subject, requiring his pupils to lift the other three; in other words he made his students do a good deal of thinking for themselves. He also taught that real knowledge includes practice.

His followers are divided on the theory of knowledge. In the Great Learning, a small treatise attributed to his disciple Tseng Tzu, there occurs the expression, "The investigation of things," and while the development of Confucian epistemology from this phrase did not take place until the 11th Century of our era, the lines along which it followed may be indicated. The first of the Sung philosophers, Chou Teng I, had as pupils two brothers named Ch'eng. From Ch'eng Hao developed Chu Hsi and his followers, who taught that knowledge was gained from the investigation of things in the sense of what we would call a scientific or inductive observation of the universe. The Sung thinkers have not been thoroughly studied by European scholars, and it is not certain whether Chu Hsi thought of our knowledge of external objects as immediate, or as a correspondence, but it does seem clear that he regarded such knowledge as real and not as appearance. On the other hand, from Ch'eng I there was a line of development through Lu Hsiang Shan and Wang Yang Ming which taught that knowledge was to be gained by introspection and tested by experience, which has led some to call Wang Yang Ming a pragmatist. While the interpretation of Chu Hsi is regarded as authoritative, all these men are considered orthodox Confucians, and their names are placed in the Confucian temple.

To return to the ancient period. Meh Ti, in the century follow-

ing Confucius, was a thorough empiricist and his three standards for the testing of any principle are all based on experience.

"There is the standard of precedent; there is the standard of observation; and there is the standard of function."<sup>21</sup> The meaning may be phrased in this way. Is a principle true or valid? First, it may be checked by the recorded experience of the nation; second, it may be tested by the ears and eyes of the common people; and third, it may be tried out and if it works well, adopted. Meh Ti says nothing about intuition, nor about the rectification of names. Sense perception seems the only way he recognizes that truth can reach us, and his argument for the existence of ghosts and spirits is a naive application of his method. We have the records of the appearances of spirits in the past, and we know many people alive today who say that they have seen them, therefore they must exist.

The Taoists are not so sure of this argument. Lieh Tzu makes a distinction between perception and the thing perceived. Sound is not the same as that which causes sound, and which is not itself audible. Sight is different from the object seen, and so on.<sup>22</sup>

In two remarkable stories, Lieh Tzu shows the part played by the mind in making truth. The first tells of a man who had lost an axe, and was convinced by the behaviour of a boy that he had stolen it. Shortly after he found the axe, and on again meeting the boy observed none of the suspicious signs.

The second describes how a certain man's mind was so set on obtaining gold that he walked into a shop and helped himself. When the judge asked why he had committed the theft in broad daylight, he answered that he had seen and been conscious of nothing except the gold. The moral is that we see what we look for.<sup>23</sup>

The story of the deer<sup>24</sup> is too intricate to retell but is well worth reading. A simple occurrence soon becomes so involved with dreams, discrepancies of testimony and fiction that after the most thorough investigation the authorities despair of coming at the real facts, and order a decision to be made on grounds of convenience. In other words, there is no such thing as absolute truth, or if there is, we cannot know it, and are forced to exercise choice in deciding what

<sup>21</sup> *The Open Court*, April, 1928, p. 231.

<sup>22</sup> *Wisdom of the East Series*. L. Giles, "Taoist Teachings," p. 21.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.* p. 120.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.* p. 66 f.

is to be considered true. Naturally faith plays a great part in Lieh Tzu's teaching, and he makes much use of fable and the miraculous.

Dr. Hu Shih has pointed out that a number of minor philosophers who seem to have been influenced by Meh Ti and are sometimes called Neo-Micians, of whom Kung-sen Lung is the best known, made valuable contributions to the development of the theory of knowledge. Meh Ti had made knowledge empirical and Lieh Tzu had emphasized the part played by the mind in making truth. These later men distinguish three elements in knowledge. First, there must be the ability to know; second, knowledge implies reception, that is sensation due to stimuli; third, knowledge is meaning.<sup>25</sup> This amounts to a synthesis of Meh Ti and Lieh Tzu, for there must be both sensation and an orderly grouping of sensations by the mind. The Neo-Micians seem to have held that this grouping or correlation of sensations was accomplished by what we would call time and space coordinates, but the Chinese text is extremely cryptic and Dr. Hu's interpretation has been questioned.

The difficult form in which these teachings were expressed, and Kung-sen Lung's use of paradoxes which resemble Zeno's, rather discredited the school. It is criticized by both Chuang Tzu and Hsun Tzu, though from different points of view. How is one to know whether the image in the mind corresponds to the real object? Chuang Tzu follows Lieh Tzu, holding that there is no way of telling, and that all truth is relative. Hsun Tzu revives the Confucian doctrine of the rectification of names, implying that there is a real connection between terms and objects, though what it is he does not define. He also holds that the meaning of such terms is fixed by social agreement. In the main, he accepts the Neo-Mician analysis of knowledge with common sense reservations, and so closed the discussion of the problem in the Chou period.<sup>26</sup>

#### THE DECREE

The character translated as the Decree, or as Fate, is at least as old as the Book of History, and presumably much older. Very often it occurs in the phrase, the Decree of Heaven. It may be given two interpretations, depending upon whether the interpreter is a determinist, or a believer in free-will. The determinist uses the

<sup>25</sup> H. H. Dubs, *Hsüntze. Probsthain's Oriental Series*, p. 213 f.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.* p. 227 f.

word in the sense of fate, or unavoidable destiny, while the other uses it as the command of Heaven, which may be disobeyed even though disobedience brings with it inevitable consequences.

While the *Book of History* unequivocally declares against fatalism, it also shows that by the beginning of Chinese history the term was already used as fate. Chieh and Tsou, the last rulers of the two dynasties preceding the Chou, are condemned because they relied upon the Decree, or as we would put it, upon divine right. Against this view the *Book of History* points out that the continuation of the decree appointing a man to office depends upon his good behaviour, and that disobedience to the commands of Heaven will result in the changing of its appointment.

"Shang Ti has changed his Decree regarding Yin, though many of its former kings were in heaven."<sup>27</sup>

"Heaven had no purpose to do away with Hsia or Yin, but the last rulers reckoning on the Decree, abandoned themselves to excess, so Heaven sent down ruin."<sup>28</sup>

Meh Ti also refers to these bad rulers as having taught fatalism.

"I have heard from the men of Hsia that he, (Chieh), feigned the orders of Heaven and taught fatalism to those below."

"Tsou did not worship Shang Ti nor the spirits above, and troubled his ancestors by neglecting sacrifices. He even said, 'My people have their fate; there is no use in punishing their disgrace in which Heaven also indulges.'<sup>29</sup>

It may be that fate is the original meaning of the word, but it is certainly true that one of the purposes of the *Book of History* as we have it, is clearly to combat determinism. Heaven does send disaster, but only as a test or a punishment, and men may rise superior to it. Only the consequences of their own acts are inescapable.

When so much discussion of the term had already taken place, it is surprising to find that the two great leaders of the line of Chou philosophers say little or nothing about it. Lao Tzu uses the word only once, merely saying that the honor and reverence paid to Tao and its complement Teh are not due to the Decree, but are part of the natural order of things.<sup>30</sup> Confucius seldom spoke of the

<sup>27</sup> *Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. 3, p. 184.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.* p. 216.

<sup>29</sup> *The Open Court*, July, 1928, p. 434.

<sup>30</sup> *Tao Teh Ching*, Chapter 51.

