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## **THE COMPLEX VISION**

**THE BOOKS OF  
JOHN COWPER POWYS**

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# THE COMPLEX VISION

BY  
JOHN COWPER POWYS



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1920

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TO  
LITTLETON ALFRED



## PROLOGUE

What I am anxious to attempt in this anticipatory summary of the contents of this book is a simple estimate of its final conclusions, in such a form as shall eliminate all technical terms and reduce the matter to a plain statement, intelligible as far as such a thing can be made intelligible, to the apprehension of such persons as have not had the luck, or the ill-luck, of a plunge into the ocean of metaphysic.

A large portion of the book deals with what might be called our *instrument of research*; in other words, with the problem of what particular powers of insight the human mind must use, if its vision of reality is to be of any deeper or more permanent value than the "passing on the wing," so to speak, of individual fancies and speculations.

This instrument of research I find to be the use, by the human person, of all the various energies of personality concentrated into one point; and the resultant spectacle of things or reality of things, which this concentrated vision makes clear, I call the original revelation of the complex vision of man.

Having analyzed in the earlier portions of the book the peculiar nature of our organ of research and the peculiar difficulties—amounting to a very elaborate work of art—which have to be overcome before this *concentration* takes place, I proceed in the later portions of the book to make as clear as I can what kind of reality it is that we actually do succeed in grasping, when this concentrating process has been achieved. I indicate incidentally that this desirable concentration of the energies of personality is so difficult

a thing that we are compelled to resort to our memory of what we experienced in rare and fortunate moments in order to establish its results. I suggest that it is not to our average moments of insight that we have to appeal, but to our exceptional moments of insight; since it is only at rare moments in our lives that we are able to enter into what I call the *eternal vision*.

To what, then, does this conclusion amount, and what is this resultant reality, in as far as we are able to gather it up and articulate its nature from the vague records of our memory?

I have endeavoured to show that it amounts to the following series of results. What we are, in the first place, assured of is the existence within our own individual body of a real actual living thing composed of a mysterious substance wherein what we call mind and what we call matter are fused and intermingled. This is our real and self-conscious soul, the thing in us which says, "I am I," of which the physical body is only one expression, and of which all the bodily senses are only one gateway of receptivity.

The soul within us becomes aware of its own body simultaneously with its becoming aware of all the other bodies which fill the visible universe. It is then by an act of faith or imagination that the soul within us takes for granted and assumes that there must be a soul resembling our own soul within each one of those alien bodies, of which, simultaneously with its own, it becomes aware.

And since the living basis of our personality is this real soul within us, it follows that all those energies of personality, whose concentration is the supreme work of art, are the energies of this real soul. If, therefore, we assume that all the diverse physical bodies which fill the universe possess, each of them, an inner soul resembling our own soul, we are led to the conclusion that just as our own soul

half-creates and half-discovers the general spectacle of things which it names "the universe," so all the alien souls in the world half-create and half-discover what they feel as *their* universe.

If our revelation stopped at this point we should have to admit that there was not one universe, but as many universes as there are living souls. It is at this point, however, that we become aware that all these souls are able, in some degree or other, to enter into communication. They are able to do this both by the bodily sounds and signs which constitute language and by certain immaterial vibrations which seem to make no use of the body at all. In this communication between different souls, as far as humanity is concerned, a very curious experience has to be recorded.

When two human beings dispute together upon any important problem of life, there is always an implicit appeal made by both of them to an invisible arbiter, or invisible standard of arbitration, in the heart of which both seem aware that the reality, upon which their opinions differ, is to be found in its eternal truth. What then is this invisible standard of arbitration? Whatever it is, we are compelled to assume that it satisfies and transcends the deepest and furthest reach of personal vision in all the souls that approach it. And what is the deepest and furthest reach of our individual soul? This seems to be a projection upon the material plane of the very stuff and substance of the soul's inmost nature.

This very "stuff" of the soul, this outflowing of the substance of the soul, I name "emotion"; and I find it to consist of two eternally conflicting elements; what I call the element of "love," and what I call the element of "malice." This emotion of love, which is the furthest reach of the soul, I find to be differentiated when it comes into contact with the material universe into three ultimate



ways of taking life; namely, the way which we name the pursuit of beauty, the way which we name the pursuit of goodness, and the way which we name the pursuit of truth. But these three ways of taking life find always their unity and identity in that emotion of love which is the psychic substance of them all.

The invisible standard of arbitration, then, to which an appeal is always made, consciously or unconsciously, when two human beings dispute upon the mystery of life, is a standard of arbitration which concerns the real nature of love, and the real nature of what we call "the good" and "the true" and "the beautiful."

And since we have found in personality the one thing in existence of which we are absolutely assured, because we are aware of it, *on the inside*, so to speak, in the depths of our own souls, it becomes necessary that in place of thinking of this invisible standard as any spiritual or chemical "law" in any stream of "life-force" we should think of it as being as personal as we ourselves are personal. For since what we call the universe has been already described as something which is half-created and half-discovered by the vision of some one soul in it or of all the souls in it, it is clear that we have no longer any right to think of these ultimate ideas as "suspended" in the universe, or as general "laws" of the universe. They are suspended in the individual soul, which half-creates and half-discovers the universe according to their influence.

Personality is the only permanent thing in life; and if truth, beauty, goodness, and love, are to have permanence they must depend for their permanence not upon some imaginary law in a universe half-created by personality but upon the indestructible nature of personality itself.

The human soul is aware of an invisible standard of beauty. To this invisible standard it is compelled to make an unconscious appeal in all matters of argument and dis-

cussion. This standard must therefore be rooted in a personal super-human vision and we are driven to the conclusion that some being or beings exist, superior to man, and yet in communication with man. And since what we see around us is a world of many human and sub-human personalities, it is, by analogy, a more natural supposition to suppose that these supernatural beings are many than that they are one.

What the human soul, therefore, together with all other souls, attains in its concentrated moments is "an eternal vision" wherein what is mortal in us merges itself in what is immortal.

But if what we call the universe is a thing made up of all the various universes of all the various souls in space and time, we are forbidden to find in this visible material universe, whose "reality" does not become "really real" until it has received the "hall-mark," so to speak, of the eternal vision, any sort of medium or link which makes it possible for these various souls to communicate with one another.

This material universe, thus produced by the concentrated visions of all the souls entering into the eternal vision, is made up of all the physical bodies of all such souls, linked together by the medium of universal ether. But although the bodies which thus occupy different points of space are linked together by the universal ether, we are not permitted to find in this elemental ether, the medium which links the innumerable souls together. And we are not permitted this because in our original assumption such souls are themselves the half-creators, as well as the half-discoverers, of that universe whose empty spaces are thus filled. The material ether which links all bodies together cannot, since it is a portion of such an universe, be itself the medium from the midst of which these souls create that universe.

But if, following our method of regarding every material substance in the world as the body of some sort of soul, we regard this universal ether as itself the body of an universal or elemental soul, then we are justified in finding in this elemental omnipresent soul diffused through space, the very medium we need; out of the midst of which all the souls which exist project their various universes.

We are thus faced by a universe which is the half-creation and half-discovery of all living souls, a universe the truth and beauty of which depend upon the eternal vision, a universe whose material substance is entirely composed of the actual physical bodies of those very souls whose vision half-creates and half-discovers it.

We thus reach our conclusion that there is nothing in the world except personality. The material universe is entirely made up of personal bodies united by the personal body of the elemental ether. What we name the universe, therefore, is an enormous group of bodies joined together by the body of the ether; such bodies being the physical expression of a corresponding group of innumerable souls joined together by the soul of the ether.

In the portions of this book which deal with the creative energy of the soul I have constantly used the expression "objective mystery"; but in my concluding chapter I have rejected and eliminated this word as a mere step or stage in human thought which does not correspond to any final reality. When I use the term "objective mystery" I am referring to the original movement of the individual mind when it first stretches out to what is outside itself. What is outside itself consists in reality of nothing but an unfathomable group of bodies and souls joined together by the body and soul of the ether which fills space.

But since, in its first stretching out towards these things, all it is aware of is the presence of a plastic something which lends itself, under the universal curve of space, to

the moulding and shaping and colouring of its creative vision, it is natural enough to look about for a name by which we can indicate this original "clay" or "matter" or "world-stuff" out of which the individual soul creates its vision of an universe. And the name "objective mystery" is the name by which, in the bulk of this book, I have indicated this mysterious world-stuff, by which the soul finds itself surrounded, both in regard to the matter of its own body and in regard to the still more alien matter of which all other bodies are composed.

But when by the use of the term objective mystery I have indicated that general and universal something, not itself, by which the soul is confronted, that something which, like a white screen, or a thick mass of darkness, waits the moving lamp of the soul to give it light and colour, it becomes clear that the name itself does not cover any actual reality other than the actual reality of all the bodies in the world joined together by the universal ether.

Is the term "objective mystery," therefore, no more than the name given to that first solid mass of external impression which the insight of the soul subsequently reduces to the shapes, colours, scents, sounds, and all the more subtle intimations springing from the innumerable bodies and souls which fill universal space? No. It is not quite this. It is a little deeper than this. It is, in fact, the mind's recognition that *behind* this first solid mass of external impression which the soul's own creative activity creates into its "universe" there must exist "something," some real substance, or matter, or world-stuff, in contact with which the soul half-creates and half-discovers the universe which it makes its own.

When, however, the soul has arrived at the knowledge that its own physical body is the outward expression of its inner self, and when by an act of faith or imagination it has extended this knowledge to every other bodily form in

its universe, it ceases to be necessary to use the term "objective mystery"; since that something which the soul felt conscious of as existing behind the original solid mass of impressions is now known by the soul to be nothing else than an incredible number of living personalities, each with its own body.

And just as I make use in this book of the term "objective mystery," and then discard it in my final conclusion, so I make an emphatic and elaborate use of the term "creative" and then discard it, or considerably modify it, in my final conclusion.

My sequence of thought, in this matter of the soul's "creative" power, may thus be indicated. In the process of preparing the ground for those rare moments of illumination wherein we attain the eternal vision the soul is occupied, and the person attempting to think is occupied, with what I call "the difficult work of art" of concentrating its various energies and fusing them into one balanced point of rhythmic harmony. This effort of contemplative tension is a "creative effort" similar to that which all artists are compelled to make. In addition to this aspect of what I call "creation," there also remains the fact that the individual soul modifies and changes that first half-real something which I name the objective mystery, until it becomes all the colours, shapes, sounds and so forth, produced by the impression upon the soul of all the other personalities brought into contact with it by the omnipresent personality of the universal ether.

The words "creation" and "creative" are thus made descriptive in this book of the simple and undeniable fact that everything which the mind touches is modified and changed by the mind; and that ultimately the universe which any mind beholds is an universe half-created by the mood of the mind which beholds it. And since the mood of any mind which contemplates the universe is dependent



upon the relative "overcoming" in that particular soul of the emotion of malice by love, or of the emotion of love by malice, it becomes true to say that any universe which comes into existence is necessarily "created" by the original struggle, in the depths of some soul or other, of the conflicting emotions of love and malice.

And since the ideal of the emotion of love is life, and the ideal of the emotion of hate is death, it becomes true to say that the emotion of love is identical with the creative energy in all souls, while the emotion of malice is identical with the force which resists creation in all souls.

Why then do I drop completely, or at least considerably modify, this stress upon the soul's "creative" power in my final chapter? I am led to do so by the fact that such creative power in the soul is, after all, only a preparation for the eternal vision. Creative energy implies effort, tension, revolution, agitation, and the pain of birth. All these things have to do with preparing the ground for the eternal vision, and with the final gesture of the soul, by which it enters into that ultimate rhythm. But once having entered into that vision—and in these things time is nothing—the rhythm which results is a rhythm upon which the soul rests, even as music rests upon music, or life rests upon life.

And the eternal vision, thus momentarily attained, and hereafter gathered together from the deep cisterns of memory, liberates us, when we are under its influence, from that contemplative or creative tension whereby we reached it. It is then that the stoical pride of the soul, in the strength of which it has endured so much, undergoes the process of an immense relaxation and relief. An indescribable humility floods our being; and the mood with which we contemplate the spectacle of life and death ceases to be an individual mood and becomes an universal mood. The isolation, which was a necessary element in our ad-

vance to this point, melts away when we have reached it. It is not that we lose our personality, it is that we merge ourselves by the outflowing of love, in all the personalities to which the procession of time gives birth.

And the way we arrive at this identification of ourselves with all souls, living or dead or unborn, is by our love for that ideal symbolized in the figure of Christ in whom this identification has already been achieved. This, and nothing less than this, is the eternal vision. For the only "god" among all the arbiters of our destiny, with whom we are concerned, is Christ. To enter into his secret is to enter into their secret. To be aware of him is to be aware of everything in the world, mortality and immortality, the transitory and the eternal.

Life then, as I have struggled to interpret it in this book, seems to present itself as an unfathomable universe entirely made up of personalities. What we call inanimate substances are all of them the bodies, or portions of the bodies, of living personalities. The immense gulf, popularly made between the animate and the inanimate, thus turns out to be an unfounded illusion; and the whole universe reveals itself as an unfathomable series, or congeries, of living personalities, united by the presence of the omnipresent ether which fills universal space.

It is of little moment, the particular steps or stages of thought, by which one mind, among so many, arrives at this final conclusion. Other minds, following other tracks across the desert, might easily reach it. The important thing to note is that, once reached, such a conclusion seems to demand from us a very definite attitude toward life. For if life, if the universe, is entirely made up of personality, then our instinctive or acquired attitude toward personality becomes the path by which we approach truth.

To persons who have not been plunged, luckily or unluckily, in the troublesome sea of metaphysical phrases, the

portions of this book which will be most tiresome are the portions which deal with those "half-realities" or logical abstractions of the human reason, when such reason "works" in isolation from the other attributes of the soul. Such reason, working in isolation, inevitably produces certain views of life; and these views of life, although unreal when compared with the reality produced by the full play of all our energies, cannot be completely disregarded if our research is to cover the whole field of humanity's reactions. Since there is always an irresistible return to these metaphysical views of life directly the soul loses the rhythm of its total being, it seems as if it were unwise to advance upon our road until we have discounted such views and placed them in their true perspective, as unreal but inevitable abstractions.

The particular views of life which this recurrent movement of the logical reason results in, are, first, the reduction of everything to an infinite stream of pure thought, outside both time and space, unconscious of itself as in any way personal; and, in the second place, the reduction of everything to one universal self-conscious spirit, in whose absolute and infinite being independent of space and time all separate existences lose themselves and are found to be illusions.

What I try to make clear in the metaphysical portion of this book is that these two views of life, while always liable to return upon us with every renewed movement of the isolated reason, are in truth unreal projections of man's imperious mind. When we subject them to an analysis based upon our complete organ of research they show themselves to be nothing but tyrannous phantoms, abstracted from the genuine reality of the soul as it exists *within* space and time.

What I seek to show throughout this book is that the world resolves itself into an immeasurable number of per-

sonalities held together by the personality of the universal ether and by the unity of one space and one time. Even of space and time themselves, since the only thing that really "fills them," so to speak, to the brim, is the universal ether, it might be said that they are the expression of this universal ether in its relation to all the objects which it contains.

Thus the conclusion to which I am driven is that the dome of space, out of which the sun shines by day and the stars by night, contains no vast gulfs of absolute nothingness into which the soul that hates life may flee away and be at rest. At the same time the soul that hates life need not despair. The chances, as we come to estimate them, for and against the soul's survival after death, seem so curiously even, that it may easily happen that the extreme longing of the soul for annihilation may prove in such a balancing of forces the final deciding stroke. And quite apart from death, I have tried to show in this book, how in the mere fact of the unfathomable depths into which all physical bodies as well as all immaterial souls recede there is an infinite opportunity for any soul to find a way of escape from life, either by sinking into the depths of its own physical being, or by sinking into the depths of its own spiritual substance.

The main purpose of the book reveals, however, the only escape from all the pain and misery of life which is worthy of the soul of man. And this is not so much an escape from life as a transfiguring of the nature of life by means of a newly born attitude toward it. This attitude toward life, of which I have tried to catch at least the general outlines, is the attitude which the soul struggles to maintain by gathering together all its diffused memories of those rare moments when it entered into the eternal vision.

And I have indicated as clearly as I could how it comes about that in the sphere of practical life the only natural

and consistent realization of this attitude would be the carrying into actual effect of what I call "the idea of communism."

This "idea of communism," in which the human implications of the eternal vision become realized, is simply the conception of a system of human society founded upon the creative instinct, instead of upon the possessive instinct in humanity.

I endeavour to make clear that such a reorganization of society upon such a basis does not imply any radical change in human nature. It only implies a liberation of a force that already exists, of the force in the human soul that is centrifugal, or outflowing, as opposed to the force that is centripetal, or indrawing. Such a force has always been active in the lives of individuals. It only remains to liberate that force until it reaches the general consciousness of the race, to make such a reconstruction of human society not only ideal, but actual and effective.





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## PREPACE

The speculative system which I have entitled "The Philosophy of the Complex Vision" is an attempt to bring into prominence, in the sphere of definite and articulate thought, those scattered and chaotic intimations which hitherto have found expression rather in Art than in Philosophy.

It has come to be fatally clear to me that between the great metaphysical systems of rationalized purpose and the actual shocks, experiences, superstitions, illusions, disillusion, reactions, hope and despairs, of ordinary men and women there is a great gulf fixed. It has become clear to me that the real poignant personal drama in all our lives, together with those vague "marginal" feelings which overshadow all of us with a sense of something half-revealed and half withheld, has hardly any point of contact with these formidable edifices of pure logic.

On the other hand the tentative, hesitating, ambiguous hypotheses of Physical Science, transforming themselves afresh with every new discovery, seem, when the portentous mystery of Life's real secret confronts us, to be equally remote and elusive.

When in such a dilemma one turns to the vitalistic and pragmatic speculations of a Bergson or a William James there is an almost more hopeless revulsion. For in these pseudo-scientific, pseudo-psychological methods of thought something most profoundly human seems to us to be completely neglected. I refer to the high and passionate imperatives of the heroic, desperate, treasonable heart of man.