Decree,<sup>31</sup> but placed himself squarely against determinism by saying that "the will of even a common man cannot be taken from him."<sup>32</sup>

Although the founders of the two chief schools of thought were reticent on the subject, their followers were not, and in general it may be said that the Confucianists, who stressed ethics and the virtues, declared for freedom, while the Taoists, who decried the virtues and sought inspiration in the course of nature, were on the side of determinism, both parties using the same word.

Mencius limited the working of the Decree to "that which happens without man's causing it to happen,"<sup>33</sup> excepting man's will from the law of mechanism, though not excluding the consequences of his actions. The book of Mencius contains very little of a religious nature and begins with a statement that he discussed nothing but benevolence and righteousness. This accent upon the virtues and the place he gave them in the Nature of man necessitated the acceptance of freedom and a corresponding definition of the Decree.

"He who has the true idea of the Decree will not stand beneath a wall about to fall."<sup>34</sup>

On the other hand, the Taoist Chuang Tzu is a clear fatalist. Life and death are ordained,<sup>35</sup> and the only correct attitude is that of submission to fate.<sup>36</sup> He damns Confucius with faint praise by calling him a good man who was condemned by Heaven to an undue interest in ephemeral matters.<sup>37</sup> "Acquiesce in what has been arranged"<sup>38</sup> is his teaching. "The sages contemplated Heaven but did not assist it."<sup>39</sup> Birth and death are like the procession of the seasons,<sup>40</sup> as usual he caps his argument with a story, in this case about a tortoise which was wise in divination but could not prevent its own capture and death.<sup>41</sup>

Hsun Tzu does not seem to have differed from Mencius on this point, defining the Decree as what one meets at the moment,<sup>42</sup> but

<sup>31</sup> *Analecets*, 9, 1.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.* 9, 25.

<sup>33</sup> *Mencius*, 5, 1, 6, 2.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.* 7, 1, 2, 2.

<sup>35</sup> *Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. 39, p. 241.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.* p. 248.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.* p. 252.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.* p. 255.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.* p. 305.

<sup>40</sup> *Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. 40, p. 4.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.* p. 137.

<sup>42</sup> H. H. Dubs, *Hsüntze*, p. 71.

he was probably less religious than Mencius and Confucius. His translator, Dr. Dubs, says that he considered Heaven as impersonal law, borrowing the Taoist conception,<sup>43</sup> but rather inconsistently he allowed man a measure of freedom.

The great opponent of fatalism in ancient China was Meh Ti, who devoted an essay to the subject, though in its present form it is probably the work of his pupils. He lays the blame for the disorders in the China of his day to the apathy caused by the current belief that there is no use in struggling against fate.

"The fatalist says: 'Being rich by fate, a man is rich; while being poor by fate, he is poor. Whether a nation increases or decreases is determined by fate. When order is fated, there will be peace; when disorder is fated, there will be trouble. . . . What is the use of working against fate?' Thus, they preach to the rulers, dukes and great men above, and prevent the people below from doing their business. Therefore the fatalists are charged with being unbenevolent. We cannot fail to understand what the fatalists say. But how do we discriminate these sayings? Meh Ti says, 'We must have a standard.' If there be no standard . . . the distinction of right and wrong, of benefit and harm, can never be known."<sup>44</sup>

Meh Ti goes on to point out the disintegrating influence of such a doctrine upon society, enumerating the evils which ensue when men consider themselves helpless. "These are the results of believing in fate. They have their birth in evil words. Therefore Meh Ti says, 'Now the scholars and superior men . . . cannot fail to know that the words of the fatalists are wrong. It is the greatest evil in the world.'<sup>45</sup>

In this brief paper I have endeavored to indicate some of the problems which the thinkers of ancient China attacked, the solutions they offered, and the play of mind on mind among the different schools. The enormity of the attempt would be equalled by trying to describe the development of Greek thought from Thales to Aristotle in a similar space. Yet the effort is worth while if it indicates the width and depth of the golden period of Chinese philosophy, and stimulates western scholars out of their apathy towards the East, which is not creditable either to our learning or our sympathies.

One of the most striking features which one notices in the study

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 63.

<sup>44</sup> *The Open Court*, July, 1928, p. 430.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.* p. 434.



of Chinese thinkers is the number of solutions and arguments which suggest or run parallel to the results of European thought. I have refrained from making comparisons because I had to be brief, but they will readily occur to everyone. And I have taken the liberty, which I feel is quite justifiable historically, of treating the development of an idea as a continuous process, each man adding something to what had gone before. The fact that there is known to have been frequent communication between the feudal states, that ideas travelled easily, that most of these men are known to have lived in the same city for portions of their lives, and that in nearly all, the effects of previous thought can readily be traced, make the assumption admissible even when the influence is not admitted directly. Some of these men refer to their predecessors, Chuang Tzu, for instance, mentioning by name nearly every Chinese thinker before and contemporaneous with him, while others write without any direct reference as to where they received their stimulus to thought.

The notes refer to English translations, which are always unsatisfactory, and which usually fail to indicate that the Chinese text employs technical terms which cannot be loosely rendered into a foreign language. The quotations have been checked with the Chinese by Mr. Huang K'uei Yuan.

## AN INQUIRY INTO THE PRE-HISTORY OF CHINESE THOUGHT

BY H. G. CREEL, A. M.

THE task which it is proposed to carry out in this and succeeding articles is an investigation of the origins and development of Chinese thought, from the earliest period about which we can reasonably speculate down through the period of the classical philosophical systems. It will immediately be objected that such an undertaking is quite incongruous with a "series of articles," but is rather a labor for a lifetime of investigation deposited in a shelf of volumes. This would be true, if this study presumed to treat exhaustively of each separate period and each individual thinker as such. It does not. The modern emphasis on specialization for efficiency in scientific research carries with it, however, the necessity of correlation in order that perspectives may be preserved and enlarged. It is to this latter task that this study is directed.

We shall have occasion, to be sure, to go in some detail into the features of some of the most important developments in Chinese philosophy and religion, but always the emphasis will be rather on placing particular thinkers and ideas in their setting with relation to the main stream of Chinese thought than on any detailed description of these phenomena themselves. Indeed, we must go back still further, and ask if there is any such thing as a "stream" of Chinese thought, or if it is rather, as a few sinologists have seemed to feel, a kind of trough into which various individuals have from time to time poured ideas originated almost *in vacuo*, following which has ensued a period of degeneration. It may be confessed here that the general thesis of this study (arrived at, not *a priori*, but as the fruit of research) is that there does exist a definite and peculiarly Chinese world-view, the history of whose development

may be traced at least in outline. Further, each of the more important thinkers and ideas within our period has originated, not outside of nor in opposition to this background, but rather as an expression of it and a development within it.

At the outset may one be pardoned for recalling a platitude of modern historical method which, like other things taken for granted, may easily be neglected in practice? When we study any particular culture our most fruitful approach is to look at it, in so far as we possibly can, from the inside. In approaching things Chinese we must attempt, first of all, to appropriate to ourselves the Chinese point of view, so that we regard any particular thing not as a Westerner would, nor even as a Hindu, but as a Chinese.<sup>1</sup> This need is well illustrated by the Chinese word *hsing* 行, often translated "element." The five *hsing* are wood, fire, metal, water, and earth. Immediately the Western reader is likely to equate these with the Greek elements. But those were relatively inert: the *hsing* on the other hand are very active. Other meanings of the same character include: "road, conduct, behavior, actions, walk, move, perform, do." One is tempted, again, to make a hasty conclusion and to equate these "elements" with the very active electron-composed substances of modern physics. But again he would be mistaken, for *hsing* is a Chinese idea, equivalent to no Western idea, and must be thoroughly studied and understood in its own setting before it may intelligently be used as a concept.