What we have come to demand is some intelligible sys-

tem of *imaginative reason* which shall answer the exigencies not only of our more normal moods but of those moods into which we are thrown by the pressure upon us—apparently from outside the mechanical sequence of cause and effect—of certain mysterious Powers in the background of our experience, such as hitherto have only found symbolic and representative expression in the ritual of Art and Religion.

What we have come to demand is some flexible, malleable, rhythmic system which shall give an imaginative and yet a rational form to the sum total of those manifold and intricate impressions which make up the life of a real person upon a real earth.

What we have come to demand is that the centre of gravity in our interpretation of life should be restored to its natural point of vantage, namely, to the actual living consciousness of an actual living human being.

And it is precisely these demands that the philosophy of the complex vision attempts to satisfy. It seeks to satisfy them by using as its organ of research the balanced "ensemble" of man's whole nature. It seeks to satisfy them by using as its "material" the whole variegated and contradictory mass of feelings and reactions to feelings, which the natural human being with his superstitions, his sympathies, his antipathies, his loves and his hates, his surmises, his irrational intuitions, his hopes and fears, is of necessity bound to experience as he moves through the world.

It seeks, in fact, to envisage from within and without the confused hurly-burly of life's drama; and to give to this contradictory and complicated spectacle the aesthetic rationality or imaginative inevitableness of a rhythmic work of art.

In this attempt the philosophy of the complex vision is bound to recognize, and include in its *rational form*, much that remains mysterious, arbitrary, indetermined, organic, obstinately illogical. For the illogical is not necessarily

the unintelligible, so long as the reason which we use is that same imaginative and clairvoyant reason, which, in its higher measure, sustains the vision of the poets and the artists.

By the use of this fuller, richer, more living, more concrete instrument of research, the conclusions we arrive at will have in them more of the magic of Nature, and will be closer to the actual palpable organic mystery of Life, than either the abstract conclusions of metaphysic or the cautious, impersonal hypotheses of experimental physical science.



# THE COMPLEX VISION

## CHAPTER I

### THE COMPLEX VISION

A philosophy is known by its genuine starting-point. This is also its final conclusion, often very cunningly concealed. Such a conclusion may be presented to us as the logical result of a long train of reasoning, when really it was there all the while as one single vivid revelation of the complex vision.

Like travellers who have already found, by happy accident, the city of their desire, many crafty thinkers hasten hurriedly back to the particular point from which they intend to be regarded as having started; nor in making this secret journey are they forgetful to erase their footsteps from the sand, so that when they publicly set forth it shall appear to those who follow them that they are guided not by previous knowledge of the way but by the inevitable necessity of pure reason.

I also, like the rest, must begin with what will turn out to be the end; but unlike many I shall openly indicate this fact and not attempt to conceal it.

My starting-point is nothing less than what I call the original revelation of man's complex vision; and I regard this original revelation as something which is arrived at by the use of a certain synthetic activity of all the attributes of this vision. And this synthetic activity of the complex vision I call its apex-thought.

This revelation is of a peculiar nature, which must be



grasped, at least in its general outlines, before we can advance a step further upon that journey which is also a return.

It might be maintained that before attempting to philosophize upon life, the question should be asked . . . "why philosophize at all?" And again . . . "what are the motive-forces which drive us into this process which we call philosophizing?"

To philosophize is to articulate and express our personal reaction to the mystery which we call life, both with regard to the nature of that mystery and with regard to its meaning and purpose.

My answer to the question "Why do we philosophize?" is as follows. We philosophize for the same reason that we move and speak and laugh and eat and love. In other words, we philosophize because man is a philosophical animal. We breathe because we cannot help breathing and we philosophize because we cannot help philosophizing. We may be as sceptical as we please. Our very scepticism is the confession of an implicit philosophy. To suppress the activity of philosophizing is as impossible as to suppress the activity of breathing.

Assuming then that we *have* to philosophize, the question naturally arises . . . *how* have we to philosophize if our philosophy is to be an adequate expression of our complete reaction to life?

By the phrase "man's complex vision" I am trying to indicate the elaborate and intricate character of the organ of research which we have to use. All subsequent discoveries are rendered misleading if the total activity, at least in its general movement, of our instrument of research is not brought into focus. This instrument of research which I have named "man's complex vision" implies his possession, at the moment when he begins to philosophize, of certain basic attributes or energies.

The advance from infancy to maturity naturally means, when the difference between person and person is considered, an unequal and diverse development of these basic energies. Nor even when the person is full grown will it be found that these energies exist in him in the same proportion as they exist in other persons. But if they existed in every person in precisely equal proportions we should not all, even then, have the same philosophy.

We should not have this, because though the basic activities were there in equal proportion, each living concrete person whose activities these were would necessarily colour the resultant vision with the stain or dye of his original difference from all the rest. For no two living entities in this extraordinary world are exactly the same.

What is left for us, then, it might be asked, but to "whisper our conclusions" and accept the fact that all "philosophies" must be different, as they are all the projection of different personalities? Nothing, as far as pure logic is concerned, is left for us but this. Yet it remains as an essential aspect of the process of philosophizing that we should endeavour to bring over to our vision as many other visions as we can succeed in influencing. For since we have the power of communicating our thought to one another and since it is of the very nature of the complex vision to be exquisitely sensitive to influences from outside, it is a matter of primordial necessity to us all that we should exercise this will to influence and this will to be influenced.

And just as in the case of persons sympathetic to ourselves the activity of philosophizing is attended by the emotion of love and the instinct of creation, so in the case of persons antagonistic to ourselves the activity of philosophizing is attended by the emotion of hate and the instinct of destruction. For philosophy being the final articulation

of a personal reaction to life, is penetrated through and through with the basic energies of life.

On the one hand there is a "Come unto me, all ye . . ." and on the other there is a "Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!" Just because the process of philosophizing is necessarily personal, it is evident that the primordial aspect of it which implies "the will to influence" must tally with some equally primordial reciprocity, implying "the will to be influenced."

That it does so tally with this is proved by the existence of language.

This medium of expression between living things does not seem to be confined to the human race. Some reciprocal harmony of energy, corresponding to our complex vision, seems to have created many mysterious modes of communication by which myriads of sub-human beings, and probably also myriads of super-human beings, act and react on one another.

But the existence of language, though it excludes the possibility of absolute difference, does not, except by an act of faith, necessitate that any sensation we name by the same name is really identical with the sensation which another person feels. And this difficulty is much further complicated by the fact that words themselves tend in the process to harden and petrify, and in their hardening to form, as it were, solid blocks of accretion which resist and materially distort the subtle and evasive play of the human psychology behind them.

So that not only are we aware that the word which we use does not necessarily represent to another what it represents to ourself, but we are also aware that it does not, except in a hard and inflexible manner, represent what we ourselves feel. Words tend all too quickly to become symbolic; and it is often the chief importance of what we call "genius" that it takes these inflexible symbols into its

hands and breaks them up into pieces and dips them in the wavering waters of experience and sensation.

Every philosopher should be at pains to avoid as far as possible the use of technical terms, whether ancient or modern, and should endeavour to evade and slip behind these terms. He should endeavour to indicate his vision of the world by means of words which have acquired no thick accretion of traditional crust but are fresh and supple and organic. He should use such words, in fact, as might be said to have the flexibility of life, and like living plants to possess leaves and sap. He should avoid as far as he can such metaphors and images as already carry with them the accumulated associations of traditional usage, and he should select his expressions so that they shall give the reader the definite impact and vivid shock of thoughts that leap up from immediate contact with sensation, like fish from the surface of a river.

Just because words, in their passage from generation to generation, tend to become so hard and opaque, it is advisable for any one attempting to philosophize to use indirect as well as direct means of expressing his thoughts. The object of philosophizing being to "carry over" into another person's consciousness one's personal reaction to things, it may well happen that a hint, a gesture, a signal, a sign, made indirectly and rather by the grouping of words and the tone of words than by their formal content, will reach the desired result more effectually than any direct argument.

It must be admitted, however, that this purely subjective view of philosophy, with its implied demand for a precise subjective colouring of the words, leaves some part of our philosophical motive-force unsatisfied and troubled by an obscure distress. No two minds can interchange ideas without some kind of appeal, often so faint and unconscious as to be quite unrecognized, to an invisible audience of hid-

den attendants upon the argument, who are tacitly assumed in some mysterious way to be the arbiters. These invisible companions seem to gather to themselves, as we are vaguely aware of them, the attributes of a company of overshadowing listeners. They present themselves to the half-conscious background of our mind as some pre-existent vision of "truth" towards which my subjective vision is one contribution and my interlocutor's subjective vision another contribution.

This vague consciousness which we both have, as we exchange our ideas, of some comprehensive vision of pre-existent reality, to which we are both appealing, does not destroy my passionate conviction that I am "nearer the truth" than my friend; nor does it destroy my latent feeling that in my friend's vision there is "something of the truth" which I am unable to grasp. I think the more constantly we encounter other minds in these philosophical disputes the more does there grow and take shape in our own mind the idea of some mysterious and invisible watchers whose purer vision, exquisitely harmonious and clairvoyant, remains a sort of test both of our own and of others' subjectivity; becomes, in fact, an objective standard or measure or pattern of those ideas which we discover within us all, and name truth, beauty, nobility.

This objective standard of the things which are most important and precious to us, this ideal pattern of all human values, attests and manifests its existence by the primordial necessity of the interchange of thoughts among us. I call this pattern or standard of ideas "the vision of the immortal companions." By the term "the immortal companions" I do not mean to indicate any "immanent" power or transcendental "over-soul." Nor do I mean to indicate that they are created by our desire that they should exist. Although I call them "companions" I wish to suggest that they exist quite independently of man and

are not the origin of these ideas in man's soul but only the model, the pattern, the supreme realization of these ideas.

It is, however, to these tacit listeners, whose vision of the world is there in the background as the arbiter of our subjective encounters, that in our immense loneliness we find ourselves constantly turning. All our philosophy, all our struggle with life, falls into two aspects as we grow more and more aware of what we are doing. The whole strange drama takes the form, as we feel our way, of a creation which at present is non-existent and of a realization of something which at present is hidden.

Thus philosophy, as I have said, is at once a setting-forth and a return; a setting-forth to something that has never been reached, because to reach it we have to create it, and a return to something that has been with us from the beginning and is the very form and shape and image of the thing which we have set forth to create.

These hidden listeners, these tacit arbiters, these assumed and implied witnesses of our life, give value to every attempt we make at arriving at some unity amid our differences; and their vision seems, as the eternal duality presses upon us, to be at once the thing from which we start and the thing towards which, moulding the future as we go, we find ourselves moving. In the unfathomable depths of the past we are aware of a form, a shape, a principle, a premonition; and into the unfathomable depths of the future we project the fulfilled reality of this. We are as gods creating something out of nothing. But when we have created it . . . behold! it was there from the beginning; and the nothing out of which we have created it has receded into a second future from which it mocks and menaces us again.

The full significance of this ultimate duality would be rendered abortive if the future were determined in any more definite way than by the premonition, the hope, the

dream, the passion, the prophecy, the vision, of those invisible companions whose existence is implied whenever two separate souls communicate their thoughts to one another.

It is by our will that the future is created; but around the will hover intermittently many unfathomable motives. And the pre-existent motive, which finally gives the shape to the future, holds the future already in its hand. And this surviving motive, ultimately selected by our will, is of necessity purged and tested by a continual comparison with that form, that idea, that dream, that vision, which is implied from the beginning and which I name "the vision of the invisible companions."

The philosophical enquiry upon which we are engaged finds its starting point, then, in nothing less than that revelation of the complex vision which is also the goal of its journey. The complex vision, in the rhythmic play of its united attributes, makes use of a synthetic power which I call its apex-thought.

The supreme activity of this apex-thought is centred about those primordial ideas of truth, beauty and nobility which are the very stuff and texture of its being. In the ecstasy of its creative and receptive "rapport" with these it becomes aware of the presence of certain immortal companions whose vision is at once the objective standard of such ideas and the premonition of their fuller realization.

In thus attempting to articulate and clarify the main outlines of our starting point, a curious situation emerges. The actual *spectacle*, or mass of impressions to be dealt with, presents itself, we are forced to suppose, as more or less identical, in its general appearance, in every human consciousness. And this "general situation" is strange enough.

We find ourselves, motionless or moving, surrounded by earth and air and space. Impressions flow past us and

flow through us. We ourselves seem at the same time able to move from point to point in this apparently real universe and able to remain, as invisible observers, outside all the phenomena of time and space. As the ultimate invisible spectator of the whole panorama, or, in the logical phrase, as the "a priori unity of apperception" our consciousness cannot be visualized in any concrete image.

But as the empirical personal self, able to move about within the circle of the objective universe, the soul is able to visualize itself pictorially and imaginatively, although not rationally or logically. These two revelations of the situation are simultaneously disclosed; and although the first-named of them—the "a priori unity of apperception"—might seem to claim, on the strength of this "a priori" a precedence over the second, it has no real right to make such a claim. The truth of the situation is indeed the reverse of this; and upon this truth, more than upon anything else, our whole method of enquiry depends. For the fact that we are unable to think of our integral personal self *as actually* being this "a priori" consciousness, and are not only able but are bound to think of our integral personal self *as actually being* this individual "soul" within time and space, we are driven to the conclusion that this "a priori" observer outside time and space is nothing more than an inevitable trick or law or aspect or play of our isolated logical reason.

Our logical reason is itself only one attribute of our real concrete self, the self which exists within time and space; and therefore we reach the conclusion that this "a priori unity," which seems outside time and space, is nothing but a necessary inevitable abstraction from the concrete reality of our personal self which is within time and space. There is no need to be startled at the apparent paradox of this, as though the lesser were including the larger or the part the whole, because when space and time are elimi-



nated there can be no longer any large or small or whole or part. All are equal there because all are equally nothing there.

This "a priori" unity of consciousness, outside time and space, is only real in so far as it represents the inevitable manner in which reason has to work when it works in isolation, and therefore compared with the reality of the personal self, within time and space, it is unreal.

And it is obvious that an unreal thing cannot be larger than a real thing; nor can an unreal thing be a whole of which a real thing is a part.

The method therefore of philosophic enquiry, which I name "the philosophy of the complex vision," depends upon the realization of the difference between what is only the inevitable play of reason, working in isolation, and what is the inevitable play of all the attributes of the human soul when they are held together by the synthetic activity of what I name the "apex-thought." But this logical revelation of the "a priori" unity of consciousness outside of time and space is not the only result of the isolated play of some particular attribute of personality. Just as the isolated play of reason evokes this result, so the isolated play of self-consciousness evokes yet another result, which we have to recognize as intervening between this ultimate logical unity and the real personal self.

The abstraction evoked by the isolated play of self-consciousness is obviously nearer reality and less of an abstraction than the merely logical one above-named, because self-consciousness has more of the personal self in it than reason or logic can have. But though nearer reality and less of an abstraction than the other, this revelation of the inevitable play of self-consciousness, working by itself, is also unreal in relation to the revelation of the concrete personal individual soul.

This revelation of self-consciousness, working in isola-

tion, has as its result the conception of one universal "I am I" or cosmic self, which is nothing more or less than the whole universe, contemplating itself as its own object. To this conception are we driven, when in isolation from the soul's other attributes our self-consciousness gives itself up to its own activity. The "I am I" which we then seek to articulate is an "I am I" reached by the negation or suppression of that primordial act of faith which is the work of the imagination. This act of faith, thus negated and suppressed in order that this unreal cosmic self may embrace the universe, is the act of faith by which we become aware of the existence of innumerable other "selves," besides our own self, filling the vast spaces of nature.

The difference between the sensation we have of our own body and the sensation we have of the rest of the universe ceases to exist when self-consciousness thus expands; and the conceptions we arrive at can only be described as the idea that the whole universe with all the bodies which it contains—including our own body—is nothing but one vast manifestation of one vast mind which is our own "I am I."

It must not be supposed that this abstraction evoked by the solitary activity of self-consciousness is any more a "whole," of which the real self is a "part," than the logical "a priori unity" is a whole, of which the real self is a part. Both are abstractions. Both are unreal. Both are shadowy projections from the true reality, which is the personal self existing side by side with "the immortal companions." Nor must it be supposed that these primordial aspects of life are of equal importance and that we have an equal right to make of any one of them the starting point of our enquiry. The starting point of our enquiry, and the end of our enquiry also, can be nothing else than the innumerable company of individual "souls," mortal and immortal, confronting the mystery of the universe.

The philosophy of the complex vision is not a mechanical philosophy; it is a creative philosophy. And as such it includes in it from the beginning a certain element of faith and a certain element which I can only describe as "the impossible." It may seem ridiculous to some minds that the conception of the "impossible" should be introduced into any philosophy at the very start. The complex vision is, however, essentially creative. The creation of something really new in the world is regarded by pure reason as impossible. Therefore the element of "the impossible" must exist in this philosophy from the very start. The act of faith must also exist in it; for the imagination is one of the primary aspects of the complex vision and the act of faith is one of the basic activities of the imagination.

The complex vision does not regard history as a progressive predetermined process. It regards history as the projection, by advance and retreat, of the creative and resistant power of individual souls. That the "invisible companions" should be in eternal contact with every living "soul" is a rational impossibility; and yet this impossibility is what the complex vision, using the faith of its creative imagination, reveals as the truth.

The imagination working in isolation is able, like reason and self-consciousness, to fall into curious distortions and aberrations.

One has only to survey the field of dogmatic religion to see how curiously astray it may be led. It is only by holding fast to the high rare moments when the apex-thought attains its consummation that we are able to keep such isolated acts of faith in their place and prevent the element of the "impossible" becoming the element of the absurd. The philosophy of the complex vision, though far more sympathetic to much that is called "materialism" than to much that is called "idealism," certainly cannot itself

be regarded as materialistic. And it cannot be so regarded because its central assumption and implication is the concrete basis of personality which we call the "soul." And the "soul," when we think of it as something real, must inevitably be associated with what might be called "the vanishing point of sensation." In other words the soul must be thought of as having some kind of "matter" or "energy" or "form" as its ultimate life, and yet as having no kind of "matter" or "energy" or "form." The soul must be regarded as "something" which is living and real and concrete, and which has a definite existence in time and space, and which is subject to annihilation; but the stuff out of which the soul is made is not capable of analysis, and can only be accepted by such an act of faith as that which believes in "the impossible."

The fact that the philosophy of the complex vision assumes as its only axiom the concrete reality of the "soul" within us which is so difficult to touch or handle or describe and yet which we feel to be so much more real than our physical body, justifies us in making an experiment which to many minds will seem uncalled for and ridiculous. I mean the experiment of trying to visualize, by an arbitrary exercise of fancy, the sort of form or shape which this formless and shapeless thing may be imagined as possessing.

Metaphysical discussion tends so quickly to become thin and abstract and unreal; words themselves tend so quickly to become "dead wood" rather than living branches and leaves; that it seems advisable, from the point of view of getting nearer reality, to make use sometimes of a pictorial image, even though such an image be crudely and clumsily drawn.

Pictorial images are always treacherous and dangerous; but, as I have hinted, it is sometimes necessary, considering the intricate and delicately balanced character of man's

complex vision, to make a guarded and cautious use of them, so as to arrive at truth "sideways," so to speak, and indirectly.

One of the curious psychological facts, in connection with the various ways in which various minds function, is the fact that when in these days we seek to visualize, in some pictorial manner, our ultimate view of life, the images which are called up are geometrical or chemical rather than anthropomorphic. It is probable that even the most rational and logical among us as soon as he begins to philosophize at all is compelled by the necessity of things to form in the mind some vague pictorial representation answering to his conception of the universe.

The real inherent nature of such a philosophy would be probably understood and appreciated far better, both by the philosopher himself and by his friends, if this vague pictorial projection could be actually represented, in words or in a picture.

Most minds see the universe of their mental conception as something quite different from the actual stellar universe upon which we all gaze. Even the most purely rational minds who find the universe in "pure thought" are driven against their rational will to visualize this "pure thought" and to give it body and form and shape and movement.

These hidden and subconscious representations, in terms of sensible imagery, of the conclusions of philosophic thought, are themselves of profound philosophical interest. We cannot afford to neglect them. They are at least proof of the inalienable part played, in the functioning of our complex vision, by *sensation* as an organ of research. But they have a further interest. They are an illuminating revelation of the inherent character and personal bias of the individual soul who is philosophizing. I suppose to a great many minds what we call "the universe" pre-

sents itself as a colossal circle, without any circumference, filled with an innumerable number of material objects floating in some thin attenuated ether. I suppose the centre of this circle with no circumference is generally assumed to be the "self" or "soul" of the person projecting this particular image.

Doubtless, in some cases, it is assumed to be such a person's physical body as it feels itself conscious of sensation and is aware of space and time.

As I myself use the expression "complex vision" I suppose I call up in the minds of my various readers an extraordinary variety of pictorial images. Without laying any undue stress upon this pictorial tendency, I should like to indicate the kind of projected image which I myself am conscious of, when I use the expression, "the complex vision."

I seem to visualize this thing as a wavering, moving mass of flames, taking the shape of what might be called a "horizontal pyramid," the apex of which, where the flames are fused and lost in one another, is continually cleaving the darkness like the point of a fiery arrow, while the base of it remains continually invisible by reason of some magical power which confuses the senses whenever they seek to touch or to hold it.

Sometimes I seem to see this "base" or "spear handle" or "arrow shaft," of my moving horizontal pyramid, as a kind of deeper darkness; sometimes as a vibration of air; sometimes as a cloud of impenetrable smoke. I am always conscious of the curious fact that, while I can most vividly see the apex-point of the thing, and while I know that this moving pyramid of fire has a base, there is for ever some drastic natural law or magical power at work that obscures my vision whenever I turn my eyes to the place where I know it exists.

I have not mentioned this particular pictorial image

with any wish to lay undue stress upon it. In all rarified and subtle experiments of thought, pictorial images are quite as likely to hinder us in our groping towards reality as they are to help us. If my image of a moving, horizontal pyramid with an apex-point of many flames fused into one and a base of impenetrable invisibility seems to any reader of this passage a ridiculous and arbitrary fancy I would merely ask such an one to let it go, and to consider my description of the complex vision quite independently of it.

Sometimes to myself it appears ridiculous; and I only, as we put it, "throw it out" in order that, if it has the least illuminative value, such a value should not be quite lost. Any reader who regards my particular picture as absurd is perfectly at liberty to form his own pictorial image of what I am endeavouring to make clear. He may, if he pleases, visualize "the soul" as a sort of darkened planet from which the attributes of the complex vision radiate to the right or to the left, as the thing moves through immensity. All I ask is that these attributes should be thought of as converging to a point and as finding their "base" in some thing which is felt to exist but cannot be described.

Probably to a thorough-going empiricist, and certainly to a thorough-going materialist, it will appear quite unnecessary to translate the obvious spectacle of the world, with oneself as a physical body in the centre of it, into mental symbols and pictorial representations of the above character. Of such an one I would only ask, in what sort of manner he visualizes, when he thinks of it at all, the "soul" which he feels conscious of in his own body; and in the second place how he visualizes the connection between the will, the instinct, the reason and so forth, which animate his body and endow it with living purpose? It will be found much easier for critics to reject the particular

image which has commended itself to me as suggestive of the mystery with which we have to deal, than for them to drive out and expel from their own thought the insidious human tendency towards pictorial representation.

I would commend to any sardonic psychologist whose "malice" leads him to derive pleasure from the little weaknesses of philosophers, to turn his attention to the ideal systems of supposedly "pure thought." He will find infinite satisfaction for his spleen in the crafty manner in which "impure" thought—that is to say thought by means of pictorial images—passes itself off as "pure" and conceals its lapses.

Truth, as the complex vision clearly enough reveals to us, refuses to be dealt with by "pure" thought. To deal with truth one has to use "impure" thought, in other words thought that is dyed in the grain by taste, instinct, intuition, imagination. And every philosopher who attempts to round off his system by pure reason alone, and who refuses to recognize that the only adequate organ of research is the complex vision, is a philosopher who sooner or later will be caught red-handed in the unphilosophic act of covering his tracks.

No philosopher is on safe ground, no philosopher can offer us a massive organic concrete representation of reality who is shy of all pictorial images. They are dangerous and treacherous things; but it is better to be led astray by them than to avoid them altogether.

The mythological symbolism of antique thought was full of this pictorial tendency and even now the shrewdest of modern thinkers are compelled to use images drawn from antique mythology. Poetic thought may go astray. But it can never negate itself into quite the thin simulacrum of reality into which pure reason divorced from poetic imagery is capable of fading.

After all, the most obstinate and irreducible of all pie-



torial representations is the obvious one of the material universe with our physical body as the centre of it. But even this is not complete. In fact it is extremely far from complete, directly we think closely about it. For not only does such a picture omit the real centre, that indescribable "something" we call the "soul," it also loses itself in unthinkable darkness when it considers any one of its own unfathomable horizons.

It cannot be regarded as a very adequate picture when both the centre of it and the circumference of it baffle thought. The materialist or "objectivist" may be satisfied with such a result, but it is a result which does not answer the question of philosophy, but rather denies that any answer is possible. But though this obvious objective spectacle of the universe, with our bodily self as a part of it, cannot satisfy the demands of the complex vision, it is at least certain that no philosophy which does not include this and accept this and continually return to this, can satisfy these demands.

The complex vision requires the reality of this objective spectacle but it also requires recognition of certain basic assumptions, implicit in this spectacle, which the materialist refuses to consider.

And the most comprehensive of these assumptions is nothing less than the complex vision itself, with that "something," which is the soul, as its inscrutable base. Thus I am permitted to retain, in spite of its arbitrary fantasy, my pictorial image of a pyramidal arrow of fire, moving from darkness to darkness. My picture were false to my conception if it did not depict the whole pyramid, with the soul itself as its base, moving, in its complete totality, from mystery to mystery.

It may move upwards, downwards, or, as I myself seem to see it, horizontally. But as long as it keeps its apex-point directed to the mystery in front of it, it matters

little how we conceive of it as moving. That it should *move*, in some way or another, is the gist of my demand upon it; for, if it does not move, nothing moves; and life itself is swallowed up in nothingness.

This swallowing up of life in nothingness, this obliteration of life by nothingness is what the emotion of malice ultimately desires. The eternal conflict between love and malice is the eternal contest between life and death. And this contest is what the complex vision reveals, as it moves from darkness to darkness.

## CHAPTER II

### THE ASPECTS OF THE COMPLEX VISION

The aspects of the complex vision may be separated from one another according to many systems of classifications. As long as, in the brief summary which follows, I include the more obvious and more important of these aspects, I shall be doing all that the philosophy of the complex vision demands.

The reader is quite at liberty to make a different classification from mine, if mine appears unconvincing to him. The general trend of my argument will not be in any serious way affected, as long as he admits that I have followed the tradition of ordinary human language, in the classification which I have preferred.

It seems to me, then, that the aspects of the complex vision are eleven in number; and that they may be summarized as consisting of reason, self-consciousness, will, the aesthetic sense, or "taste," imagination, memory, conscience, sensation, instinct, intuition and emotion.

These eleven aspects or attributes are not to be regarded as absolutely separate "functions," but rather as relatively separate "energies" of the one concrete soul-monad. The complex vision is the vision of an irreducible living entity which pours itself as a whole into every one of its various energizings. And though it pours itself as a whole into each one of these, and though each one of these contains the latent potentiality of all the rest, the nature of the complex vision is such that it necessarily takes colour and form from the particular aspect or attribute through which at the moment it is especially energizing.

It is precisely here that the danger of "disproportion"

is found. For the complex vision with the whole weight of all its aspects behind it receives the colour and the form of only one of them. We can see the result of this from the tenacity—implying the presence of emotion and will—with which some philosopher of pure reason passionately and imaginatively defends his logical conclusion.

But we are ourselves proof of it in every moment of our lives. Confronted with some definite external situation, of a happy or unhappy character, we fling ourselves upon this new intrusion with the momentum of our whole being; and it becomes largely a matter of accident whether our reaction of the moment is coloured by reason or by will or by imagination or by taste. Immersed in the tide of experience, receiving shock after shock from alien and hostile forces, we struggle with the weight of our whole soul against each particular obstacle, not stopping to regulate the complicated machinery of our vision but just seizing upon the thing, or trying to avoid it, with whatever energy serves our purpose best at the moment.

This is especially true of small and occasional pleasures or small and occasional annoyances. A supreme pleasure or a supreme pain forces us to gather our complex vision together, forces us to make use of its apex-thought, so that we can embrace the ecstasy or fling ourselves upon the misery with a co-ordinated power. It is the little casual annoyances and reliefs of our normal days which are so hard to deal with in the spirit of philosophic art, because these little pleasures and pains while making a superficial appeal to the reason or the emotion or the will or the conscience, are not drastic or formidable enough to drive us into any concentration of the apex-thought which shall harmonize our confused energies.

The fatal ease with which the whole complex vision gets itself coloured by and obsessed by one of its own attributes may be proved by the history of philosophy itself. Indi-

vidual philosophers have, over and over again, plunged with furious tenacity into the mystery of life with a complex vision distorted, deformed and over-balanced.

I seem to see the complex vision of such thinkers taking some grotesque shape whereby the apex-point of effective thought is blunted and broken. The loss and misery, or the yet more ignoble comfort, of such suppressions of the apex-thought, is however a personal matter. Those "invisible companions," or immortal children of the universe, who are implicitly present as the background of all human discussion, grow constantly more definite and articulate the apprehension of the general human mind by reason of these personal aberrations.

It is perhaps rather to the great artists of our race than to any philosopher at all that these invisible ones reveal themselves, but in their gradual disclosure to the consciousness of the human race, they are certainly assisted by the most insane and unbalanced plunges into mystery, of this and the other abnormal individual. The paradox may indeed be hazarded that the madder and more abnormal are the individual's attempts to dig himself into the very nerves and fibres of reality, the clearer and more definite as far as consciousness of the race is concerned, does the revelation of these invisible ones grow.

The abnormal individual whose complex vision is distorted almost out of human recognition by the predominance of some one attribute, is yet, in his madness and morbidity, a wonderful engine of research for the clairvoyance of humanity.

The vision of the immortals, as a background to all further discussion, is rendered richer and more rhythmical every day, or rather the hidden rhythm of their being is revealed more clearly every day, by the eccentricities and maladies, nay! by the insanities and desperations, of individual victims of life.

Thus it comes about that, while the supreme artists, whose approximation to the vision of the invisible ones is closest, remain our unique masters, the lower crowd of moderately sane and moderately well-balanced persons are of less value to humanity than those abnormal and wayward ones whose psychic distortions are the world's perverted instruments of research.

A philosopher of this unbalanced kind is indeed a sort of living sacrifice or victim of self-vivisection, out of whose demonic discoveries—bizarre and fantastic though they may seem to the lower sanity of the mob—the true rhythmic vision of the immortals is made clearer and more articulate.

The kind of balance or sanity which such average persons, as are commonly called "men of the world," possess is in reality further removed from true vision than all the madness of these debauches of specialized research. For the consummation of the complex vision is a meeting place of desperate and violent extremes; extremes, not watered down nor modified nor even "reconciled," certainly not cancelled by one another, but held forcibly and deliberately together by an arbitrary act of the apex-thought of the human soul.

As I glance at these basic activities of the complex vision one by one, I would beg the reader to sink as far as he can into the recesses of his own identity; so that he may discover whether what he finds there agrees in substance—call it by what name he pleases and explain it how he pleases—with each particular energy I name, as I indicate such energies in my own way.

Consider the attitude of self-consciousness. That man is self-conscious is a basic and perhaps a tragic fact that surely requires no proof. The power of thinking "I am I" is an ultimate endowment of personality, outside of which, except by an act of primordial faith, we cannot

pass. The phenomenon of human growth from infancy to maturity proves that it is possible for this self-consciousness—this power of saying “I am I”—to become clearer and more articulate from day to day. It seems as impossible to fix upon a definite moment in a child’s life where we can draw a line and say “*there* he was unconscious of himself and *here* he is conscious of himself” as it is impossible to observe as an actual visible movement the child’s growth in stature.

Between consciousness and self-consciousness the dividing line seems to be as difficult to define as it is difficult to define the line between sub-consciousness and consciousness. My existence as a self-conscious entity capable of thinking “I am I” is the basic assumption of all thought. And though it is possible for my thought to turn round upon itself and deny my own existence, such thought in the process of such a denial cuts the very ground away which is the leaping point of any further advance.

Philosophy by such drastic scepticism is reduced to complete silence. You cannot build up anything except illusion from a basis that is itself illusion. If I were not self-conscious there would be no centre or substratum or coherence or unity in any thought I had. If I were not self-conscious I should be unable to think.

Consider, then, the attribute of reason. That we possess reason is also a fact that carries with it its own evidence. It is reason which at this very moment—reason of some sort, at any rate—I am bound to use, in estimating the important place or the unimportant place which reason itself should occupy. You cannot derogate from the value of reason without using reason. You cannot put reason into an inferior category, when compared with will or instinct or emotion, without using reason itself to prove such an inferiority.

We may come to the conclusion that the universe is

rather irrational than rational. We may come to the conclusion that the secret of life transcends and over-brims all rationality. But this very conclusion as to the irrational nature of the mystery with which reason is attempting to deal is itself a conclusion of the reason.

There is only one power which is able to put reason aside in its search for truth and that power is reason.

Consider, then, the attribute of will. That we possess a definite and distinct energy whose activity may be contrasted with the rest and may be legitimately named "the will" is certainly less self-evident than either of the two preceding propositions but is none the less implied in both of them. For in the act of articulating to ourself the definite thought "I am I" we are using our will. The motive-force may be anything. We may for instance will an answer to the implied question "*what* am I," and our self-consciousness may return the answer "I am I," leaving it to the reason to deal with this answer as best it can. The motive may be anything or nothing. Both, consciousness and will are independent of motive.

For in all these primordial energizings of the complex vision everything that happens, happens simultaneously. With the consciousness "I am I" there comes simultaneously into existence the consciousness of an external universe which is, at one and the same time, included in the circle of the "I am I" and outside the circle. That is to say when we think the thought "I am I," we feel ourselves to be the whole universe thinking "I am I," and yet by a primordial contradiction, we feel ourselves to be an "I am I" opposed to the universe and contrasted with the universe.

But all this happens simultaneously; and the consciousness that we are ourselves implies, at one and the same time, the consciousness that we *are* the universe and the consciousness that we are *inside* the universe.



And precisely as the fact of self-consciousness implies the primordial duality and contradiction of being at once the whole universe and something inside the universe, so the original fact of our thinking at all, implies the activity of the will.

We think because we are "thinking animals" and we will because we are "willing animals." The presence of what we call motive is something that comes and goes intermittently and which may or may not be present from the first awakening of consciousness. We *may* think "I am I" at the very dawn of consciousness under the pressure of a vague motive of clearing up a confused situation. We *may* use our reason at the very dawn of consciousness under the pressure of a vague motive of alleviating the distress of disorder with the comfort of order. But, on the other hand, self-consciousness may play its part, reason may play its part and the will may play its part in the complete absence of any definite motive. There is such a thing—and this is the point I am anxious to make—as *motiveless* will. Certain thinkers have sought to eliminate the will altogether by substituting for it the direct impact or pressure of some motive or motive-force. But if the will can be proved to be a primordial energy of the complex vision and if the conception of a motiveless exertion of the will is a legitimate conception, then, although we must admit the intermittent appearance and disappearance of all manner of motives, we have no right to substitute motive for will. If we do make such a substitution, all we really achieve is simply a change of *name*; and our new motive is the old will "writ small."

Motives undoubtedly may come and go from the beginning of consciousness and the beginning of will. They may flutter like butterflies round both the consciousness

and the will. For instance it is clear that I am not *always* articulating to myself the notable or troublesome thought "I am I." I may be sometimes so lost and absorbed in sensation that I quite forget this interesting fact. But it may easily happen at such times that I definitely experience the *sensation of choice*; of choice between an intensification of self-consciousness and a continued blind enjoyment of this external preoccupation. And it is from this *sensation of choice* that we gather weight for our contention that the will is a basic attribute of the human soul.

It is certainly true that we are often able to detach ourselves from ourselves and to watch the struggle going on between two opposite motive-forces, quite unaware, it might seem, and almost indifferent, as to how the contest will end.