Especial caution, that we may keep from reading in our own interpretations, is necessary in dealing with the Chinese thought-world. Ancient China enjoyed an unique physical isolation from the rest of the world. "Desert, mountain, and sea had conspired together and presented an almost insurmountable barrier to human intercourse."<sup>2</sup> This geographical separation has had its very definite intellectual counterpart. If one wished to make an extreme statement, he might even contend that ancient India, the Mesopotamian world, the Mediterranean world, and Europe shared (within the widest limits of variation) one system of human thought, while ancient China presents us with another. Here lies one of the greatest values of the study of Chinese history: many ideas which

<sup>1</sup> This does not mean, of course, that I carry the insistence on cultural atomism to the point to which Oswald Spengler does, holding that borrowing between cultures is absolutely impossible. This is to press a good principle entirely too far.

<sup>2</sup> James B. Pratt, "*The Pilgrimage of Buddhism*," p. 272.

have been thought "universal," and have been referred to the "psychological unity of mankind," must abdicate this position when the Chinese touchstone is applied.

The fact remains that many of the earlier studies of Chinese religion in particular were made by men who recognized but little the existence of a peculiar Chinese mode of thought, if indeed they did not deny the very possibility. Three reasons for this may be mentioned. The first is the inaccessibility of the country. The second is the difficulty of the language.<sup>3</sup> Third, since these conditions prevented the early entry of unbiased scholars, in any number, into the Chinese field, the initial task of interpretation of Chinese history, philosophy, and religion was left almost entirely to Christian missionaries, men who by their very calling were usually unqualified for the labor of objective and critical scholarship. As a result, the Chinese Classics are still known to the West largely through the translations of such men as James Legge. One can have only admiration for the conscientious industry which Legge gave to his pioneering tasks, but that does not prevent the wish that they might have been performed by some one less determined to harmonize Chinese history with the book of *Genesis*.<sup>4</sup> Ancient Chinese is a language which can not be translated literally into another tongue. The translator must be to some extent an interpreter. Such a situation is paradise for the man with a theory.

The unfortunate sequel has been that when more competent investigators, free from such bias, entered the field, they took over, to some extent, this distortion of Chinese ideas. Thus, for instance, M. Granet translates *shen* as "dieu," but since this does not fit in other places (it does not fit precisely, anywhere) he must translate the same word differently. The same is true of *shê* which he translates sometimes as "dieu du sol," sometimes otherwise, although the meaning in Chinese is the same. All this is most confusing. It is hoped that the reader will bear with the alternative which has been adopted for this study, of first defining such genuinely untranslatable terms and thereafter using the phonetic transliteration to denote them.

<sup>3</sup> This is partially due to the fact that the teaching of Chinese has not yet been developed to anything like the efficiency which prevails in the teaching of European tongues. It may be hoped that in the near future, as a result of labors now going forward, learning Chinese will be considered by no means an insurmountable task.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Legge, *Shu King* (in *Chinese Classics*) (referred to hereafter as *Shu*) p. 189.

In order to understand any Chinese idea or any Chinese thinker, we must have some comprehension of the Chinese thought-world as a whole, and of its history. Manifestly, this requires that we shall start with the very earliest data which we can find, and work from that point. We are faced with the difficult task of evaluating those of the Chinese records which pretend to tell us of remote antiquity.

Western scholars are very cautious in making any statement of fact for China prior to, say, the time of Confucius. Chinese scholars in general are, of late, hesitant about affirming anything concerning their early history. Almost any hypothesis may be proved or disproved on what may seem fairly good authority. Almost all documents are suspect. Granet throws overboard nearly the whole of early Chinese literature, in so far as it is supposed to record historical events.<sup>5</sup>

A hopeless situation? For accurate political history, perhaps. Certainly a discouraging situation, from any point of view. Yet, it is the obstacles to be overcome which give zest to any game, from chess to research. In any case, we are certainly faced with a situation calling for a peculiar method of approach. For myself, I am unable to place much faith in specific dates and events prior to the time of Confucius, and almost none in those anterior to the founding of the Chow dynasty (1122 ? B. C.). Yet this does not make the writing of cultural, intellectual, and religious history by any means impossible. For instance: If we find in the book called *The Tribute of Yu* that a certain tribe sent earth of five colors as a tribute, it may make little difference whether Yu or the tribe ever existed; the important point for us is that if we can establish an approximate date for the document, we shall know that the five colors as a concept existed at that time (barring later interpolation, of course). And at any rate this provides us with one more evidence of the existence, at whatever date, of an important element of the Chinese natural philosophy.

It is the first task of this study to set forth the complex of natural and religious philosophy as it existed in China a little before the time of Confucius. To do that, we shall have to go into remote origins, and there we shall be on doubtful ground. But this will not seriously endanger the final result, for, while the historical chronology of a people may be falsified and garbled past recognition in

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Marcel Granet, *Dances et Legendes de la Chine Ancienne* (noted hereafter as *Dances*) p. 1.

a literature, it is literally impossible that a literature of the scope and variety of the Chinese could be pervaded by a single type of philosophy if that philosophy had not been, as a matter of fact, a dominating factor in the life of the people.

No argument is required to show that the question of the original home of the Chinese people is of importance for our problem. If as Legge believes they are descendants of Noah who moved eastward after the incident at Babel, if they came from Egypt, or if they were immigrants from ancient Babylon, these facts will give us a key to the interpretation of their early philosophy. But even the question of when they entered the territory we know as China is one to which, as Henri Cordier wrote in 1915, we may never know the answer. It is comforting to reflect that we do have at least one specific date; according to Schlegel, the oldest astronomical observation in the world was made and recorded in China, that of the eclipse of the sun on May 7, 2165 B. C. This implies, of course, that the people making the observation had reached a very considerable degree of advancement.

A detailed summary of the more important research on the question of Chinese origins will be found in the *T'oung Pao* for 1915, pp. 577-603. Two general theories seem to have taken the field, one being that the Chinese have been in their present situation from highest antiquity, the other that they migrated to China from a previous westward home. With the latter theory is usually, but not always, combined the contention that they were herders during and prior to the migration.

These two theories are sometimes associated, and used to account for the undoubtedly composite origin of the Chinese. It is held, then, that a portion of the people came in as warlike, pastoral nomads, conquered the people they found in the land, and settled among them as a ruling caste. If we could accept this explanation it would certainly solve several of our knottiest problems, as we shall have occasion to see. But a theory is not correct *merely* because it is convenient.

The arguments for a pastoral "stage" in Chinese history are not convincing.<sup>6</sup> It used to be believed that, just as people passed first from marital promiscuity through the matriarchate, then

<sup>6</sup>In support of the pastoral theory see Kwen Ih Tai, *An Inquiry into the Origin and Early Development of T'ien and Shang-ti* (Ph.D. Thesis, Chicago), pp. 138-160. For the primitive agricultural theory, see H. F. Rudd, *Chinese Social Origins*, p. 55.

through a patriarchal stage, so they went from hunting to herding and thence to agriculture. Both are exploded theories, in so far as they were thought to be universally applicable. In aboriginal North and Middle America, herding never reached any development worthy of mention, while the agricultural achievements of the Indian are probably his chief contribution to civilization.