But this struggle between opposite motives does not obliterate our sensation of choice. It sometimes intensifies it to an extreme point of quite painful suspension. The opposite motives may be engaged in a struggle. But the field of the struggle is what we call the will. And it may even sometimes happen that the will intervenes between a weaker and stronger motive and, out of arbitrary pride and the pleasure of exertion for the sake of exertion, throws its weight on the weaker side.

It is a well-known psychological fact that the complex vision can energize, with vigorous spontaneity, through the will alone, just as it can energize through sensation alone. The will can, so to speak, stretch its muscles and gather itself together for attack or defence at a moment when there is no particular necessity for its use.

Some degree of self-consciousness is bound to accompany this "motiveless stretching" of the will, for the simple reason that it is not "will in the abstract" which makes such a movement but the totality of the complex vision,

though in this case all other attributes of the complex vision, including self-consciousness and reason, are held in subordination to the will.

Man is a philosophical animal; and he philosophizes as inevitably as he breathes. He is also an animal possessed of will; and he uses his will as inevitably as, in the process of breathing, he uses his lungs or his throat. Around him, from the beginning, all manner of motives may flutter like birds on the wing. They may be completely different motives in the case of different personalities. But in all personalities there is consciousness, to grasp these motives; and in all personalities there is will, to accept or to reject these motives.

The question of the freedom of the will is a question which necessarily enters into our discussion.

The will feels itself—or rather consciousness feels the will to be—at once free and limited. The soul does not feel it is free to do anything it pleases. That at least is certain. For without some limitation, without something resistant to exert itself upon, the will could not be known. An absolutely free will is unthinkable. The very nature of the will implies a struggle with some sort of resistance.

The will is, therefore, by the terms of its original definition and by the original feeling which the soul experiences in regard to it, limited in its freedom. The problem resolves itself, therefore, if once we grant the existence of the will, into the question of how much freedom the will has or how far it is limited. Is it, for instance, when we know all the conditions of its activity, entirely limited? Is the freedom of the will an illusion?

It is just at this point that the logical reason makes a savage attempt to dominate the situation. The logical reason arrives step by step at the inevitable conclusion that the will has no freedom at all but is absolutely limited.

On the other hand emotion, instinct, imagination, intuition, and conscience, all assume that the limitation of the will is not absolute but that within certain boundaries, which themselves are by no means fixed or permanent, the will is free.

Consciousness itself must be added to this list. For whatever arguments may be used in the realm of thought, when the moment of choice arrives in the realm of action, we are always conscious of the will as free. If the reason is justified in regarding the freedom of the will as an illusion, we are justified in denying the existence of the will altogether. For a will with only an illusion of freedom is not a will at all. In that case it were better to eliminate the will and regard the soul as a thing which acts and reacts under the stimuli of motives like a helpless automaton endowed with consciousness.

But the wiser course is to experiment with the will and let it prove its freedom to the sceptical reason by helping that same reason to retire into its proper place and associate itself with the apex-thought of the complex vision.

Leaving the will then, as a thing limited and yet free, let us pass to a consideration of what I call "taste." This is the aesthetic sense, an original activity of the human soul, associated with that universal tendency in life and nature which we name the beautiful. I use the word "taste" at this moment in preference to "aesthetic sense," because I feel that this particular original activity of the complex vision has a wider field than is commonly supposed. I regard it, in fact, as including much more than the mere sense of beauty. I regard it as a direct organ of research, comparable to instinct or intuition, but covering a different ground. I regard it as a mysterious clairvoyance of the soul, capable of discriminating between certain everlasting opposites, which together make up an eternal duality in the very depths of existence.

These opposites imply larger and more complicated issues than are implied in the words beautiful and ugly. The real and the unreal, the interesting and the uninteresting, the significant and the insignificant, the suggestive and the meaningless, the arresting and the commonplace, the exciting and the dull, the organic and the affected, the dramatic and the undramatic, are only some of the differences implied.

The fact that art is constantly using what we call the ugly as well as what we call the commonplace, and turning both these into new forms of beauty, is a fact that considerably complicates the situation. And what art, the culminating creative energy of the aesthetic sense, can do, the aesthetic sense itself can do with its critical and receptive power.

So that in the aesthetic sense, or in what I call "taste," we have an energy which is at once receptive and creative; at once capable of responding to this eternal duality, and of creating new forms of beauty and interest *out of* the ugly and uninteresting. A new name is really required for this thing. A name is required for it that conveys a more creative implication than the word "taste," a word which has an irresponsible, arbitrary, and even flippant sound, and a more passionate, religious, and ecstatic implication than the word "aesthetic," a word which suggests something calculated, cold, learned, and a little tame. I use the word "taste" at this particular moment because this word implies a certain challenge to both reason and conscience, and some such challenge it is necessary to insist upon, if this particular energy of the soul is to defend its basic integrity.

This ultimate attribute of personality, then, which I call "taste" reveals to us an aspect of the system of things quite different from those revealed by the other activities of the human soul. This aspect of the universe, or this

"open secret" of the universe, loses itself, as all the others do, in unfathomable abysses. It descends to the very roots of life. It springs from the original reservoirs of life. It has depths which no mental logic can sound; and it has horizons in the presence of which the mind stops baffled. When we use the term "the beautiful" to indicate the nature of what it reveals, we are easily misled; because in current superficial speech—and unless the word is used by a great artist—the term "beautiful" has a narrow and limited meaning. Dropping the term "taste" then, as having served its purpose, and reverting to the more academic phrase "aesthetic sense" we must note that the unfathomable duality revealed by this aesthetic sense covers, as I have hinted, much more ground than is covered by the narrow terms "beauty" and "ugliness."

It must be understood, moreover, that what is revealed by the aesthetic sense is a struggle, a conflict, a war, a contradiction, going on in the heart of things. The aesthetic sense does not only reveal loveliness and distinction; it also reveals the grotesque, the bizarre, the outrageous, the indecent and the diabolic. If we prefer to use the term "beauty" in a sense so comprehensive and vast as to include *both sides* of this eternal duality, then we shall be driven to regard as "beautiful" the entire panorama of life, with its ghastly contrasts, with its appalling evil, with its bitter pain, and with its intolerable dreariness.

The "beautiful" will then become nothing less than the whole dramatic vortex regarded from the aesthetic point of view. Life with all its contradictions, considered as an aesthetic spectacle, will become "beautiful" to us. This is undoubtedly one form which the aesthetic sense assumes; the form of justifying existence, in all its horror and loathsomeness as well as in all its magical attraction.

Another form the aesthetic sense may assume is the form of "taking sides" in this eternal struggle; of using its inspiration to destroy, or to make us forget, the brutality of things, by concentrating our attention upon what in the narrow sense we call the beautiful or the distinguished or the lovely. But there is yet a third form the aesthetic sense may assume. Not only can it visualize the whole chaotic struggle between beauty and hideousness as itself a beautiful drama; not only can it so concentrate upon beauty that we forget the hideousness; it is also able to see the world as a humorous spectacle.

When the aesthetic sense regards the whole universe as "beautiful" it must necessarily regard the whole universe as tragic; for the pain and dreariness and devilishness in the universe is so unspeakable that any "beauty" which includes such things must be a tragic beauty. Not to recognize this and to attempt to "accept" the universe as something which is not tragic, is to outrage and insult the aesthetic sense.

But we may regard the universe as tragic without regarding it as "beautiful" and yet remain under the power of the aesthetic energy. For there exists a primordial aspect of the aesthetic vision which is not concerned with the beautiful at all, or only with the beautiful in so wide a latitude as to transcend all ordinary usage, and this is our sense of humour.

The universe as the human soul perceives it, is horribly and most tragically humorous. Man is the laughing animal; and the "perilous stuff" which tickles his aesthetic sense with a revelation of outrageous comedy has its roots in the profoundest abyss. This humorous aspect of the system of things is just as primordial and intrinsic as what we call the "beautiful." The human soul is able to pour the whole stream of its complex vision through this fantastic casement. It knows how to respond to the "dia-

blerie" of the abysses with a reciprocal gesture. It is able to answer irony with irony; and to the appalling grotesqueness and indecency of the universe it has the power of retorting with an equally shameless leer.

But this sardonic aspect of human humour, though tallying truly enough with one eternal facet of the universe, does not exhaust the humorous potentiality of the aesthetic sense. There is a "good" irony as well as a "wicked" irony. Humour can be found in alliance with the emotion of love as well as with the emotion of hate. Humour can be kind as well as cruel; and there is no doubt that the aesthetic spectacle of the world is as profoundly humorous in a quite normal sense as it is beautiful or noble or horrible.

Turning now to that primeval attribute of the complex vision which we call emotion, we certainly enter the presence of something whose existence cannot be denied or explained away. Directly we grow conscious of ourselves, directly we use reason or instinct or the aesthetic sense, we are aware of an emotional reaction. This emotional reaction may be resolved into a basic duality, the activity of love and the activity of the opposite of love.

I say "the opposite of love" deliberately; because I am anxious to indicate, in regard to emotion, how difficult it is to find adequate words to cover the actual field of what we feel.

I should like to write even the word "love" with some such mark of hesitation. For, just because of the appalling importance of this ultimate duality, it is essential to be on our guard against the use of words which convey a narrow, crude, rough-and-ready, and superficial meaning. By the emotion of "love" I do not mean the amorous phenomenon which we call "being in love." Nor do I mean the calmer emotion which we call "affection." The passion of friendship, when friendship really becomes a



passion, is nearer my meaning than any of these. And yet the emotion of love, conceived as one side of this eternal duality, is much more than the "passion of friendship"; because it is an emotion that can be felt in the presence of things and ideas as well as persons. Perhaps the emotion of love as symbolized in the figure of Christ, combined with the aesthetic and intellectual passion inherited from the Greek philosophers, comes nearest to what I have in mind; though even this, without some tangible and concrete embodiment, tends to escape us and evade analysis.

And if it is hard to define this "love" which is the protagonist, so to speak, in the world's emotional drama, it is still harder to define its opposite, its antagonist. I could name this by the name of "hate," the ordinary antithesis of love, but if I did so it would have to be with a very wide connotation.

The true opposite to the sort of "love" I have in my mind is not so much "hate" as a kind of dull and insensitive hostility, a kind of brutal malignity and callous aversion. Perhaps what we are looking for as the true opposite of love may be best defined as malice.

Malice seems to convey a more impersonal depth and a wider reach of activity than the word hate and has also a clearer suggestion of deliberate insensitiveness about it. The most concentrated and energetic opposite of love is not either hate or malice. It is *cruelty*; which is a thing that seems to draw its evil inspiration from the profoundest depths of conscious existence.

But cruelty must necessarily have for its "object" something living and sentient. A spiritual feeling, a work of art, an idea, a principle, a landscape, a theory, an inanimate group of things, could not be contemplated with an emotion of cruelty, though it could certainly be contemplated with an emotion of malice.

There is often, if not always, a strange admixture of

sensuality in cruelty. Cruelty, profoundly evil as it is, has a living intensity which makes it less dull, less thick, less deliberately insensitive, less coldly hostile, than the pure emotion of malice, and therefore less adapted than malice to be regarded as the true opposite of love.

But the best indication of the distinction I want to make will be found in the contrast between the conceptions of creation and destruction. The dull, thick, insensitive callousness which we are conscious of in the opposite of love is an indication that while love is essentially creative the opposite of love is essentially *that which resists creation*.

The opposite of love is not destructive in the sense of being an active destructive force. Such an active destructive force must necessarily, by reason of the passionate energy in it, be a perversion of creative power, not the opposite of creative power.

Creative power, even in its unperverted activity, must always be capable of destroying. It must be capable of destroying what is in the way of further creation. Thus the true opposite of creation is not destruction, but the inert, heavy, thick, callous, brutal, insensitive "obscurantism" or "material opacity" which resists the pressure of the creative spirit.

By this analysis of the ultimate duality of emotion we are put in possession of a basic aspect of the complex vision, which must largely shape and determine its total activity. The soul within us, that mysterious "something" which is the living and concrete "person" whose vision the complex vision is, is a thing subject at the start to this unfathomable duality, the emotion of love and the emotion of malice.

The emotion of love is the life-begetting, life-conceiving force, the creator of beauty, the discoverer of truth, and the reconciler of eternal contradictions.

The emotion of malice, with its frozen sneer of sardonic

denial, raises its "infernal fist" against the centrifugal outflowing of the emotion of love. It is impossible to conceive of self-consciousness without love and hatred; or, as I prefer to say, without love and malice. Self-consciousness implies from the start what we call the universe; and the universe cannot appear upon the scene without exciting in us the emotion of love and hate. Every man born into the world loves and hates directly he is conscious of the world. This is the ultimate duality. Attraction and repulsion is the material formula for this contradiction.

If everything in the world were illusion except one Universal Being, such a being must necessarily be thought of as experiencing the emotion of self-love and of self-hatred. A condition of absolute indifference is unthinkable. Such indifference could not last a moment without becoming either that faint hatred, which we call "boredom," or that faint love, which we call "interest." The contemplation of the universe with no emotional reaction of any kind is an inconceivable thing. An infant at its mother's breast displays love and malice. At one and the same moment it satisfies its thirst and beats upon the breast that feeds it.

The primordial process of philosophizing and the primal will to philosophize are both of them penetrated through and through with this ultimate duality of love and malice. Love and malice in alternate impulse are found latent and potent in every philosophic effort. Behind every philosophy, if we have the love or the malice to seek for it, may be found the love or malice, or both of them, side by side, of the individual philosopher. That pure and unemotional desire for truth for its own sake which is the privilege of physical science cannot retain its simplicity when confronted with the deeper problems of philosophy. It cannot do so because the complex vision with which we philosophize contains emotion as one of its basic attributes.

To consider next, the attribute of imagination. Imagi-

nation seems, when we analyse it, to resolve itself into the half-creative, half-interpretative act by which the complex personality seizes upon, plunges into, and moulds to its purpose, that deeper unity in any group of things which gives such a group its larger and more penetrating significance.

Imagination differs from intuition in the fact that by its creative and interpretative power it dominates, possesses and moulds the material it works upon. Intuition is entirely receptive and it receives the illumination offered to it at one single indrawing, at one breath. Imagination may be regarded as a male attribute; intuition as a feminine one; although in a thousand individual cases the situation is actually reversed.

To realize the primary importance of imagination one has only to visualize reason, will, taste, sensation, and so forth, energizing in its absence. One becomes aware at once that such a limited activity does not cover the field of man's complex vision. Something—a power that creates, interprets, illumines, gathers up into large and flowing outlines—is absent from such an experience.

Consider, in the next place, that primordial attribute of the complex vision which we commonly name conscience. We are not concerned here with the world-old discussion as to the "origin" of conscience. Conscience, from the point of view we are now considering, is just as fundamental and axiomatic as will, or intuition, or sensation.

The philosophy of the complex vision retains, with regard to what is called "evolution," a completely suspended judgment. The process of historic evolution may or may not have resulted in the particular differentiation of species which we now behold. What we are now assuming is that, in whatever way the differentiation of actual living organisms has come about, every particular living organism, including the planetary and stellar bodies, must

possess in some degree or other the organ of apprehension which we call the complex vision.

Our assumption, in fact, is that every living thing has personality; that personality implies the existence of a definite soul-monad; that where such a soul-monad exists there is a complex vision; and finally that, where there is a complex vision, there must be, in some rudimentary or embryotic state, the eleven attributes of such a vision, including the attribute which the human race has come to call "conscience" and which is, in reality, "the power of response" to the vision which we have named "immortal." When evolutionists retort to us that what we call personality is only a late and accidental phenomenon in the long process of evolution, our answer is that when they seek, according to such an assumption, to visualize the universe as it was *before personality appeared*, they really, only in a surreptitious and illegitimate manner, project their own conscious personality into "the vast backward and abyssm of time," to be the invisible witness of this pre-personal universe.

Thus when evolutionists assure us that there was once a period in the history of the stellar system when nothing existed but masses of gaseous nebulae, our reply is that they have forgotten that invisible and shadowy projection of their own personality which is the pre-supposed watcher or witness of this "nothing-but-nebulae" state of things.

The doctrine or hypothesis of evolution does not in any degree explain the mystery of the universe. All it does is to offer us an hypothetical picture—true or false—of the manner in which the changes of organic and inorganic life succeeded one another in their historic creation. Evolutionists have to make their start somewhere, just as "personalists" have; and it is much more difficult for them to show how masses of utterly unconscious "neb-

ulae" evoked the mystery of personality than it is for us to show how the primordial existence of personality demands at the very start some sort of material or bodily expression, whether of a nebular or of any other kind.

Evolutionists, forgetting the presence of that invisible "watcher" of their evolutionary process which they have themselves projected into the remote planetary past, assume as their axiomatic "data" that soulless unconscious chemical elements possess "within them" the miraculous power of producing living personalities. All one has to do is to pile up thousands upon thousands of years in which the miracle takes place.

But the philosophy of the complex vision would indicate that no amount of piling up of centuries upon centuries could possibly produce out of "unconscious matter" the perilous and curious "stuff" which we call "consciousness of life." And we would further reply to the evolutionists that their initial assumption as to the objective existence, suspended in a vacuum, of masses of material chemistry is an assumption which has been abstracted and isolated from the total volume of those sense-impressions, which are the only actual reality we know, and which are the impressions made, in human experience, upon some living personality.

This criticism of the evolutionists' inevitable attack upon us enters naturally at this point; because, while the average mind is willing enough to grant some sort of vague omnipresent "will to evolve" to the primordial "nebula" and even prepared to allow it such obscure consciousness as is implied in the phrase "life-force" or "élan vital," it is startled and shocked to a supreme degree when we assert that such "nebula," if it existed, was the outward body or form of a living "soul-monad" possessed, even as human beings are, of every attribute of the complex vision.

The average mind, in its vague and careless mood, is ready to accept our contention that some sort of will or reason or consciousness existed at the beginning of things. It is only when such a mind comes to realize that what we are predicating is actual personality, with all the implications of that, that it cries out in protest. The average mind can swallow our contention that reason and will existed from the beginning because the average mind has been penetrated for centuries by vague traditions of an "over-soul" or an universal "reason" or "will." It is only when in our analysis of the attributes of personality we come bolt up against the especially anthropomorphic attribute of "conscience" that it staggers and gasps.

For the original "stellar gas" to be vaguely animated by some obscure "élan vital" seemed natural enough; but for it to be the "body" of some definite living soul seems almost humorous; and for such a living soul to possess the attribute of "conscience," or the power of response to the vision of immortals, seems not only humorous but positively absurd.

The philosophy of the complex vision, however, in its analysis of the eternal elements of personality is not in the least afraid of reaching conclusions which appear "absurd" to the average intelligence. The philosophy of the complex vision accepts the element of the "absurd" or of the "outrageous" or of the "fantastic" in its primordial assumptions; for according to its contention this element of the "apparently impossible" is an essential ingredient in the whole system of things.

Life, according to this philosophy, is only one aspect of personality. Another aspect of personality is the apparently miraculous creation of "something" out of "nothing"; for the unfathomable creative power of personality extends beyond and below all the organic phenomena which we group vaguely together under the name of "life."

Thus when in our analysis of the attributes of the complex vision we are confronted by the evolutionary question as to how such a thing, as the thing we call "conscience," got itself lodged in the little cells of the human cranium, our answer is that the question stated in this manner does not touch the essential problem at all. The essential problem from the point of view of the philosophy of the complex vision is not how "conscience," or why other attribute of the soul, got itself lodged in the human skull, or expressed, shall we say, through the human skull, but how it is that the whole stream of sense-impressions, of which the hardness and thickness of the human skull is only one impression among many, and the original "star-dust" or "star-nebulæ" only another impression among many, ever got itself unified and synthesized into the form of "impression" at all.

In other words the problem is not how the attributes of the soul arose from the chemistry of the brain and the nerves; but how the brain and the nerves together with the whole stream of material phenomena from the star-dust upwards, ever got themselves unified and focussed into any sort of intelligibility or system. The average human mind which feels a shock of distrust and suspicion directly we suggest that the thing we name "conscience," defined as the power of response to the ideal vision, is an inalienable aspect of what we call "the soul" wherever the soul exists, feels no sort of shock or surprise when we appeal to its own "conscience," or when it appeals to the "conscience" of its child or its dog or even of its cat, or when it displays anger with its trees or its flowers for their apparent wilfulness and errancy.

Kant found in the moral sense of humanity his door of escape from the fatal relativity of pure reason with its confounding antinomies. Huxley found in the moral sense of humanity a mysterious, unrelated phenomenon that re-



fused to fall into line with the rest of the evolutionary stream. But when, in one bold act of faith or of imagination, we project the content of our own individual soul into the circle of every other possible "soul," including the "souls" of such phenomenal vortices of matter as those from which historic evolution takes its start, this impossible gulf or "lacuna" dividing the human scene from all previous "scenes" is immediately bridged; and the whole stream of material sense-impression flows forward, in parallel and consonant congruity, with the underlying creative energy of all the complex visions of which it is the expression.

Therefore, there is no need for us, in our consideration of the basic attribute of the soul which we call conscience, to tease ourselves with the fabulous image of some pre-historic "cave-man" supposedly devoid of such a sense. To do this is to employ a trick of the isolated reason quite alien from our real human imagination.

Our own personality is so constructed that it is impossible for us to realize with any sort of intelligent sympathy what the feelings of this conscience-less cave-man would be. To contemplate his existence at all we have to resort to pure rationalistic speculation. We have to leave our actual human experience completely behind. But the philosophy of the complex vision is an attempt to interpret the mystery of the universe in terms of nothing else than actual human experience. So we are not only permitted but compelled to put out of court this conscience-less cave-man of pure speculation. It is true that we encounter certain eccentric human beings who deny that they possess this "moral sense"; but one has only to observe them for a little while under the pressure of actual life to find out how they deceive themselves.

Experience certainly indicates that every human being, however normal and "good," has somewhere in him a touch

of insanity and a vein of anti-social aberration. But no human being, however abnormal or however "criminal," is born into the world without this invisible monitor we call "conscience."

The curious pathological experience which might be called "conscience-killing" is certainly not uncommon. But it is an experiment that has never been more than approximately successful. In precisely the same way we might practise "reason-killing" or "intuition-killing" or "taste-killing." One may set out to hunt and try to kill any basic attribute of our complex vision; but the proof of the truth of our whole argument lies in the fact that these murderous campaigns are never completely successful. The "murdered" attribute refuses to remain quiet in its grave. It stretches out an arm from beneath the earth. It shakes the dust off and comes to life again.

When we leave the question as to the existence of conscience, and enquire what the precise and particular "command" of conscience may be in any individual case, we approach the edge of an altogether different problem.

The particular message or command of conscience is bound to differ in a thousand ways in the cases of different personalities. Only in its ultimate essence it cannot differ. Because, in its ultimate essence, the conscience of every individual is confronted by that eternal duality of love and malice which is the universal contradiction at the basis of every living soul.

But short of this there is room for an infinite variety of "categorical imperatives." The conscience of one personality is able to accept as its "good" the very same thing that another personality is compelled to regard as its "evil." Indeed it is conceivable that a moment might arise in the history of the race when one single solitary individual called that thing "good" or that thing "evil" which all the rest of the world regarded in the opposite

sense. Not only so; but it might even happen that the genius and persuasiveness of such a person might change into its direct opposite the moral valuation of the whole of humanity. In many quite ordinary cases there may arise a clash between the conventional morality of the community and the verdict of an individual conscience. In such cases it would be towards what the community termed "immoral" that the conscience of the individual would point, and from the thing that the community termed "moral" that it would turn instinctively away.

A conscience of this kind would suffer the pain of remorse when in its weakness it let itself be swayed by the "community-morality" and it would experience the pleasure of relief when in absolute loneliness it defied the verdict of society.

Let us consider now an attribute of man's complex vision which must instantaneously be accepted as basic and fundamental by every living person. I refer to what we call "sensation." The impressions of the outward senses may be criticized. They may be corrected, modified, reduced to order, and supplemented by other considerations. Conclusions based upon them may be questioned. But whatever be done with them, or made by them, they must always remain an integral and inveterate aspect of man's personality.

The sensations of pain and pleasure—who can deny the primordial and inescapable character of these? Not that the pursuit of pleasure or the avoidance of pain can be the unbroken motive-force even of the most hedonistic among us. Our complex vision frequently flings us passionately upon pain. We often embrace pain in an ecstasy of welcome. Nor is this fierce embracing of pain "motivated" by a deliberate desire to get pleasure out of pain. It seems in some strange way due to an attraction towards pain for its own sake—towards pain, as though pain were

really beautiful and desirable in itself. One element in all this is undoubtedly due to the desire of the will to assert its freedom and the integrity of its being; in other words to the desire of the will towards the irrational, the capricious, the destructive, the chaotic.

It has been only the least imaginative of philosophers who have taken for granted that man invariably desires his own welfare. Man does not even invariably desire his own pleasure. He desires the reactive vibration of power; and very often this "power" is the power to rush blindly upon destruction. But, whether dominant or not as a motive affecting the will, it remains that our experience of pleasure and pain is a basic experience of the complex vision. And this experience of sensation is not only a passive experience. The attribute of sensation has its active, its energetic, its creative side. No one who has suffered extreme pain or enjoyed exquisite and thrilling pleasures, can deny the curious fact that these things take to themselves a kind of independent life within us and become something very like "entities" or living separate objects.

This phenomenon is due to the fact that our whole personality incarnates itself in the pain or in the pleasure of the moment. Such pain, such pleasure, is the quintessential attenuated "matter" with which our soul clothes itself. At such moments we *are* the pain; we *are* the pleasure. Our human identity seems merged, lost, annihilated. Our soul seems no longer *our* soul. It becomes the soul of the overpowering sensation. We ourselves at such moments become fiery molecules of pain, burning atoms of pleasure. Just as the logical reason can abstract itself from the other primal energies and perform strange and fantastic tricks, so the activity of sensation can so absorb, obsess and overpower the whole personality that the rhythm of existence is entirely broken.

Pain at the point of ecstasy, pleasure at the point of

ecstasy, are both of them destructive of those rare moments when our complex vision resolves itself into music. Such music is indeed itself a kind of ecstasy; but it is an ecstasy intellectualized and consciously creative. Pain is present there and pleasure is present there; but they are there only as orchestral notes in a larger unity that has absorbed them and transmuted them.

When a work of art by reason of its sensational appeal reduces us to an ecstasy of pleasure or pain it renders impossible that supreme act of the complex vision by means of which the immortal calm of the ideal vision descends upon the unfathomable universe.

Sensation carried to its extreme limit becomes impersonal; for in its unconscious mechanism personality is devoured. But it does not become impersonal in that magical liberating sense in which the impersonal is an escape, bringing with it a feeling of large, cool, quiet, and unruffled space. It becomes impersonal in a thick, gross, opaque, mechanical manner.

There is brutality and outrage; there is bestiality and obscenity about both pain and pleasure when in their voracious maw they devour the magic of the unfathomable world. Thus it may be noted that most great and heroic souls hold their supreme pain at a distance from them, with a proud gesture of contempt, and go down at the last with their complex vision unruffled and unimpaired. There is indeed a still deeper "final moment" than this; but it is so rare as to be out of the reach of average humanity. I refer to an attitude like that of Jesus upon the cross; in whose mood towards his own suffering there was no element of "pride of will," but only an immense pity for the terrible sensitiveness of all life, and a supreme heightening of the emotion of love towards all life.

It will be noted that in my analysis of "sensation" I have said nothing of what are usually called "the five

senses." These senses are obviously the material "feelers" or the gates of material sentiency by which the soul's attribute of sensation feeds itself from the objective world; but they are so penetrated and percolated, through and through, by the other basic activities of the soul, that it is extremely difficult to disentangle from our impressions of sight, of sound, of touch, of taste, and of smell, those interwoven threads of reason, imagination and so forth which so profoundly modify and transmute, even in the art of seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, and smelling, the various manifestations of "the objective mystery" which we apprehend in our sensuous grasp.

By emphasizing the feelings of pleasure and pain as the primary characteristics of the attribute of sensation we are indicating the fact that every sensation we experience carries with it in some perceptible degree or other, the feeling of "well-being" or the feeling of distress.

We now come to consider that dim, obscure, but nevertheless powerful energy, which the universal tradition of language dignifies by the name of "instinct." This "instinct" is the portion of the activity of the soul which works more blindly and less consciously than any other.

The French philosopher Bergson isolates and emphasizes this subterranean activity until it seems to him to hold in its grasp a deeper secret of life than any other energy which man possesses. To secure for instinct this primary place in the panorama of life it is necessary to eliminate from the situation that silent witness which we call "the mind" or self-consciousness; that witness which from its invisible watch-tower looks forth upon the whole spectacle. It is necessary to take for granted the long historic stream of evolutionary development. It is necessary to regard this development in its organic totality as the sole reality with which we have to deal.

The invisible mental witness being eliminated, it becomes

necessary, if instinct is to be thus made supreme, to regard the appearance of the soul as a mere stage in an evolutionary process, the driving-force of which is the power of instinct itself. Planets and plants, men and animals, are seen in this way to be all dominated by instinct; and instinct is found to be so much the most important element in evolution, that upon it, rather than upon anything else, the whole future of the universe may be said to depend.

Having made this initial plunge into shameless objectivity, having put completely out of court the invisible witness of it all, we find ourselves reduced to regarding this "blind" instinct as the galvanic battery which moves the world. Thus isolated from the other powers of the soul, this mysterious energy, this subterranean driving-force, has to bear the whole weight of everything that happens in space and time. A strange sort of "blindness" must its blindness be, when its devices can supply the place of the most passionate intellectual struggles of the mind!

If it is blind, it gropes its way, in its blindness, through the uttermost gulfs of space and into the nethermost abysses of life. If it is dumb, its silence is the irresistible silence of Fate, the silence of the eternal "Mothers."

But the "instinct" which is one of the basic attributes of the complex vision is not quite such an awe-inspiring thing as this. To raise it into such a position as this there has to be a vigorous suppression, as I have hinted, of many other attributes of the soul. Instinct may be defined as the pressure of obscure creative desire, drawn from the inscrutable recesses of the soul, malleable up to a certain point by reason and will, but beyond that point remaining unconscious, irrational, incalculable, elusive. That it plays an enormous part in the process of life cannot be denied; but the part it plays is not so isolated from consciousness as sometimes has been imagined.

There is in truth a strange reciprocity between instinct

and self-consciousness, according to which they both play into each other's hands. This is above all true of great artists' work, which in a superficial sense might be called unconscious, but which in a deeper sense is profoundly conscious. It seems as though, in great works of art, a certain superficial reasoning is sacrificed to instinct, but in that very sacrifice a deeper level of reason is reached between which and instinct there is no longer anything but complete understanding.

To intellectualize instinct is one of the profoundest secrets of the art of life; and it is only when instinct is thus intellectualized, or brought into focus with the other aspects of the soul, that it is able to play its proper rhythmic part in the musical synthesis of the complex vision. But although we cannot allow to instinct the all-absorbing part in the world-play which Bergson claims for it, it remains that we have to regard it as one of the most mysterious and incalculable of the energies of the soul. It is instinct which brings all living entities into relation with something sub-conscious in their own nature.

Under the pressure of instinct man recognizes the animal in himself, the plant in himself, and even a strange affinity with the inorganic and the inanimate. It is instinct in us which attracts us so strangely to the earth under our feet. It is instinct which attracts certain individual souls to certain particular natural elements, such as air, fire, sand, mould, rain, wind, water, and the like; a kind of remote atavistic reciprocity in us stretching out towards that particular element. It is by means of instinct that we are able to sink into that mysterious sub-conscious world which underlies the conscious levels of every soul-monad. Under the groping and fumbling guidance of this strange power we seem to come into touch with the profoundest reservoirs of our personal identity.

Considering what fantastic and cruel tricks the lonely



thinking power, the abstract reason, has been allowed to play us it is no wonder that this French philosopher has been tempted to turn away from reason and find in instinct the ultimate solution. Instinct, as we give ourselves up to it, seems to carry us into the very nerves and tissues and veins and pulses of life. Its verdicts seem to reach us with an absolute and unquestionable authority. They seem to bear upon them an "imprimatur" more powerful than any moral sanction. Potent and terrible, direct and final, instinct seems to rise up out of the depths and break every law.

It leaps forth from our inmost being like a second self more powerful than we are. It invades religion. It incarnates itself in lust. It obsesses taste. It masquerades as intuition. It triumphs over reason. With an irrationality, that seems at the same time terrible and beautiful, instinct moves straight to its goal. It follows its purpose with demonic tenacity, heedless of logic, contemptuous of consequences. It cares nothing for contradictions. It forces contradictions to lose themselves in one another according to some secret law of its own, unknown to the law of reason.

Such, then, is instinct, the sub-conscious fatality of Nature so difficult to control; whose unrestrained activity is capable of completely destroying the rhythm of the complex vision. Nothing but the power of the apex-thought of man's whole concentrated being is able to dominate this thing. It may be detected lurking in the droop of the Sphinx's eyelids and in the cruel smile upon her mouth. But the answer given to the challenge of this subterranean force is not, after all, any logical judgment of the pure reason. It is the answer of the vision of the artist, holding its treacherous material under his creative hand.

Let us turn now to the attribute of "intuition." In-

tuition is a thing more clearly definable and more easily analysed than almost any other of the aspects of the soul. Intuition is the feminine counterpart of imagination; and, as compared with instinct, it is a power which acts in clearly defined, isolated, intermittent movements, each one of which has a definite beginning and a definite end. As compared with imagination, intuition is passive and receptive; as compared with instinct it does not fumble and grope forward, steadily and tenaciously, among the roots of things; but it suspends itself, mirror-like, upon the surface of the unfathomable waters, and suspended there reflects in swift sudden glimpses the mysterious movements of the great deep. In this process of reflecting, or apprehending in sudden, intermittent glimpses, the mysterious depths of the life of the soul, intuition is less affected by the reason or by the will than any other aspect of the complex vision.

Instinct, in secret sub-conscious alliance with the will, is a permanent automatic energy, working in the hidden darkness of the roots of things like an ever-flowing subterranean stream. The revelations of intuition, on the other hand, are not flowing and constant, but separate, isolated, distinct and detached. In the subject-matter of their revelations, too, intuition and instinct are very different. If the recesses of the soul be compared to a fortified castle, instinct is the active messenger of the place, continually issuing forth on secret errands concerning the real nature of which he is himself often quite ignorant. Intuition, on the contrary, is the little postern gate at the back of the building, set open at rare moments to the wide fields and magical forests which extend to the far-off horizon.

Instinct is always found in close contact with sensation, groping its ways through the midst of the mass of material impressions, acting and reacting as it fumbles among such impressions. Intuition seems to deal directly and ab-

solutely with a clear and definite landscape behind the superficial landscape, with a truth behind truth, with a reality within reality.

To take an instance from common experience: a stranger, an unknown person, enters our circle. Instinct, working automatically and sensationally, may attract us powerfully towards such a person, with a steady, irresistible attraction. Intuition, on the contrary, uttering its revelation abruptly and with, so to speak, one sudden mysterious cry, may warn us of some dangerous quicksand or perilous jungle in such a stranger's nature of which instinct was totally ignorant because the thing was what might be called a "spiritual quality" lying deeper than those sensational or magnetic levels through which instinct feels its way.

The instinct of animals or birds for instance warns them very quickly with regard to the presence of some natural enemy whose approach they apprehend through some mysterious sense—impression beyond the analysis of human reason. But when their enemy is the mental intention of a human being they are only too easily tricked.

To take quite a different instance. It may easily happen that while conscience has habitually driven us to a certain course of action against which instinct has never revolted because of its preoccupation with the senses, some sudden flash of intuition reaching us from the hidden substratum of our being changes our whole perspective and gives to conscience itself a completely opposite bias. What these intermittent revelations of intuition certainly do achieve is the preservation in the soul's memory of the clear and deep and free and unfathomable margins of the ultimate mystery, those wavering sea-edges and twilight-shores of our being, which the austere categories of rational logic tend to shut out as if by impenetrable walls.

It remains to consider the attribute of memory. Memory is the name which we give to that intrinsic suscepti-

bility, implying an intrinsic permanence or endurance in the material which displays susceptibility, such as makes it possible for what the soul feels or what the soul creates to write down its own record, so that it can be read at will, or if not "at will," at least can be read, if the proper stimulus or shock be applied.