In regard to the whole question of the place of origin of the early Chinese and the mode of their early life, we must be willing to maintain suspended judgment. While this is written, researches are going forward which may, at any time, put our knowledge on firmer ground; when this happens we may expect that several other mysteries, of the greatest importance for the history of the whole human race, will be cleared up at the same time. But lack of dogmatic certainty on this point need not prevent us from building an interpretation of ancient Chinese thought which, we may be reasonably confident, will not be invalidated no matter what may be the results of future research in the field of origins. Good scientific theories should be constructed, when possible, on the plan of Japanese dwellings—flexible enough so that they can stand an earthquake or two in the substructure without being shaken completely to pieces.

After all, what precise difference would it have made in the world-view of the people, at the earliest time at which we know them, if they had been nomadic cattle-raisers in some remote antiquity? Even Dr. Tai, an enthusiastic proponent of the pastoral theory, tells us that the composition of the *Book of Odes* (which must have been well before the time of Confucius) "was after the Chinese people had occupied China and had adapted themselves to the geographical environment for several thousand years. We need not be surprised to find that *the agricultural civilization had by this time thoroughly permeated the thought and expression of everyday life.*"<sup>7</sup> (Italics mine).

We know well enough what happens to the religion and the philosophy of a pastoral people which settles down to an agricultural mode of life. Some elements of their old religion are re-interpreted to fit the new situation; those which do not adapt themselves are dropped. Such a transitional situation runs through almost the whole of the *Old Testament*. But we have an even more concrete example just south of China, in India. The religion of the *Vedas*

<sup>7</sup> Tai, *op. cit.*, p. 141.

is that of a group of pastoral nomads. They moved into India, and took over an agricultural and settled economy. Certain of the old gods, as Varuna, which had been very important to them as nomads, no longer contributed to their new way of living, and were practically forgotten. But Indra, who was unimportant when they were herders, brought rain; his importance to farmers is obvious, and he was, in fact, raised to a place of the first rank. On the basis of such facts, and with the independent knowledge of the Chinese situation which we possess, we are justified in laying this question of pastoral origin to one side for the present, and in proceeding to make our interpretation on the basis of an agricultural economy.

We have plenty of material, if we are willing to accept it all, to make a picture of Chinese life as it was at the beginning of the Chow dynasty. If we can accept the *Great Plan*, as it stands in the present text of the *Shu King*,<sup>8</sup> as actually dating from 1024 B. C. (a point which is far from being definitely established) we can even say that the whole foundation and a good deal of the superstructure of later Chinese philosophy and religion existed at that time. It is highly probable that this is the case. To penetrate beyond this date is difficult. We have many, too many, pieces of the puzzle; some we must reject as obviously incongruous. What shall we do with the remainder? We are in the realm of hypothesis, and must use deduction for lack of a better method.

Of the apparently genuine materials before us, which *seem* most likely to have appeared first? The five household *shên*<sup>9</sup> 神 and the Sacred Place (Granet's "Lieu Saint") appear to meet the specifications. The five *shên* are the outer door, the inner door, the well, the hearth, and the atrium.<sup>10</sup> These are the focal points of interest about the home, and most of them, at least, very soon take on

<sup>8</sup> *Shu King* means, literally, "Document Classic." This book is the collection of records which makes up the orthodox history of the Confucian school. Like most other ancient Chinese books, it has had a checkered history. Much of it, at least, is of doubtful age.

<sup>9</sup> *Shên* is a word of wide occurrence. It is sometimes translated "god" which is thoroughly misleading. "Spirit" is better, but still inaccurate in many contexts. It is sometimes used as an adjective, meaning "unusual" or "weird," though not "supernatural" in the Western sense.

In the present application the word means little more than the objects themselves, capable of acting to help or harm the household.

<sup>10</sup> It is impossible strictly to translate the Chinese phrase into English. This "atrium" is the space under the middle of the roof of the principal room, at which point was located an opening which served both as chimney and as window.



"super-usual" significance among any settled people. We find sacrifices, the beginning of which is unknown, made to them at specified times.<sup>11</sup> The Sacred Place (as representing Earth) is closely linked to the five *shên* both by Chavannes and by Wang Ch'ung<sup>12</sup> (1.510). This is to class the five *shên* as *yin*, since earth is the very essence of *yin*. In both cases, however, the classification is based on a considerable development of the *yin-yang* philosophy,<sup>13</sup> a fairly sophisticated set of ideas which, since we seek origins, we can hardly assume as an original datum. This association may more plausibly be explained on the assumption that both the five *shên* and the Sacred Place were, at an early period, part of a naïve agricultural cult closely bound to the earth. The elements of this cult would then have been loosely grouped with the Earth side of the later Heaven-Earth duality. In this later system, it must be remembered, Earth as *yin* is female, yet Wang associates the hearth (seat of fire, which is the essence of *yang*, the male principle) with it. Furthermore, the sacred mound, *shê* 社 which is the very focalization of the agricultural powers of earth, often figures as *masculine*.<sup>14</sup> Obviously, we have here certain tell-tale incongruencies which indicate very strongly that the more recent system was built on the basis of an earlier cult.

This mound, the *shê* just mentioned, appears to have been the center of the life of the tiny agricultural village, which comprised, the records tell us, twenty-five "families" (this family included a kinship group of considerable size, of course, as is the case in China today). There is reason to believe that the cult centering about the *shê* is very ancient indeed, that it is, in fact, the central element of the hypothetical agricultural cult of which we have already spoken,<sup>15</sup> which preceded the philosophical "Heaven-Earth, *yin-yang*" complex. The reasons for this are several. For one, the mound seems to have included a tree, or perhaps even a sacred

<sup>11</sup> Edouard Chavannes, *Le T'ai Chan*, p. 492.

<sup>12</sup> Wang Ch'ung, born 27 A. D., is one of the most interesting figures in the history of Chinese literature. In dealing with the popular religion we shall have occasion to consider him in detail. References in parenthesis refer to volume and page number of his *Lun Hêng* (in the English translation by Alfred Forke), one of our most valuable sources for the popular religion.

<sup>13</sup> This dual system of classification will be discussed in detail in the succeeding chapter.

<sup>14</sup> Chavannes, *op. cit.*, pp. 520-21.

<sup>15</sup> Chavannes, *op. cit.*, p. 437, p. 524. Granet, *La Religion des Chinois* (cited hereafter as *Religion*), p. 63.

grove.<sup>16</sup> But wood is that one of the five *hsing* which corresponds to the east, which is a *yang* region, which contradicts the *yin* status of the mound.

Furthermore, the place of the Earth in the later religion is decidedly subservient and secondary. But the *shê* of the ancient villages seem quite self-sufficient. They are gone to by the people for almost all of the things which they would have needed in a simple agricultural situation, such as crops, protection from drouth, and protection from floods. Further, the techniques used to gain these ends are easier to understand by themselves than to fit into the later philosophical scheme. Instances are the practice of putting five frogs on the mound to draw rain, and of moistening the mound from the irrigation ditch for the same purpose.<sup>17</sup> Water, like the *shê*, is classed as *yin*. When we find that recourse is had to the mound in case of high water, we may feel that here is a proof for the philosophical theory. But when we find that the *shê* was also appealed to in case of drouth, we begin to suspect that the mound was far more important than the later scheme would represent it to have been.

Indeed, Wang Ch'ung seems rightly to have described the situation, in so far as the people are concerned, when he said, "It is customary to sacrifice to the *shê*, which produce all things." (II, 337). Anciently, the common people looked, for the things they wanted, to Earth, not generically but in the form of the *shê*. In the documents, Heaven is respected, sometimes feared, but Earth is loved and venerated (I, 535; II, 337, 339, 376-7). From the very first appearance of Heaven in the literature, it is remote, just, ethical, almost a philosophical concept rather than an element of a simple religion. Heaven seems almost to be a transcendentalization of the governmental and regulatory function. Earth, on the other hand, is close, intimate, bountiful—the old concept of the *shê*, in fact, will not fit into the later cosmological scheme without that alteration which, as we shall see, it underwent.