Memory is not the cause of the soul's concrete identity. The soul's concrete identity is the cause or natural ground of memory. Memory is the "passive-active" power by means of which the concrete identity of the soul grows richer, fuller, more articulate, more complex and more subtle.

In looking back over these eleven attributes of the "soul-monad," what we have to remark is, that two of the number differ radically in their nature from the rest. The attribute of emotion differs from the rest in the sense that it is the living substantial unity or ultimate synthesis in which they all move. It is indeed more than this. For it is the actual "stuff" or "material" out of which they are all, so to speak, "made" or upon which they all, so to speak, inscribe their diverse creations.

The permanent "surface," or identical susceptibility, of this ebbing and flowing stream of emotion is memory; but the emotion itself, divided into the positive and negative "pole," as we say of love and malice, is an actual projection upon the objective universe of the intrinsic "stuff" or psycho-material "substance" of which the substratum of the soul is actually composed. The other aspects of the soul are, so to speak, the various "tongues" of diversely coloured flame with which the soul pierces the "objective mystery"; but the substance of all these flames is one and the same. It is the soul itself, projected upon the plane of material impression; and thus projected, becoming the conflicting duality to which I give the name of "emotion."

The attribute of "will," also, differs radically from the

rest; in the sense that "will" is the power which the soul possesses of encouraging or suppressing, re-vivifying or letting fade, all the other attributes of the soul, including that attribute which is the substance and synthesis of them all and which I name "emotion."

In regard to "emotion" the will can do three separate things. It can encourage the emotion of love and suppress that of malice. It can encourage the emotion of malice and suppress that of love. And finally it can use its energy in the effort, an effort which can never be totally successful, to suppress all emotion, of any kind at all.

Man's complex vision then consists, in simple terms, of self-consciousness, reason, taste, imagination, conscience, instinct, sensation, intuition, will, memory, and emotion. These various activities, differentiated clearly enough in their separate energizing, must never be regarded as absolutely separate "faculties," but rather as relatively separated "aspects." Behind all of them and under all of them is the complex vision itself, felt by all of us in rare moments in its creative totality, but constantly being distorted and obscured as one or other of its primal energies invades the appropriate territory of some other.

The complex vision must not be regarded as the mere sum or accumulated agglomeration of all these. It is much more than this. It is more than a mere formal focussing of its own attributes. It is more than a mere logical unity suspended in a vacuum.

The complex vision is the vision of a living self, of an organic personality, of an actual soul-monad. It may be the vision of a man. It may be the vision of a plant or a planet or a god. It may be the vision of entities undreamed of and of existences inconceivable. It may be the vision, for example, of some strange "soul of space" or "soul of the ether" whose consciousness is extended

throughout the visible universe and even throughout the "etherial medium" which binds all souls together.

But whether the vision of a plant, a man, or a god, the complex vision seems to bring with it its own immediate revelation that where there is any form of "matter," however attenuated, such "matter" is the outward expression of some inward living soul whose energies have some mysterious correspondence to the eleven aspects of the soul of man.

## CHAPTER III

### THE SOUL'S APEX-THOUGHT

It now becomes necessary to discuss the connection between what I have named the soul's "apex-thought" and certain permanent aspects of life with which this "apex-thought" has to deal.

The "apex-thought" is the name I give to that synthetic and concentrating effort of the soul by means of which the various energies of the complex vision are brought into focus and fused with one another. In accordance with my favourite metaphorical image, the "apex-thought" is the extreme point of the arrow-head of the soul; the point with which it pierces its ways into eternity.

It is necessary that I should indicate the connection between the activity of this apex-point of the complex vision and the various perplexing human problems round which our controversies smoulder and burn. It is advisable that I should indicate the connection between the activity of this "apex-thought" and that thing which the world has agreed to call Religion.

It is advisable that I should indicate the relation of the "apex-thought" to those recurrent moods of profound human scepticism wherein we deny the attainability of any "truth" at all.

It is advisable that I should indicate the relation of the apex-thought to any possible "new organ of vision" with which some unforeseen experiment of the soul may suddenly endow us. And it is above all advisable that I should show the relation between this focussed synthesis of the

soul's complexity and the actual physical body whose material senses are part of this complexity.

The whole problem of the art of life may be said to lie in the question of co-ordination. The actual process of co-ordination is the supreme and eternal difficulty. Only at rare moments do we individually approximate to its achievement. Only once or twice, it may be, in a whole life-time, do we actually achieve it. But it is by the power and insight of such fortunate moments that we attain whatever measure of permanent illumination adds dignity and courage to our days.

We live by the memory of such moments. We live by the hope of their return. In the meanwhile our luck or our ill luck, as living human beings, depends on no outward events or circumstances but on our success in the conscious effort of approximation to what, when it does arrive, seems to take the grace and ease and inevitable beauty of a free gift of the gods.

This fortunate rhythm of the primordial energies of the complex vision may be felt and realized without being expressed in words. The curse of what we call "cleverness" is that it hastens to find facile and fluent expression for what cannot be easily and fluently expressed. Education is too frequently a mere affair of words, a superficial encouragement of superficial expression. It is for this reason that many totally uneducated persons achieve, unknown to all except their most intimate friends, a far closer approach to this difficult co-ordination than others who are not only well-educated but are regarded by the world as famous leaders of modern thought.

It will be remarked that in my list of the primordial energies of the complex vision I do not mention religion. This is not because I do not recognize the passionate and formidable rôle played by religion in the history of the human race, nor because I regard the "religious instinct"



as a thing outgrown and done with. I have not included it because I cannot regard it as a distinct and separate attribute, in the sense in which reason, conscience, intuition and so forth, are distinct and separate attributes, of the complex vision.

I regard it as a name given in common usage to certain premature and disproportioned efforts at co-ordination among these attributes, and I am well content to apply the word "religion" to that sacred ecstasy, at once passionate and calm, at once personal and impersonal, which suffuses our being with an unutterable happiness when the energies of the complex vision are brought into focus. I regard the word religion as a word that has drawn and attracted to itself, in its descent down the stream of time, so rich and so intricate a cargo of human feelings that it has come to mean too many things to be any longer of specific value in a philosophical analysis.

Any sort of reaction against the primeval fear with which man contemplates the unknown, is religion. The passionate craving of human beings for a love which changes not nor passes away, is religion.

The desperate longing to find an idea, a principle, a truth, a "cause," for the sake of which we can sacrifice our personal pleasure and our personal selfishness, is religion.

The craving for some unity, some synthesis, some universal meaning in the system of things, is religion. The desire for an "over-life" or an "over-world," in which the distress, disorder, misunderstandings and cruelties of our present existence are redeemed, is religion.

The desire to find something real and eternal behind the transient flow of appearance, is religion. The desire to force upon others by violence, by trickery, by fire, by sword, by persecution, by magic, by persuasion, by eloquence, by martyrdom, an idea which is more important to us than life itself, is religion.

It will be seen from this brief survey of the immense field which the word "religion" has come to cover, that I am justified in regarding it rather as a name given to the emotional thrill and ecstatic abandonment which accompanies any sort of co-ordination of the attributes of the complex vision, proportioned or disproportioned, than as a distinct and separate attribute in itself.

Only when the co-ordination of our human activities rises to the height of a supreme music, can we regard "religion" as the most beautiful and most important of all human experiences. And at the moment when it takes this form it resolves itself into nothing more than an unutterable feeling of ecstasy produced by the sense that we are in harmony with the rest of the universe. Religion, as I am compelled to think of it, resolves itself into that reaction of unspeakable happiness produced in us, when by any kind of synthetic movement, however crude, we are either saved from unreality or reconciled to reality.

Religion is, in fact, the name we give to the ecstasy in the heart of the complex vision, when, in any sort of co-ordination between our contradictory energies, we at once escape from ourselves and realize ourselves. We are forbidden to speak of the "religious sense" or the "religious instinct" because, truly interpreted, religion is not a single activity among other activities, but the emotional reaction upon our whole nature when that nature is functioning in its creative fulness.

Religion must therefore be regarded as the culminating ecstasy of the art of life, or as a premature snatching at such an ecstasy while the art of life is still discordant and inchoate. In the first instance it is the supreme reward of the creative act. In the second instance it is a tragic temptation to rest by the way in a unity which is an illusive unity and in a heaven from which "the sun of the morning" is excluded. It thus comes about that what we call

religion is frequently a hindrance to the rhythm of the apex-thought. It may be a sentimental consolation. It may be an excuse for cruelty and obscurantism. There is always a danger when it is thus prematurely manifested, that it should darken, distort, deprave and obstruct the movement of creation.

At this point, an objection arises to our whole method of research which it is necessary to meet at once. This objection, a peculiarly modern one, is based upon the theory, handed about in modern literature as a kind of diploma of cleverness and repeated superficially by many who are not really sceptical at all, that it is impossible in this world to arrive, under any circumstances, at any kind of truth.

Persons who repeat this sceptical dogma are simply refusing to acknowledge the evidence of their own experience. However rare our high rhythmic moments may be, some sort of approximation to them, quite sufficient to destroy the validity of this absolute scepticism, must, if a person honestly confesses the truth, and does not dissimulate out of intellectual pride, have entered into the experience of every human being.

Let us, however, consider the kind of dogmatic language which these sceptics use. They speak of "life" as a thing which so perpetually changes, expands, diminishes, undulates, advances, recedes, evolves, revolves, explodes, precipitates, lightens, darkens, thins, thickens, hardens, softens, over-brims, concentrates, grows shallow, grows deep, that it were ridiculous even to attempt to create an equilibrium, or rhythmic "parting-of-the-ways," out of such evasive and treacherous material.

My answer to this sceptical protest is a simple one. It is an appeal to human experience. I maintain that this modern tendency to talk dogmatically and vaguely about "the evasive fluidity of life" is nothing more than a crafty

pathological retreat from the formidable challenge of life. It is indeed a kind of mental drug or spiritual opiate by the use of which many unheroic souls hide themselves from the sardonic stare of the eternal Sphinx. It is a weakness comparable to the weakness of many premature religious syntheses; and it has the same soothing and disintegrating effect upon the creative energy of the mind.

What, as a matter of fact, hurts us all, much more than any tendency of life to be over-fluid and over-evasive, is the atrocious tendency of life to be inflexible, rigorous, implacable, harshly immobile. This vague dogmatic sentiment about "the fluidity of life," is one of the instinctive ways by which we try to pretend that our prison-walls are not walls at all, but only friendly and flowing vapour. None of the great works of art and poetry, the austere beauty of which reflects the real nature of the universe, could continue to exercise their magical power upon us, could continue to sustain us and comfort us, if those tragic ultimate realities were not ultimate realities.

The sublime ritual of art, which at its noblest has the character of religion, could not exist for a moment in a world as softly fluctuating and as dimly wavering as this modern scepticism would make it. Life is at once more beautiful and far more tragic. Though surrounded by mystery the grand outlines of the world remain austere and sternly the same. The sun rises and sets. The moon draws the tides. Man goes forth to his work and his labour until the evening. Man is born; man loves and hates; man dies. And over him the same unfathomable spaces yawn. And under him the same unfathomable spaces yawn. Time, with its seasons, passes him in unalterable procession. From birth to death his soul wrestles with the universe; and the drama of which he is the protagonist lifts the sublime monotony of its scenery from the zenith to the nadir.

Let any man ask himself what it is that hurts him most in life and yet seems most real to him. He will be compelled to answer . . . "the atrocious regularity of things and their obscene necessity." The very persons who talk so glibly about the "fluidity" and "evasiveness" of life are persons in whose own flesh the wedge-like granite of fate has lodged itself with crushing finality. Life has indeed been too rigid and too stark for them; and in place of seizing it in an embrace as formidable as its own, they go aside muttering, "life is evasive; life is fluid; life brims over."

This sceptical dogma of "evasiveness" is generally found in alliance with some vague modern "religion" whose chief object is to strip the world of the dignity of its real tragedy and endow it with the indignity of some pretended assurance. This is the rôle of that superficial optimism so inherently repugnant to the aesthetic sense.

Such apologists for a shallow and ignoble idealism are in the habit of declaring that "the tendency of modern thought" is to render "materialism" unthinkable; but when these people speak of materialism they are thinking of the austere limits of that vast objective spectacle into which we are all born. This spectacle is indeed mysterious. It is indeed staggering and awful. But it is irrevocably *there*. And no vague talk about the "evasiveness" and "over-brimmingness" of life can alter one jot or tittle of its eternal outlines.

From the sublime terror of this extraordinary drama such persons are anxious to escape, because the iron of it has entered into their souls. They do not see that the only "escape" offered by the reality of things is a change of attitude towards this spectacle, not an assertion that the form of this spectacle is unfixed and wavering. No psychological or mathematical speculation has the power to alter the essential outlines of this spectacle.

If such speculations could alter it, then the aesthetic sense of humanity would be driven to transform itself; and a new aesthetic sense, adapted to this new "evasiveness of life," would have to take its place. Attempts are indeed being made at this very hour to "start fresh" with a new aesthetic sense and only the winnowing process of time and the pressure of personal experience can refute such attempts. Meanwhile all we can do is to note the rejection of such attempts by the verdict of the complex vision; a rejection which indicates that if such attempts are to be successful they must imply the substitution of a new complex vision for the one which humanity has used since the beginning.

In other words they must imply a radical change in the basic attributes of human nature. Humanity, to justify them, must become some sort of super-humanity; and a new world inhabited by a new race must take the place of the world we know. Such an attempt to substitute a new humanity for the old is already conscious of itself in those curious experiments of psychical research which are based upon the hypothesis that some completely new organs of sense are on the point of being discovered. Philosophers who believe in the inherent unchangeableness of our present instrument of research—the complex vision as it now exists—can only look on at these experiments with an attitude of critical detachment; and wait until time and experience have justified or refuted them.

Philosophers who believe in the unchangeableness of the complex vision are bound to recognize that the human will, which is a basic attribute of this vision, must in any case play a considerable part in the creation of the future. But from their point of view the will is, after all, only one of these basic attributes. There is also the aesthetic sense. And the aesthetic sense is totally averse to this new kind of humanity and this new kind of world. The eternal

vision of those invisible "sons of the universe," the proof of whose existence is a deduction from the encounters of all actual souls with one another, would seem to be entirely irreconcilable with any new complex vision whose nature had been completely changed.

The visible spectacle of the world with its implied "eternal arbiters" would be transmuted and transfigured by such an upheaval. For as long as the human will, as we know it now, remains in association with the aesthetic sense as we know it now, the creation of the future—however yielding and indetermined—must depend upon the form, the shape, the principle, the prophecy, the premonition, existing from the beginning in the nature of things. And it is precisely this shape, this form, this principle, this hope, this dream, this essential motive of those sons of the universe whose existence is implied "when two and three are gathered together," which would be destroyed and annihilated, if the complex vision were transformed into something else and a new world took the place of the old.

It is the existence of these real "immortals" confronting this real universe which makes possible the feeling we have that in spite of all our differences, some accumulated stream of beauty, truth and goodness, does actually carry the past forward into the future, does actually create the future according to a premonition and a hope which have been there from the beginning.

This is the supreme act of faith of the complex vision. This is the supreme act of faith which saves us at once from our subjective isolation and from the will towards the acceptance of a premature "religion." This is what saves us from any psychological or mathematical or logical speculation, which would contradict this hope or destroy the reality of the universe from which this hope emerges.

When we come to a general consideration of the various

attributes of the complex vision we are struck at once by the appalling power they each have, when not held in check, of cancelling one another's contribution. It is for this reason that my newly-coined word was unavoidable if we are to emphasize the synthetic energy of the complex vision when it exercises its control over these diverse attributes and resists their constant tendency to cancel one another. It was precisely to emphasize this synthetic energy of the soul that I have made use of the arbitrary expression "apex-thought." For if we think of these various attributes as shooting forth like flames from the arrow-head of the individual soul, we must think of this co-ordinating energy as the power which continually draws these flames together when they deviate from their focussed intensity, and continually restores, from its inharmonious dispersion, the concentration of their arrows' point. If we are permitted to use this image of a horizontal pyramid of flames it will be seen how important a part is played by this apex-thought in concentrating the energies of the complex vision so that it can "drive" or "burn" or "pierce" its way into the surrounding mystery.

For this image of an arrow-head of focussed flame which is in constant danger of being dispersed as the flames recede from one another and are blown backwards is only a symbolic way of indicating how difficult it is to pierce with our complicated instrument of research the vast mystery which surrounds us.

All this is mere pictorial metaphor; but in visualizing the human soul as a moving arrow-head, composed of flickering flames that only now and then combine into a sharp point, while at other times the wind drives them apart and bends them back, I am suggesting that the ultimate reality of things is a state of confused movement continually becoming a state of concentrated movement. I am suggesting that the secrets of life only yield themselves up to a



movement of desperation. I am suggesting that the spirit of creation is also the spirit of destruction, and that the real object of the energy of creation is to pierce with its burning light the darkness of the objective mystery.

As proof of the necessity of keeping this apex-thought in constant poise, let me reiterate one or two of the philosophical disasters which result from a cessation of its rhythmic function. When the reason, for instance, usurps the whole field and acts in isolation from the imagination and the intuition, it tends to persuade us to deny the very existence of that deepest and most vivid reality of all, the handle of our spear-head, the base of our pyramid, the mysterious entity within us, which we have come, following the traditions of the centuries, to name the "soul." And not only does the soul disappear when the reason thus isolates itself, but another primary revelation of the complex vision, I mean that half-created, half-discovered object of the senses popularly called "matter," disappears with it.

Man's self-consciousness is thus left suspended "in vacuo" with no concrete reality within it and no concrete reality outside it; and "thought-in-the-abstract" becomes the only truth.

But not only can reason thus set itself up in isolated usurpation against such other activities as imagination, intuition, will or taste; it can also divide itself against itself and emerge in completely contradictory functions. In the form of mathematical logic, for instance, it can dispose most drastically of that living organic world which in the form of experimental science it assumes to be the only truth. Again it may happen that reason will arbitrarily ally itself with one or the other of the other attributes and on the strength of such an alliance seek to obliterate all the rest. Thus while it is impossible to avoid the admission that of all these basic attributes reason is the most important, because without it all the rest would be inarticulate and

dumb, it remains true that to hold reason in balanced relation to all the rest and to hold its own contradictory tendencies in balanced relation to one another is an undertaking of such extraordinary difficulty that if it were not for the complex vision's possession of that co-ordinating power which I have named its apex-thought, one might well pardon the mood of those persons who use reason to drug reason and who steer their boat into some unruffled back-water of dogma or mysticism.

The necessity of such an infinitely delicate poise or balance or rhythm in these high matters, the necessity of keeping all these conflicting attributes at this exquisite point of suspense between abysses of contradiction, is a necessity which compels us to recognize that philosophy is nothing more or less than the supreme art, and the most difficult of all arts.

Certainly, it seems as though thought has to become in a profound sense rhythmical, has to take to itself the nature of music, before it can become the truth. For the truth does not seem to be a mere picture of the system of things, reflected in the mirror of the mind. The truth seems to be the very system of things itself, become conscious and volitional, changing, growing, living, destroying, creating. Thus it comes about that the thought which plunges into the universe must of necessity, even in that very act, remould and re-fashion the universe. Thus Nature perpetually recreates herself by the passion of her children and is forever re-born as the child of her own offspring.

But if the supreme difficulty of the art of life lies in the maintenance of this rhythm between these primary attributes, it must never be forgotten that these "attributes" are, after all, only *aspects* of the soul. The soul is each of them, not *in* each of them. They are not "faculties" through which the soul acts. They are never absolutely distinct from one another. There is something of each of

them in every one of them, and every attempt which they make to establish themselves in an independent existence is only an attempt of the soul itself to live a perverted and a discordant, instead of a natural and a harmonious life.

The rarity and difficulty of that high art which brings all these orchestral players into harmony is sufficient cause to account for the scarcity of genuine philosophical thought in this confused world. The human soul, looking desperately round for some calm yet passionate light to save its hours from ruinous waste, turns away in bitter disillusion from the thin dust and the swollen vapour that are offered it.

Out of the logical laboratories of the abstract reason this thin dust is offered; and out of the ideal factories of the wish for superficial comfort this iridescent vapour is poured forth. That burning secret of life, that lovely and terrible reality for which the soul pines is not to be found in any mere outward fact or in any mere subjective intuition.

Such a fact may crumble to pieces and give place to another. Such an intuition may melt into air under the shock of experience. The craving of the soul is not satisfied by the discovery that "matter" resolves itself into "energy," nor is the misery of the heart assuaged by the theory that time is an attribute of fourth-dimensional space. The lamentable beating of blood-stained hands upon the ultimate walls does not cease when we learn that two straight lines can or cannot meet in infinity; nor does the knowledge that history is an "ideal evolution" heal the aching of the world-sorrow.

Could we know for certain that the dead were raised up, even that knowledge would not reduce to silence the bitter cry of the outraged generations. So poisonous and so deep is the pain of life that no kind of knowledge, not even the knowledge that annihilation must at last, sooner or later, end it all, can really heal it.

But truth is not knowledge. Truth is not the recognition of an external fact. Truth is a creative gesture. It is a ritual, a rhythmic poise, a balance deliberately sustained between eternal contradictions. It is the magical touch which reduces to harmony the quivering vibrations of many opposites. It is the dramatic movement of a supreme actor at the climax of an unfathomable drama. It is music resting upon itself; music so exquisite as to seem like silence, music so passionate as to have become calm.

The apex-thought of that pyramid of conflicting flames which we call the complex vision holds itself together at one concentrated point. And this point is the arrow point of our human soul; that soul which is shot across immensity in the eternal war between life and the opposite of life.

Although for the purpose of emphasizing and elucidating the essential nature of this apex-thought it has been found advisable to use such metaphorical and pictorial images as the one just indicated, it must be remembered that what we are actually and in direct experience confronted with is the mystery of a real human personality inhabiting a real human body.

This real personal soul inhabiting a real objective body and surrounded on all sides by a real unfathomable universe, is the original revelation of the complex vision from which there is no escape except by death.

The philosophy of the complex vision finds its starting point in an acceptance of this situation which is nothing more than an acceptance of the complex vision's own harmonious activity. An acceptance of the reality of the human body is an essential part of this harmonious activity because among the aspects of the complex vision are to be found certain attributes, such as sensation, instinct and imagination, which would be negated and rendered abortive if the human body were an illusion.

If the "starting point" of our philosophy demands recognition of the reality of the body, the "ideal" of our philosophy must have a place for the body also. Flesh and blood must therefore play their part in the resultant harmony at which we are all the while aiming; and no contempt for the body, no hatred of the body, no refusal to recognize the supreme beauty and sacredness of the body, can be allowed to distort or pervert our vision.

The activity of the apex-thought, though we have a right to use any metaphorical image we please about it in order to elucidate its nature, must always be considered as using the bodily senses in its resultant rhythm. It must always be considered as using that portion of the objective universe which we name the body as an inevitable "note" in its musical flight from darkness to darkness. It must always be conceived as following the attraction of an eternal vision, in which "the idea of the body" is an imperishable element.

This "eternal vision," which it is the rhythmic motive of the apex-thought to seek, carries with it the witness and "imprimatur" of the gods; and although no man has ever "beheld" the gods, and although the gods by reason of their omnipresent activity, cannot be thought of as being "incarnated," yet since they are living souls, even as we are, and since every living soul has, as the substratum of its identity, what might be called a "spiritual body," there is nothing in the revelation made to us through the activity of our complex vision to forbid our free and even fanciful speculation as to its use, by the very highest of super-human personalities, even, let us say, by the Christ himself, of this mysterious energy of the soul which I have named the "apex-thought."

## CHAPTER IV

### THE REVELATION OF THE COMPLEX VISION

Using then, as our instrument of research, that totality of attributes by which the soul in its rare moments of rhythmic consummation visualizes the world, the question arises—what, in plain untechnical terms, is the revelation made to us by this complex medium? Here, as before, I am anxious, before I venture upon such a hazardous undertaking as an answer to this question, to indicate clearly that what I am attempting to state is a revelation which is common to the experience of all souls, wherever such a thing as the soul exists. The question as to whether or not such an universal revelation is an illusion does not concern us. To call any universal experience “an illusion” is no more and no less illuminating than to call it “an ultimate truth.” It is the only reality we are at present in possession of; and we must accept it, or remain in complete scepticism; which is only another name for complete chaos.

The first important discovery which the complex vision makes is the fact that the revelation, thus half-offered to it and half-created by it, is presented simultaneously in all its various aspects. It does not appear to us bit by bit or in succession but “en masse” and in its complete “ensemble.” It is of course unavoidable that its aspects should be enumerated one by one and that in such an enumeration one aspect should be placed first and another last. Nevertheless, this “first” and “last” must not be regarded as of any reasonable importance; but as nothing more than an accident of arbitrary choice. All the aspects of this original revelation are linked together. All are dependent

upon one another. Among them there is no "first" and "last." All are equally real. All are equally necessary. All are equally inescapable.

The activity of the complex vision, then, makes us aware that we have within us an integral irreducible self, the living personal substratum of our self-consciousness, the "I" of our primordial "I am I." This living personal self is the background of our complex vision. It is the personal "visionary" whose vision we are using. I say we have "within us" such a self. This "within us" is one of the inescapable original revelations. For though our consciousness will be found in its full circle to invade obscure shores and wavering margins, there must always be a return, however far it may wander, to this definite "something" within us which utters the happy or unhappy "I am I."

It is precisely here, in regard to the nature of this "I am I," that it is essential to let the totality of our complex vision speak, and not one or other of its attributes. Nowhere has the fantastic and desolating power of pure abstract reason left to itself done more to distort the general situation than in this matter. It has distorted it in two opposing ways.

It has distorted it metaphysically by completely eliminating this revelation of a personal self, "within us," and it has distorted it scientifically by reducing this personal self to an automatic mechanical phenomenon produced by the action and interaction of unconscious chemical "forces."

To the logic of metaphysical reason there is no concrete living self which can say "I am I" from that definite point in space and time which we indicate by the use of the phrase "within us." According to such logic our "I am I" becomes "an infinity of consciousness" with no local habitation. It becomes a consciousness which includes both the "within" and the "without," a consciousness in which

our actual personal self is nothing but an illusory phenomenon, a consciousness which is outside both time and space, a consciousness whose centre is everywhere and its circumference nowhere, a consciousness which is pure disembodied "thought," thought without any "thinker," thought contemplating itself as thought, thought in an absolutely empty void.

When to this ultimate "unity of apperception," suspended in a vacuum, consciousness of self is added; when this "consciousness-in-the-abstract" is regarded as an universal self-consciousness, the resultant "I am I" of such an omnipresent being becomes an infinite "I am I" which is nothing less than the unfathomable universe conscious of itself in its totality. Whether consciousness of self be added to this "consciousness-in-the-abstract" or not, it is hard to see how out of this unruffled ocean of identity the actual multifarious world which we feel around us, this world of plants and planets and birds and fishes and mortal men and immortal gods, ever succeeded in getting itself produced at all.

The vague metaphysical phrases about the One issuing forth into the Many, in order to make Itself more completely Itself than it was before, seem to us, when under the influence of our complex vision, no other than the meaningless playing with cosmic tennis balls of some insane universal Juggler.

The second way in which reason, left to itself, has distorted what the complex vision reveals to us about the "I am I," is the scientific or evolutionary way. According to this view which assumes that the objective process of evolution is our only knowable reality, the individual personal "I am I" finds itself resolved into a fatal automatic phenomenon of cause and effect; a phenomenon which has as its "cause" nothing but the prehistoric chemical movements of "matter" or "energy." The personal self thus



considered becomes a momentary vortex in a perpetually changing stream of "states of consciousness" or "ripples of sensation" to each of which vast anterior tides of atavistic forces have contributed their mechanical quota.

The chemical fatality of our nerve-tissues, the psychological fatality of our motive-impulses, leave no space, when they have all been summed up, for any free arbitrary action of an independent self.

And so, just as according to the metaphysical view, the soul disappears in a blur of ideal fatality, according to the scientific view the soul disappears in a nexus of mechanical determinism. As against both these errors, to the complex vision this "soul" within us appears to be something altogether different from the physical body. The experience we have of it, the feeling we have of it, is that it is a definite "something" dwelling "within" the physical body.

This revelation with regard to it is as unmistakable as it is difficult to analyze. That it is here, within us, we feel and know; but as soon as we attempt to subject it to any exact scrutiny it seems to melt away under our hands. The situation is indeed a kind of philosophical tragic-comedy; and is only too indicative of the baffling whimsicality of the whole system of things. Contradiction and paradox at the very basis of life mock our attempt to utter one intelligible word about the thing which is the most real of all things to us.

We are vividly aware of this mysterious personality within us, "the guest and companion of the body," but directly we attempt to lay hold upon the actual substance of it it seems to vanish into thin air. But at least our complex vision, which is its complex vision, reveals to us the fact of its existence; and with its existence once acknowledged, however impossible analysis of it may be, we are able to give a plain and unequivocal denial to all the impersonal conclusions reached by metaphysic and science.

This categorical pronouncement of the complex vision with regard to the "I am I," namely that it is the voice of a living concrete soul within us, is supported historically by an immense weight of human tradition. Belief in the reality of the soul is older and more tenacious than any other human doctrine which our race has ever held. The use of the term "soul" is no more than a bare recognition that behind the consciousness which says "I am I" there is a living entity whose consciousness this is.

With this bare recognition the revelation of the complex vision abruptly stops. It stops with that peculiar and disconcerting suddenness with which it seems to be its nature to stop, whenever it reaches the limit of its scope in any direction. It stops here, with regard to the soul, just as it stops when confronted with the conception of limitlessness, both with regard to space and with regard to time. But the soul at least is ours; a fact that cannot be explained away.

And although we have no right to go a step beyond the bare recognition of its existence and although all words regarding it are misleading if used in any other than a symbolic sense, we must remember that since the complex vision is conscious of itself as a unity, whatever this "something" may be which is the centre and core of our living personality, it must at least be a definite irreducible "monad," "something" that cannot be resolved into anything else, or accounted for by anything else, or explained in terms of anything else, or "caused" by anything else; "something" that may, perhaps, at last be annihilated; but that while it lives must remain the vividest reality we know.

Insanity and disease may obstruct and cloud the soul. Outward circumstances may drive the soul back upon itself. But while it lives it lives in its totality and when it perishes, if it be its destiny to perish, it perishes in its totality.

While the soul lives we may sink into it and have no fear; and yet all the while we have no right to say anything about it except that it exists. Truly it is a tragic commentary upon the drama that we call our life, that we should find our ultimate "rest" and "peace" in so bare, so stark, so austere, so irrational a revelation as this!

But surrounded as we are by the menace of eternal nothingness it is at least something to have at the background of our life a living power of this kind, a power which can endure unafraid the very breaking point of disaster, a power which can contemplate the possibility of annihilation itself with equanimity and unperturbed calm.

It will be noted that I have been compelled to use once and again the term "eternal nothingness." This is indeed an inevitable aspect of what the soul visualizes as possible. For since the soul is the creator and discoverer of all life, when once the soul has ceased to exist, non-existence takes the place of existence, and nothingness takes the place of life.

Speculatively we have the right, although the complex vision is silent on that tremendous question, to dally with the idea of the survival of the soul after the death of the body. But this must for ever be an open question, not to be answered either negatively or affirmatively, not to be answered by the intelligence of any living man. All we can say is that it seems as if the death of the body destroyed the complex vision; and if the complex vision is destroyed it seems as though non-existence were bound to take the place of existence, and as though nothingness were bound to take the place of everything. The oriental conception of "Nirvana" is no more than a soothing opiate administered to a soul that has grown weary of its complex vision and weary of its irreducible personality. To imagine oneself freed from the burden of personal consciousness, and yet in some mysterious way conscious of being

freed from consciousness, is a delicious and delicate dream of life-exhausted souls.

As a speculation it has a curious attraction; as a reality it has nothing that is intelligible. But though the tragedy of life to all sensitive spirits is outrageous and obscene, at least we may say that the worst conceivable possibility is not likely to occur. The worst conceivable possibility would be to be doomed to an immortal personal life without losing the restrictions and limitations of our present personal life. If the soul survives the body it must do so on the strength of its possession of some transforming energy which shall enable it to supply the place in its organic being which is at present occupied by the attribute of sensation. It is quite obvious that if the life of the soul depends upon the active functioning of all its attributes; and if one of its attributes, namely sensation, is entirely dependent for its active functioning upon the life of the body; the life of the soul itself must also depend upon the life of the body, unless, as I have hinted, it can transmute its attribute of sensation into some other attribute suitable to some unknown plane of spiritual existence.

There are indeed certain ecstatic moments when the soul feels as if such a power of liberation from the bodily senses were actually within its grasp; but it will inevitably be found, when the great rhythmic concentration of the apex-thought is brought to bear upon such a feeling as this, that it either melts completely away, or is relegated to unimportance and insignificance. Such a feeling, ecstatic and intense though it may have been, has been nothing more than a disproportioned activity of the attribute of intuition; intuition misled in favour of the immortality of the soul, even as the pure reason is often misled in the direction of the denial of the soul's existence.

The revelation of the complex vision has no word to say, on either side, with regard to whether the soul does or does

not survive the death of the body; but it has a very distinct word to say as to the importance of this whole question; and what it says in regard to this is—that it is not important at all! The revelation of the complex vision implies clearly enough that what man were wise to “assume”—leaving always the ultimate question as an open question—is that the individual soul and the individual body perish together.

This assumption is in direct harmony with what we actually *see*; even though it is in frequent collision with what we sometimes *feel*. But the essence of the matter is to be found in this, that our assumption as to the soul's perishing, when the body perishes, is an assumption, untrue though it may turn out to be, which the soul itself, when under the power of its apex-thought, is compelled to make. And it is compelled to make this assumption by reason of the inherent nature of love. For it is of the nature of love when confronted by two alternatives one of which lays the stress upon personal advantage and the other *upon love itself* apart from any personal advantage, whether one's own or another's, to choose, as the assumption upon which it shall live, the latter of these two alternatives. For it is the nature of love to seek love and nothing else than love. And as long as the assumption which the soul makes is the assumption that it survives the death of the body, that emotion of love which is the soul's creative essence is debarred from the full and complete integrity of its desire.

For the desire of love is not for immortality but for the eternal; and the eternal is not something that depends upon the survival of any individual soul, whether our own or another's. The eternal is something which can be realized in one single moment; something which completely destroys in us any desire for survival after death; something which reconciles us to existence *considered in the light of love*

*alone*; something that does not assume anything at all about the universe, except that love exists.

Thus we return to that assumption about the soul, which it is better—leaving the open question still an open question—for the mind to accept as its working assumption; namely that the soul uses the body in its own ends, is conscious of its existence through the senses of the body, lives *in* the body, and perishes when the body perishes. Nor is it only the emotion of love which rejects the dogma of the immortality of the soul. Were the soul proved beyond all possibility of doubt to be immortal, there would at once fall upon us a despair more appalling than any which we have known. For just as the idea of the eternal satisfies the very depths of our soul with an infinite peace, so the idea of immortality troubles the very depths of our soul with an infinite doubt. Something unutterable in our aesthetic sense demands that life should be surrounded by death and ended by death. Thus and not otherwise should we ourselves have created the world at the beginning. Thus and not otherwise by the rhythmic play of the complex vision, do we create the world.

But meanwhile, whatever happens, as long as we live we possess the reality of the soul. This is, and always has been, the rallying-ground of heroic and sensitive personalities, struggling with the demons of circumstance and chance. This is that unconquerable "mind-within-themselves" into which the great Stoics of Antiquity withdrew at their will, and were "happy," beyond the reach of hope and fear. This is the citadel from the security of which all the martyrs for human liberty have mocked their tormentors. This is the fortress from which the supreme artists of the world have looked forth and moulded the outrage of life's dilemma into monumental forms of imaginative beauty. This is the sanctuary from which all human personalities, however weak and helpless, have been

permitted to endure the cruelty and pitilessness of fate.