But one of the chief reasons why it seems impossible that the *shê* originated simply as a personification of the *yin* comes from the fact that it is very easy to account for its origin in a manner which does not require that we throw the sophisticated philosophy of a later day back into a setting where it looks like a top-hat on a

<sup>16</sup> Chavannes, *op. cit.*, p. 466-70, p. 485. Granet, *Religion*, p. 68.

<sup>17</sup> Chavannes, *op. cit.* p. 495.

coolie.<sup>18</sup> On the other hand, the *yin-yang* philosophy itself appears, without forcing, as a natural development out of the early village life and agricultural cult on the one hand, and the later political developments on the other.

The village life is very important, for it appears to be the archetype from which the entire Chinese conception of the world and even the cosmos grew. The village was, as has been said, small. It was based on agriculture. It was apparently a community of a peaceful regularity and a social solidarity beyond anything which we of the present day can imagine.<sup>19</sup> Rudd has summarized the climatic situation admirably.

The Chinese civilization appeared in a region of extensive plains and low hills, located in the temperate zone between the parallels of 30° and 40° north latitude. The earth offers but few such favorable situations for the development of great peoples. No other ancient civilization had such freedom for extensive and intensive development. The cold winters and hot summers offered stimulus and reward for personal effort. Industry was necessary in order to secure food and comfort. The soil was naturally productive. The rainfall was not abundant, but it came at the seasons when it was most needed for agriculture, and stimulated the effort to utilize it when it came.<sup>20</sup>

To this day, the sense of solidarity among the members of a Chinese "large family" has few parallels in the West. In these ancient agricultural villages there was "une sorte de gregarisme, une vie en groupes, en communautés où individus et familles doivent se perdre et ne comptent pas."<sup>21</sup> Again, "Une village enferme une vaste famille tres unie et très homogène."<sup>22</sup> This solidarity took on not alone a social but even a territorial aspect. Indeed, Granet

<sup>18</sup> That I be not thought wilfully to ignore the fact, let me acknowledge that the practice of putting a red cord about the *shê* in case of drought does appear to be an example of the *yin-yang* philosophy. But it can not be proved that this was early. To be sure, Chavannes (*op. cit.*, p. 485) says that the string was at first put about the tree rather than the mound, which seems to refer the practice to antiquity. But Chavannes' source for this dates from 500 A. D.

<sup>19</sup> I do not mention the nine-field scheme (cf. Maspero, *La Chine Antique*, p. 108-10) for three reasons. (1) Considerable doubt of its authenticity has been raised of late, especially in China. (2) It can not have been in existence at any time prior to the existence of fairly well-recognized government. (3) It is of no very great importance for this study.

<sup>20</sup> Rudd, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

<sup>21</sup> Maspero, *op. cit.*, p. 108.

<sup>22</sup> Granet, *Religion*, p. 4.

holds that the relations of the family group with the soil were originally so close that the corpse was deposited on the family ground, near the dwelling, during decomposition, and each new member of the family was considered a literal reincarnation of the substance of the ancestors.<sup>23</sup> He finds, also, an association of the fertility of the grain, which was stored near the conjugal couch, with that of the women.<sup>24</sup>

But the most striking fact about the life of the village-dweller was the division of his year into two seasons, according to which almost every phase of his existence was drastically altered.<sup>25</sup> In summer, the whole family went to the fields, and lived in little huts at the scene of the agricultural labors. The work in the fields was done by the men, the women and children preparing their meals and bringing them to the field. This condition continued all through the summer. After the harvest was gathered, the mode of life was changed altogether, the whole group going back to the home to spend the cold winter. Here it was the women, apparently, who did the large share of the work, making clothing, etc.<sup>26</sup>

The turn of the season, in spring and fall, would quite evidently be a time of great importance. It was the time, in each case, when the season of the labors of one sex had finished, and when that of another was to begin. In the spring there was all of the anxiety over the crops of the coming year, and the rejoicing at the return of vegetation; in the autumn there was gladness because of the harvest. Beyond doubt we have here the origin of the two great festivals of the ancient Chinese, which came approximately at the equinoxes. It is worthy of note that, at the spring festival, there were ceremonies celebrated at the Sacred Place (which was perhaps the early form of the *shê*)<sup>27</sup> in which, apparently, young men and young women danced opposite each other (dramatizing the opposition of the sexes), singing ceremonial songs. They finally paired off, the climax being sexual intercourse. This was followed by marriage if a child resulted.<sup>28</sup>

The opposition of the sexes in this ancient agricultural life is striking. It is so sharp, Granet opines, that it may be said to have

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27-28.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.* p. 26.

<sup>25</sup> Maspero, *op. cit.*, p. 114.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 116. Granet, *Religion*, p. 3-4.

<sup>27</sup> Granet, *Dances*, p. 447-50.

<sup>28</sup> Granet, *Religion*, pp. 8-16. Maspero, *op. cit.* pp. 118-19.

dominated the whole of the social life. We find what is perhaps an echo of it in the separation of the sexes among the aristocracy.<sup>29</sup>

Granet was the first, to my knowledge, to point out the very great probability that the *yin* and the *yang* conceptions were originally merely the classification of objects in general under these two categories (male and female) which were most ready to the hand of the ancient farmer.<sup>30</sup> It must be borne in mind that it is not contended that the developed *yin-yang* cosmology existed among the early agricultural Chinese—rather the contrary—but only that this division on sex lines is probably the source of the later philosophical concepts. Granet believes that *yin* at first referred to the position taken by the female dancers in the spring festival, while *yang* referred to the proper place of the male dancers.

Other aspects of the village life which had an overwhelming importance for the later Chinese religion and philosophy were the social solidarity, already mentioned, and the intense provincialism which characterized it. This is not alone peculiar to agricultural communities located in China. Wherever such a group exists, it tends very quickly to achieve a code of ethics which is not subject to criticism, even the minutest violations of which are considered to be great offences. The origin of reflective, as opposed to hereditary, morality, lies in wide contacts, bringing criticism and comparison. The Chinese village lacked this. China as a whole has lacked and deliberately excluded it, from very ancient times down almost to the present. The result, reflected in the literature beyond all possibility of doubt, was the placing of the highest premium on conformity to custom down to the smallest detail.

The process went a step further. It is nothing unique for a people to believe that its religious rites cause the processes of the universe to follow their accustomed round. Nor is it unusual for people to believe that conformity or non-conformity with a particular ethical code has spectacular cosmic consequences. Most of us have heard some good person say, after a tremendous earthquake or fire, "What a wicked city that must have been!" The tendency to think in such terms increases as we approach conditions of village provincialism like that in ancient China. The Chinese developed this idea, in combination with certain other conceptions,

<sup>29</sup> Granet, *Dances*, p. 569.

<sup>30</sup> Granet, *Religion*, pp. 20-21. The etymology of the characters *yin* 陰 and *yang* 陽 is interestingly discussed by Granet.

into a religion, and a social and political and even a natural philosophy. As a result of this, almost every calamity which could happen was referred to the failure of some person or persons to live up to the established code.

The positive conceptions of the ideal state in this regard were *li* 禮 "propriety" and *h'u* 和 "harmony, union, concord, agreement." The former refers to the body of *mores* according to which it was necessary to live in order to win social approval and prosperity, and to avoid disturbing the order of the cosmos (conceived as including men on very intimate terms). The second term is very often used to denote that harmonious state of nature which was the normal and beneficial thing. In the beginning, these ideas were very simple. Men must follow the customs of the group in order to maintain both social and cosmic harmony. If they do not, they will bring upon the group (in a very naturalistically conceived way) such disasters as follow upon the disturbance of the harmonious rotation of the seasons, *i. e.*, drought, floods, crop failures, plagues of insects, etc.

This early Chinese thought-world was (if we do not push the word too far) dynamically conceived. The *hsing*, "elements,"<sup>31</sup> if they existed in the Chinese world at that time, were not so much types of substance, apparently, as *localizations of modes of action*. The Chinese never seem to deal with the epistemological problem; they are naïve realists, with a decidedly pragmatic tinge. In the same way they conceive "good" not as a type of substance but as a state of harmony. That which Westerners have called "supernatural" appears to differ from the "natural" not in substance but only in its way of action. Evil is not a substance nor a class of things, but a kind of behavior which is the opposite of harmonious, that is, *kuo* 過, "excess," "going beyond."

It may seem that the above paragraph attributes to the ancient Chinese a number of sophisticated philosophical ideas which would be, in a setting so naïve, surprising. But careful consideration will show that it rather denies to them certain ideas which the Westerner tends unconsciously to assume that the Chinese must have had, merely because they are implicit in his own occidental background.

We have traced the origin of the most important early ideas in the Chinese philosophical and religious world—on the one hand *yin* and *yang*, on the other the solidarity of the social with the cosmic

<sup>31</sup> The date of their origin will be considered later.

order. But almost nothing has yet been said of *T'ien*, which is, according to some scholars, perhaps the most important ingredient of early Chinese religion. The neglect was not inadvertence. *T'ien* has been mentioned so little because it is believed that its importance, at this period, was very slight and secondary.

The importance of *T'ien* in early Chinese religion has probably been greatly overemphasized, for two reasons. In the first place, by the time the Chinese were writing down their history in any sort of systematic manner, and were re-editing all of the old texts, the political system which depended on the *T'ien* concept (as completely as the Holy Roman Empire depended on *Jahweh*) was in full swing, and it was the officials of this system who wrote and edited the histories. Add to this the Chinese reverence for and imitation of antique custom, and it becomes plain that the officers would beyond all question have written a flourishing *T'ien-cult* into the ancient period, whatever the facts might have been.

In the second place, Western scholars, led in the first place by Christian missionaries, have often been eager to demonstrate the early importance of *T'ien*, usually in order to prove that monotheism was the original religion of China. Christianity then appears, of course, as the preservation of this original and pure cult through the ages. In any case they equate *T'ien* and *Shang Ti*<sup>32</sup> to *Jahweh*, and try to find them to have been as important as possible.

No one, Western scholar or Chinese, pretends to find any sort of popular cult of *T'ien* 天<sup>33</sup> within the historical period. But there was, undeniably, an early and flourishing cult of the *shê*, the five household *shên*, etc. Here was an embarrassing position for the historians. *T'ien* was considered the loftiest power in the universe and was associated with the Emperor himself, and therefore should, of course, have been the object of the most wide-spread and the most ancient veneration. Yet where was the proof of this? As is usual in such cases, a neat explanation was found.

This explanation, upon which some have based the antiquity of the cult of *T'ien*, is founded upon a passage of the *Shu King*, dated about one thousand years after the event, referring to an incident in the reign of Yao, the first Emperor mentioned in the

<sup>32</sup> *Shang Ti*, "Upper Ruler," is probably another form of *T'ien*. This point will be discussed later.

<sup>33</sup> This character seems to have developed from a picture of a man with a line (representing the sky) above his head. It is generally accepted to have originally meant merely the sky.

*Shu King*. The passage, taken from the document *Leu-hing* of the *Shu*,<sup>34</sup> reads:

Then he commissioned Ch'ung and Le to make an end of the communications between earth and heaven, and the descents (*of spirits*, Legge interpolates) ceased. From the princes down to the inferior officers, all helped with clear intelligence *the spread of the regular principles of duty*. . .

Wieger, who of course shares the general Roman Catholic thesis of universal primitive monotheism, tells us that the situation lying behind this text was as follows: The primitive Chinese religion, the pure cult of *T'ien*, had become contaminated through the contact of the people with certain non-Chinese tribes, the Li and the Miao. Shun was charged by the Emperor to punish them, with the result that, the *Shu* tells us, he exterminated them.<sup>35</sup> Further action was necessary, however. The people, not leaving the offering of sacrifices to the official channels, had begun to have personal relations with the superior powers, which threw the entire religious system into confusion. For this reason it was necessary "to make an end of the communications between earth and heaven." This caused the old order to be re-established, Wieger tells us, and it continued until about 770 B. C.

But, upon such close examination, this incident does not at all show that a popular cult of *T'ien* existed at an early date. Wieger says that Shun revived the laws of the ancient cult; had it, therefore, been previously the custom for the people not to sacrifice to *T'ien*, but to leave this to the Emperor? If so, that would agree perfectly with my own hypothesis, that *T'ien* was never properly a deity of the people. On the other hand, it seems difficult to see how the prohibition of popular sacrifices to *T'ien* could have done away with the abuses which were supposed to have occurred. It would seem that the Emperor and his agents would rather have tried to stimulate the *T'ien*-cult, and to make it take the place of the supposedly heretical practices. Furthermore, Legge reports an extended dialogue concerning this passage, dating from the time of Confucius, in which there is not the slightest hint that it has any reference to popular worship of *T'ien* at all.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>34</sup> *Shu* p. 593.

<sup>35</sup> L. Wieger, S. J., *Histoire des Croyances Religieuses et des Opinions Philosophiques en Chine depuis l'Origine, jusqu'à Nos Jours* (cited hereafter as *Histoire des Croyances*), pp. 14-15.

<sup>36</sup> *Shu*, pp. 593-94, notes.



Another difficulty is worthy of note. How is it that this popular *T'ien*-cult, supposedly so strong up to this time, was extirpated in the full spotlight of history (as its proponents would have us believe) yet has left no echo of its existence in the rest of Chinese literature, not even in the *Shi King*, the *Book of Poetry*, which is our best source for popular sentiment? The point is not one on which to be stubbornly dogmatic, but until further evidence is produced I shall remain persuaded that *T'ien* was always a governmental figure, never a popular one. It is the aristocracy, not the people, who sacrifice to it. The fact is that all of this literature which concerns the early rulers of China is very doubtful. Some of its incidents can only be mythical, much is probably allegory. As collateral evidence it is often very good; as independent proof it is in most cases worthless. In this case the independent evidence nearly all points away from a popular cult of *T'ien*.

But suppose we concede that a *T'ien*-cult might have existed, deeply rooted in the popular imagination, from the earliest times. Could the Emperor have ended it with such ease, or even at all? He could not. Chinese emperors who try to introduce great innovations in religion have always lost their heads and their thrones to some ambitious vassal who has been watching for just such an opportunity to raise a pious rebellion.

But if *T'ien* was not always the great deity of the Chinese, we must account for its origin in some manner.<sup>37</sup> One may not ignore the very frequent association of nomadic peoples with sky-gods. From this fact comes, perhaps, the strongest argument for a pastoral nomadic period in the history of the Chinese.

The earlier Heaven-cult did not include the earth as the counterpart of Heaven, and can not well be said to be a product of the peasant community. The agricultural feature was apparently added to the original ritual as the farming interest had been gradually developed to displace that of pastoral economy.<sup>38</sup>

One may not deny the possibility of a pastoral nomadic period, nor dogmatically assert that this might not be the origin of *T'ien*. It might. But the tendency of nomadic deities to atrophy in an agricultural situation is, as has been pointed out, great, and is

<sup>37</sup> T'ai refers to "the undivided supremacy which *T'ien* had commanded over the people from time immemorial." *Op. cit.*, p. 233.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 141a.

irresistible unless the old deities are able to take on new functions which fit into the new habitat and mode of life of their people. In China, *T'ien* did, in the course of time, assume functions of a governmental character, but one can hardly believe that this group of nomads (according to the hypothesis we are pursuing) can have moved into China and immediately set up a thoroughly organized government. Therefore, even if the origin of *T'ien* were nomadic, it seems probable that the concept would in any case have undergone an intermediate period of extreme feebleness.<sup>39</sup>

But if we eliminate the pastoral stage, we may still find an explanation for *T'ien*. The sky is important for the agricultor, as well as for the herdsman. It is from the sky that the rain comes, it is in the sky that the sun, all-important, is located. The sky becomes a symbol of the orderly rotation of the seasons, which is associated with that remarkably strong sense of Harmony and Order, social and cosmic, which, as we have seen, the Chinese developed.

The sky sees everything. Among many peoples it has become linked with justice and with government. It is often the seat of the Great Ruler, who is of course closely associated with the human king or emperor. So it was in China. This development, which can only be mentioned here, will be treated at length when we come to deal with Confucianism and its background.

The sky is active, sending driving rain and hot sunlight. The earth is passive, motionless, putting forth the fruit of the seed it receives. Quite simply, the male *yang* came to have its seat in heaven, while the female *yin* was naturally linked with earth.<sup>40</sup>

\* \* \*

The foregoing picture is not presented as anything like a complete account of early Chinese religion or philosophy, nor even as a thorough canvass of all of the reliable material which is available on the subject. Many elements have been omitted, some because they are peripheral, others because they are included implicitly in what has been described. The chief purpose of this sketch has been to provide a background for, and an introduction to, the ensuing study of later Chinese thought.

<sup>39</sup> The only alternative would be the persistence among the settled people of a governing caste, or the penetration among them of a group of nomads who set up an aristocracy. See Granet's refutation of these possibilities, *Dances*, p. 9-24.

<sup>40</sup> The sun is sometimes called "the great *yang*."

## NATURE AND EPISTEMOLOGY

BY M. WHITCOMB HESS

“IF the undergraduate,” says a modern college president<sup>1</sup> “can only get it through his head that Christian morals and natural morals are two quite different things . . . that they differ in aim and in purpose a vast confusion may be resolved.” But the vast confusion observed in the lives of the present generation so far from being resolved by a consideration of nature as alien to the Christian life is partially the result of that attitude. For the distinction Mr. Bell would make between natural morals and Christian morals is the result of an ambiguous hybrid of epistemology and ethics, the identification of nature with half-knowledge, which, in the background of theological and philosophical speculation for some centuries, threatens to darken the landscape.

No one will deny that a real relation exists between ethics and epistemology. The two are at one concerning the nature of good and of evil. Each concedes the synonym of the abstract terms, truth and good, error and evil. But though they meet on this one ground, ethics is as far removed from epistemology as the concrete is from the abstract. Ethics deals with the relating of experience; epistemology, with the reverberation of reality. There is no separation between life and knowledge, but there is a difference of degree between the theory of life which is truth, or knowledge, and the theory of the theory, which is epistemology. Because of this difference, the meeting-ground of ethics and epistemology is also the dividing line between them. It has been this indeterminate relation which has brought about that opposition between nature and spirit which sets the one as the principle of reason over against the other as the unreasoned principle, or blind force. And for such concep-

<sup>1</sup> *The Atlantic Monthly*, April, 1928. *The Church and the Undergraduate*, p. 505, by Bernard Iddings Bell, President of St. Stephens College.

tion, ethics has borrowed the knowledge-levels discovered by epistemology which belong to the theory of knowledge as such, and which applied to the self merely make for a confused notion of what the earth-life is all about.

## II

In individual experience the body is at once a place and a possession though in its intimacy of relation to the thinking self it exceeds that of any other place or possession to an almost unimaginable extent. However, since the dawn of speculation the body has been identified more or less with the devilish principle. This identification has been strengthened by the ancient human desire to repudiate disease and death but it has its roots in nature's alignment with half-truth by the epistemologists.

Experience has always shown that first judgments are subject to change. The necessity for hard and patient thinking was manifest from the earliest adventurings in philosophy. The pre-Socratics already had put reflection beyond naive experience in value for attaining truth. Illusory appearance was attributed to the deceit of the senses before the sophist Protagoras identified thought with sense-perception as one process. Believing, like earlier thinkers, that perception is conditioned by organic changes in both percipient and perceived object at the moment of contact, Protagoras' very definition of perception, or thought, made it unstable. So the great advance Protagoras made was lost even in the making; and perception to this day has hardly recovered from the equivocal position given it when Plato and Aristotle completed the giant task of proving against the sophists a universal validity for knowledge which Socrates, with his inductive doctrine, began.

In human experience knowledge progresses from a low state, which has been held identical with sense-perception since it is coincident with primary presentations, to a high state held as pure thought. For this reason the phenomenal world was considered by early thinkers as separated from a higher world of thought, by a difference of degree, if not of kind.<sup>2</sup> Plato taught then that the incorporeal world forms the object of science; but the mistaken

<sup>2</sup> Democritus expressed the difference between perception and thought in quantitative terms: Obscure insight or perception, and genuine insight or thought, result respectively from the atomic motions of coarse and fine images of things.

notion drawn from his teaching was that the phenomena of the natural world of the senses are manifestations of immaterial realities, the Ideas, which exist side by side with them just as partial insight (Protagorean perception) exists side by side with true insight. Nevertheless the most careful studies of Plato reveal his conception of the Idea as purely epistemological: The first great epistemologist meant by the Idea what modern epistemologists mean by value; he meant by phenomenon what they mean by fact. In other words, Plato taught that knowledge about things and events is progressively intelligible; and he used the terms "intellectual" and "sensuous" as convenient names for knowledge-divisions, and was at times confused in his own statements by the nomenclature.

Aristotle, more scientist than philosopher, mapped out a system of development from the lowest expression of reality in truth which he called matter, to the highest, or pure form. The relation of matter as mere possibility to form as complete actuality removed for Aristotle the difficulties of separation which he thought he found in Plato's doctrine. But while there is present an epistemological monism in form and matter taken as two sides of one and the same reality, still the Aristotelian system stresses a marked dualism of the resistant passivity of matter, and, opposing it, the purposive activity of form. And as Plato also had done Aristotle applied these limits to bodily and psychical activities, an application anticipating St. Paul and St. Augustine. An anthropological dualism thus grew out of the inevitable application of epistemology to human-conduct—inevitable because of the very nature of truth which makes difficult the limiting of the theory of knowledge to its particular field.

### III

Philo Judaeus who lived during the first century A. D. fell into the pitfall laid by epistemology. In his reinterpretation of Judaism in the light of Greek philosophy there is found dominant the note of contrast between spirit and flesh. Spirit, man's true nature, Philo believed, must engage in continuous strife with man's false nature, flesh, which actually imprisons and retards the spirit in its development. It is interesting to note that Philo remaining in the fold of Judaism insisted on the spirit-flesh antagonism which his contemporary, Saul of Tarsus, emphasized after his conversion.

With Philo the reason was admittedly the result of having ingrafted Greek thought into the Hebrew faith; and Paul, of philosophical training, was the first among the Christians to take the cross as a symbol of spirit's literal triumph over the flesh.

Two centuries later than Philo and St. Paul, Plotinus made a forthright identification of the corporeal world with partial-truth. The famous metaphor of the founder of Neo-Platonism, drawn from its prototype in the Republic, though mystically and poetically suggestive, is a penetrative analysis of the learning process. From truth's exhaustless source light emanates first as spirit, then as soul and finally at its farthest reach forms a twilight with matter. Matter is dark space, sheer ignorance, or sheer evil. Plotinus shows in this extraordinary figure that truth is unchanging and unchangeable as Parmenides had claimed for it before Plato. He gives the nature of truth in its least manifestation. In the process of knowledge the more light and fuller needed is obtained not by the absorption of anything external to the thinker but by the mind's return to itself. There is the further illumination of truth's nature: The effect of higher determinism if abstracted from this cause appears as blind behavior. *Unreasoned power is the express rebellion against truth.* What is usually overlooked in Plotinus' remarkable snapshot of the thinker at the moment of complete knowledge is that the picture has no content, but is of mere knowledge-theory.

#### IV

Whatever may be the ultimate meaning of nature, it is not found in setting it over against spirit as its lower stage. And to identify nature and spirit with knowledge-states, diametrically opposed because taken from their continuum in knowledge-process, ends by making epistemology absurd and experience futile.

## INTELLECTUAL INTEGRITY AND THE ART OF THINKING

BY VICTOR S. YARROS

CROCE, the distinguished Italian philosopher, maintains in one of his books that there is no such thing as an intellectual error. The average man has talked for ages of mistakes of the head and mistakes of the heart, but Croce asserts that all mistakes are essentially moral.

This, at first sight, appears to be a wild paradox. Is it not notorious that the most careful, conscientious and truthful men make mistakes? Are not men misled by appearances, by evidence which seems to them sufficient but turns out eventually to have been insufficient? Are not hypotheses and theories revised and re-revised in the light of new facts, and is it not legitimate to form tentative theories? Now, then can Croce take the position he does as to the origin and nature of error?

The answer is that Croce believes, with Prof. Graham Wallas and others, that there is an art of thinking, and that it is one's duty to undergo training and discipline in that art, and to master it, *thus avoiding errors*.

For example, a man of science observes phenomena and tries to explain them. This means that he has formed a theory. But if he is truly scientific, he will realize and insist that his theory is provisional, tentative, subject to modification or even rejection after further observation and experiment. In that case there is no error. Likewise, when a person is aware of his limitations, his ignorance, he will qualify his statements and remain open-minded. He will say, "I am inclined to believe," not "I believe." He will not claim convictions when he has only notions or opinions based on slender data.

Croce, if I understand him, contends that the avoidance of errors and mistakes is a matter of literary style, and that the true scientist

can have no difficulty in expressing himself with precision and caution. Rashness, dogmatism, looseness of statement, vanity, pretence and the like are, of course, moral, not mental, qualities. Hence Croce's conclusion—so odd when not analyzed and correctly interpreted—that error is moral, not intellectual.

This question is raised again by Abbe Ernest Dimmet, the French critic and teacher, in his little book on *The Art of Thinking*. His conclusions are not different from those of Graham Wallas, but he is less direct, less exact, less didactic. He is interested, he says, in producing thought, not in guiding it. Wallas was interested in improving the quality of much current thought. Both agree that the obstacles to real thinking are many, and the wonder is that we manage to think as well as we do. But who would dispute the proposition that, if it be possible to produce better thought and more thought of the right kind, it is our duty to employ whatever means are available for the promotion of that end?

For, as M. Dimmet says, the question is at bottom a moral one—namely, the making of the fullest and worthiest use of all our faculties. The question is individual, primarily, but it is also social. Waste of power and faculty is reprehensible, and the victims of such waste are often the victims of social maladjustment, bad educational methods, group blunders and false standards. If schools and colleges do not teach the art of thinking, they neglect their primary and most important purpose. Facts are only the raw material of thought, and obviously to interpret them aright, to arrive at hypotheses and theories, or at laws, thinking is necessary.

How, then, can we teach thinking? Wallas divided the process of thought into four distinct stages, and stressed the importance of adequate preparation, of time for incubation and the proper utilization of illumination. M. Dimmet passes over this suggestive division and deals more generally with the problem.

He first points out the obstacles to thought—Wallas would say to correct and sound thinking. What are they? Dimmet gives quite a list of obstacles—passion, to begin with, naturally, which is another name for bias or prejudice, and then imitation, gregariousness, indolence, wrong ideas of education, lack of leisure or of time for reflection and the cultivation of the pleasures of the intellect.

Can these obstacles be avoided? Not entirely, perhaps, but most of those who are endowed with the capacity for thought—with brains, in short—and with a certain amount of intellectual integrity



and seriousness can avoid most of the obstacles under ordinary circumstances by observing certain conditions and eliminating other conditions.

What must we do to enable our minds to think correctly? I confess I am not entirely satisfied with the way in which M. Dimmet answers the question. He omits vital elements and is rather vague in his answer, though all that he says is true and helpful.

Those who would teach men to think and to avoid error should lay particular stress on the duty of fitting one's-self to form an opinion on a given subject. What value is there in an opinion based on no facts, no knowledge? And how can there be much value in an opinion based on very little and ill-assimilated knowledge? The trouble with most men, especially in the realm of the inexact sciences, is that they form and express opinions without half the knowledge that would give them the *right* to opinions, and that they refuse to modify their notions even if the evidence against them is overwhelming. Further, the trouble with most men is that they are too vain and proud to be intellectually honest. He who would reason scientifically must be humble, ready to change his mind, or to suspend judgment, or to consider with sympathy the arguments of opponents.

But to return to M. Dimmet. What are his conditions of thought? He names and discusses several. He emphasizes the trustworthiness of intuitions, of flashes, of inspirations, agreeing in this with Bergson. He advises leisurely contemplation. He insists on the reading of the best books and on living with the great and their noble and elevated ideas. He urges cultivation of one's own vein, after determining what that vein is. He deprecates the tendency to rush into print. He believes, as does Wallas in incubation and illumination after due preparation, and also in verification.

Since the little book is distinctly literary, rhetorical and conversational, it has the defects of its good qualities—it is occasionally superficial and paradoxical. But these faults may be passed over. It is bound to stimulate thought and direct attention to the sources of error, the vices of intolerant and dogmatic writers, the bad habits of the generality of men who regard themselves as civilized and superior, and the road to truth and high-minded thinking.

The Wallas and Dimmet books should be studied in every high school, college, university and institute of the world. They are more valuable than text-books on logic, or, rather, they are excellent text-books on logic among other things.

## PROTEVANGELION

By Charles Sloan Reid

Discredited, what feature of the tale  
    Again o'ertold had thus offended them,  
The self-posed censors, of divine travail  
    That raised an Avatar in Bethlehem?

The miracle in measure looms as great  
    As in the favored gospel's poesy—  
And witness waxes large, as numbers prate  
    In unison of things of mystery.

A story told, of repetition's voice,  
    Unlike in naught essential to the theme,  
Sage authorship in handwork should rejoice  
    Accredited in revelation's scheme.

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September, 1928

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Published Bi-Monthly

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55 Fifth Avenue, New York

Single Numbers \$1.00 (5s.)

Per Annum \$5.00 (25s.)

Publishers: DAVID NUTT, London—G. E. STECHERT CO., New York—FELIX ALCAN,  
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*Published at the beginning of JANUARY, APRIL, JULY, OCTOBER*

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