After all, it does not so greatly matter that we are unable to do more than know that this thing, this indescribable "something," really exists. Perhaps it is because its existence is more real than anything else that we are unable to define it. Perhaps we can only define those attributes which are the outward aspects of our real being. Perhaps it is simply because the soul is nothing less than our very self, that our analytical power stops, helpless, in its presence. *We* are what it is; and for this very cause it perpetually evades and escapes us.

The reality of the soul, therefore, is the first revelation of the complex vision. The second revelation is the objective reality of the outward visible universe. Left to itself, in its isolated activity, our logical reason is capable of throwing doubt upon this revelation also. For it is logically certain that what we are actually conscious of is no more than a unified stream of various mental impressions, reaching us through our senses, and never interrupted except in moments of unconscious sleep.

It is therefore quite easy for the logical reason, functioning in its isolation from the other attributes, to maintain that this stream of mental impressions is *all that there is*, and that we have no right to call the universe real and objective, except in the ambiguous sense of a sort of permanent illusion. But as soon as the complex vision, in its totality, contemplates the situation, the thing takes on a very different aspect. The pure reason may be as sceptical as it pleases about the static solidity of what is popularly called "matter." It may use the term energy, or movement, or ether, or force, or electricity, or any other name to describe that *permanent sensation of outward reality* which our complex vision reveals.

But one thing it has no right to do. It has no right to utter the word "illusion" with regard to this objective

universe. The apparent solidity of matter may be rationally resolved into energy or movement, just as the apparent objectivity of matter may be rationally resolved into a stream of mental impression. But the complex vision still persists in asserting that this *permanent sensation of outward reality*, which, except in dreamless sleep, is never normally interrupted, represents and bears witness to the real existence, outside ourselves, of "something" which corresponds to such a sensation. It is just at this point that the soul—helped by instinct, imagination, and intuition—makes its great inevitable plunge into the act of primordial faith.

This act of primordial faith is the active belief of the soul not only in an objective universe outside itself, but also in the objective existence of other individual souls. Without this primordial act of faith the individual soul can never escape from itself. For the pure reason not only reduces the whole universe to an idea in the mind; but it also reduces all *other* minds to ideas in *our* mind. In other words the logical reason imprisons us fatally and hopelessly in a sort of cosmic nut-shell of our own mentality.

And there would, actually, be no escape from this appalling imprisonment, according to which the individual soul becomes a solitary circle, the centre and circumference of all possible existence, if it were not that the soul possesses other organs of research, in addition to reason and self-consciousness. Directly we temper reason with these other activities the whole situation has a different look. It is a thing of small consequence what word we use to describe that external cause of the flowing stream of mental impressions. The important point is that we are compelled to assume, as representing a real outward fact, this permanent sense of objectivity from which there is no escape.

And as the existence of the objective universe is established by a primordial act of faith, so it is also established



that these alien bodily personalities, whose outward appearance stands and falls with the objective universe, possess "souls," or what we have come to name "complex visions," comparable with our own. And this is the case not only with regard to other human beings, but with regard to all living entities whether human or non-human. As to how the "souls" of plants, birds, and animals, or of planets or stars, differ in their nature from human souls we can only vaguely conjecture. But to refuse some degree of consciousness, some measure of the complex vision, to any living thing, is to be false to that primordial act of faith into which the original revelation of the complex vision compels us to plunge.

The inevitableness of this act of faith may be perhaps more vividly realized when we remember that it includes in its revelation the objective reality of our own physical body. Our evidence for the real outward existence of our own body is no surer and no more secure than our evidence for the outward existence of other "bodies."

They stand or fall together. If the universe is an illusion then our own physical body is an illusion also.

And precisely as the "stuff" out of which the universe is made may be named "energy" or "ether" or "force" or "electricity," rather than "matter," so also the "stuff" out of which the body is made may be named by any scientific term we please. The term used is of no importance as long as the thing represented by it is accepted as a permanent reality.

We are now able to advance a step further in regard to the revelation of the complex vision. Granting, as we are compelled to grant, that the other "souls" in the universe possess, each of them, its own "vision" of this same universe; and assuming that each "vision" is so coloured by the individuality of the "visionary" as to be, in a measure, different from all the rest, it becomes obvious that in a very

important sense there is not only one universe, but many universes. These many universes, however, are "caused," or evoked, or created, or discovered, by the encounter of various individual souls with that one "objective mystery" which confronts them all.

What a naïve confession it is of the limitation of the human mind that we should be driven, after all our struggles to articulate the secret of life, to accept, as our final estimate of such a secret just the mysterious "something" which is the substratum of our own soul, confronted by that other mysterious "something" which is the substratum of all possible universes! With the complex vision's revelation that the objective universe really exists comes the parallel revelation that time and space really exist. Here, for the third time, are we faced with critical protests from the isolated activity of the logical reason.

Metaphysic reduces both time and space to categories of the mind. Mathematical speculation hints at the existence of some mysterious fourth-dimensional space. Bergsonian dialectic regards ordinary "spatial" time as an inferior category; and finds the real movement of life in a species of time called "duration," which can only be detected by the interior feeling of intuition.

But while we listen with interest to all these curious speculations, the fact remains that for the general vision of the combined energies of the soul the world in which we find ourselves is a world entirely dependent upon what must be recognized as a *permanent sensation* of "ordinary" space and "ordinary" time. And as we have shown in the case of the objective existence of what we call Nature, when any mental impression reaches the level of becoming a *permanent sensation* of all living souls it ceases to be possible to speak of it as an illusion.

It is well that we should become clearly conscious of this "reality-destroying" tendency of the logical reason, so

that whenever it obsesses us we can undermine its limited vision by an appeal to the complex vision. Shrewdly must we be on our guard against this double-edged trick of logic, which on the one hand seeks to destroy the basis of its own activity, by disintegrating the unity of the soul, and on the other hand seeks to destroy the material of its own activity by disintegrating the unity of the "objective mystery."

The original revelation of the complex vision not only puts us on our guard against this disintegrating tendency of the pure reason, but it also explains the motive-force behind this tendency. This motive-force is the emotion of malice, which naturally and inevitably seeks to hand us over to the menace of nothingness; in the first place of nothingness "within" us, and in the second place of nothingness "without" us. That the logic of the pure reason quickly becomes the slave of the emotion of malice may be proved by both introspection and observation. For we note, both in ourselves and others, a peculiar glow of malicious satisfaction when such logic strikes its deadliest blows at what it would persuade us to regard as the illusion of life.

Life, just because its deepest secret is not law, determined by fate, but personality struggling against fate, is always found to display a certain irrationality. And the complex vision becomes false to itself as soon as it loses touch with this world-deep irrationality.

We have now therefore reached the conception of reality as consisting of the individual soul confronted by the objective mystery. That this objective mystery would be *practically* the same as *nothing*, if there were no soul to apprehend it, must be admitted. But it would not be *really* the same as *nothing*; since as soon as any kind of soul reappeared upon the scene the inevitable material of the objective mystery would at once re-appear with it. The existence of the objective mystery as a permanent possibility of material for universe-building is a fact which sur-

rounds every individual soul with a margin of unfathomable depth.

At its great illuminated moments the complex vision reduces the limitlessness of space to a realizable sensation of liberty, and the "flowingness" of time to an eternal now; but even at these moments it is conscious of an unfathomable back-ground, one aspect of which is the immensity of space and the other the flowingness of time.

The revelation of the complex vision which I have thus attempted to indicate will be found identical with the natural conclusions of man in all the ages of his history. The primeval savage, the ancient Greek, the mediaeval saint, the eighteenth century philosopher, the modern psychologist, are all brought together here and are all compelled to confess the same situation.

That we are now living personalities, possessed of soul and body, and surrounded by an unfathomable universe, is a revelation about which all ages and all generations agree, whenever the complex vision is allowed its orchestral harmony. The primeval savage looking up at the sky above him might regard the sun and moon as living gods exercising their influence upon a fixed unmoving earth. In this view of the sun and the moon and the stars such a savage was perfectly within his right, because always along with it even to the most anthropomorphic, there came the vague sense of unfathomableness.

The natural Necessity of the ancient Greeks, the trinitarian God of the mediaeval school-man, the great First Cause of the eighteenth-century deist, the primordial Life-Force of the modern man of science, are all on common ground here in regard to the unfathomableness of the ultimate mystery.

But the revelation of the complex vision saves us from the logical boredom of the word "infinite." The idea of the infinite is merely a tedious mathematical formula,

marking the psychological point where the mind finds its stopping-place. All that the complex vision can say about "infinite space" is that it is a real experience, and that we can neither imagine space with an end nor without an end.

The "Infinite" is the name which logic gives to this psychological phenomenon. The fact that the mind stops abruptly and breaks into irreconcilable contradictions when it is confronted with unfathomable space is simply a proof that space without an end is as unimaginable as space with an end. It is no proof that space is merely a subjective category of the human mind. One thing, however, it is a proof of. It is a proof that the universe can never be satisfactorily explained on any materialistic hypothesis.

The fact that we all of us, at every hour of our common day, are surrounded by this unthinkable thing, space without end, is an eternal reminder that the forms, shapes and events of habitual occurrence, which we are inclined to take so easily for granted, are part of a staggering and inscrutable enigma.

The reality of this thing, actually there, above our heads and under our feet, lodges itself, like an ice cold wedge of annihilating scepticism, right in the heart of any facile explanation. We cannot interpret the world in terms of what we call "matter" when what we call "matter" has these unthinkable horizons. We may take into our hands a pebble or a shell or a grain of sand; and we may feel as though the universe were within our grasp. But when we remember that this little piece of the earth is part of a continuous unity which recedes in every direction, world without end, we are driven to admit that the universe is so little within our grasp that we have to regard it as something which breaks and baffles the mind as soon as the mind tries to take hold of it at all.

The reason does not advance one inch in explaining the

universe when it utters the word "evolution" and it does not advance one thousandth part of an inch—indeed it gives up the task altogether—when it informs us that infinite space is a category of the human mind. We must regard it, then, as part of the original revelation of the complex vision, that we are separate personal souls surrounded by an unfathomable mystery whose margins recede into unthinkable remoteness.

The ancient dilemma of the One and the Many obtrudes itself at this point; and we are compelled to ask how the plurality of these separate souls can be reconciled with the unity of which they form a part. That they cannot be regarded as absolutely separate is clear from the fact that they can communicate with one another, not only in human language but in a thousand more direct ways. But granting this communication between them, does the mere existence of myriads of independent personalities, living side by side in a world common to all, justify us in speaking of the original system of things as being pluralistic rather than monistic?

Human language, at any rate, founded on the fact that these separate souls can communicate with one another, seems very reluctant to use any but monistic terms. We say "the system of things," not "the systems of things." And yet it is only by an act of faith that human language makes the grand assumption that the complex vision of all these myriad entities tells the same story.

We say "the universe"; yet may it not be that there are as many "universes" as there are conscious personalities in this unfathomable world? If there were no closer unity between the separate souls which fill the universe than the fact that they are able, after one primordial act of faith, to communicate with one another, these monistic assumptions of language might perhaps be disregarded and we might have a right to reject such expressions as "sys-

tem of things" and "cosmos" and "universe" and "nature."

But it still remains that they are connected, in space and in time, by the medium, whatever it may be, which fills the gulfs between the planets and the stars. As long as these separate souls are invariably associated as they are, with physical bodies, and as long as these physical bodies are composed of the same mysterious force which we may call earth, fire, water, air, ether, electricity, energy, vibration, or any other technical or popular name, so long will it be legitimate to use these monistic expressions with which human language is, so to speak, so deeply stained. As a matter of fact we are not left with only this limited measure of unity. There are also certain psychological experiences—experiences which I believe I have a right to regard as universal—which bring these separate souls into much closer connection.

Such experiences can be, and have been, ridiculously exaggerated. But the undeniable fact that they exist is sufficient to prove that in spite of the pluralistic appearance of things, there is still enough unity available to prevent the Many from completely devouring the One. The experiences to which I am referring are experiences which the complex vision owes to the intuition. And though this experience has been made unfair use of, by both mystics and metaphysicians, it cannot be calmly disregarded.

The intuition, which is, as I have already pointed out, the feminine counterpart to the imagination, is found, with regard to this particular problem, uttering so frequent and impressive an oracle that to neglect its voice, would be to nullify and negate the whole activity of the intuition and deny it its place among the ultimate energies of vision.

There is always more difficulty in putting into words a revelation which the complex vision owes to intuition than in regard to any other of its attributes. Reason in

this matter, and sensation and imagination also, have an unfair advantage when it comes to *words*. For human language is compelled to draw its images from sensation and its logic from reason. But intuition—the peculiarly feminine attribute of the soul—finds itself dealing with what is barely intelligible and with what is profoundly irrational. Thus it naturally experiences a profound difficulty in getting itself expressed in words at all.

And, incidentally, we cannot avoid asking ourselves the curious question whether it may not be that language, which is so dependent upon the peculiarly masculine attributes of reason and sensation, has not become an inadequate medium for the expression of what might be called the feminine vision of the world? May we not indeed go so far as to hazard the suggestion that when this fact, of the masculine domination of language, has been adequately recognized, there will emerge upon the earth women-philosophers and women-artists who will throw completely new light upon many problems? The difficulty which women experience in getting expressed in definite terms, whether in philosophy or art, the co-ordinated rhythm of *their* complex vision, may it not be largely due to the fact that the attribute of intuition which is their most vital organ of research has remained so inarticulate? And may not the present wave of psychological “mysticism,” which just now is so prominent a psychic phenomenon, be due to the vague and, in many cases, the clumsy attempt, which women are now making to get their intuitive contribution into line with the complex vision of the rest?

When the universe is referred to as “Nature,” may it not be that it is this very element, this strange wisdom of the abysmal “Mothers,” which humanity thinks of as struggling to utter its unutterable secret?

How, then, for the sake of its contribution to the ulti-



mate rhythm, does the complex vision articulate this mysterious oracle from the feminine principle in life, as it brokenly and intermittently lifts up its voice?

One aspect of this oracle's voice is precisely what we are concerned with now. I mean the problem of the relation of the One to the Many. The merely logical conception of unity is misleading because the wavering mass of impression which makes up our life has a margin which recedes on every side into unfathomableness. This conception has two aspects. In the first place it implies *continuity*, by which I mean that everything in the world is in touch with everything else.

In the second place it implies *totality*, by which I mean that everything in the world can be considered as one rounded-off and complete "whole." According to this second aspect of the case, we think of the world as an integral One surrounded by nothingness, in the same way that the individual soul is surrounded by the universe.

The revelation of the complex vision finds the second of these two aspects entirely misleading. It accepts the conception of *continuity*, and rejects the conception of *totality*. It rejects the conception of "totality," because "totality," in this cosmic sense, is a thing of which it has no experience; and the revelation of the complex vision is entirely based on experience. The margins of the world, receding without limit in every direction, prevent us from ever arriving at the conception of "totality."

What right have we to regard the universe as a totality, when all we are conscious of is a mass of wavering impression continued unfathomable in every direction? In only one sense, therefore, have we a right to speak of the unity of the system of things; and that is in the sense of continuity. Since this mass of impression, which we name the universe, is on all sides lost in a margin of unfathomableness, it is, after all, only a limited portion of it which

comes into the scope of our consciousness. It is one of the curious exaggerations of our logical reason that we should be tempted to "round off" this mystery. The combined voices of imagination and intuition protest against such an enclosed circle.

The same revelation of the complex vision which gives objective reality to what is outside our individual soul insists that this objective reality extends beyond the limited circle of our consciousness. The device by which the logical reason "rounds off" the conception of *continuity* by the conception of *totality* is the device of the mathematical formula of "infinity."

The imaginative movement by which the complex vision of the soul plunges into the abysses of stellar space, seeking to fathom, at least in a mental act, immensity beyond immensity, and gulf beyond gulf, is a definite human experience. It is the actual experience of the soul itself, dropping its plummet into immensity, and finding immensity unfathomable. But as soon as the logical reason dominates the situation, in place of this palpable plunge into a real concrete experience, with its accompanying sensation of appalling wonder and terrible freedom, we are offered nothing but a thin, dry, barren mathematical formula called "infinity," the mere mention of which freezes the imagination at its source.

What, in fact, the complex vision reveals to us is that all these arid formulae, such as infinity, the Absolute Being, and the Universal Cause, are conceptions projected into the real and palpable bosom of unfathomable life by the very enemy and antagonist of life, the aboriginal emotion of inert malice. This is why so often in the history of the human race the conception of "God" has been the worst enemy of the soul. The conception of "God" by its alliance with the depressing mathematical formula of "infinity" has indeed done more than any other human

perversion to obliterate the beauty and truth of the emotional feeling which we name "religion."

The revelation of the complex vision makes it clear to us that the idea of "God," in alliance with the idea of "Infinity," is a projection, into religious experience, of the emotion of inert malice. As soon as the palpable unfathomableness of space is reduced to the barren notion of a mathematical "infinity" all the free and terrible beauty of life is lost. We have pressed our hands against our prison-gates and found them composed of a material more rigid than adamant, the material of "thought-in-the-abstract."

Now although our chief difficulty in regard to this insistent problem of the One and the Many has been got rid of by eliminating from the notion of the One all idea of totality, it is still true that something in us remains unsatisfied while our individual soul is thought of as absolutely isolated from all other souls. It is here, as I have already said, that the peculiarly feminine attribute of intuition comes to our rescue. The fact that we can communicate together by human and sub-human language, does not, though it implies a basic similarity in our complex vision, really satisfy us.

A strange unhappiness, a vague misery, a burden of unutterable nostalgia, troubles the loneliness of our soul. And yet it is not, this vague longing, a mere desire to break the isolating circle of the "I am I" and to invade, and mingle with, other personalities. It is something deeper than this. It is a desire to break the isolation of all personalities, and to enter, in company with all, some larger, fuller, freer level of life, where what we call "the limits of personality" are surpassed and transcended.

This underlying misery of the soul is, in fact, a constant recognition that by the isolated loneliness of our deepest self we are keeping at a distance something—

some unutterable flow of happiness—which would destroy for us all fears and all weariness, and would end for ever the obscene and sickening burden of the commonplace. It is precisely at this point that the intuition comes to the rescue; supplying our complex vision with that peculiar “note,” or “strain of music,” without which the orchestral harmony must remain incomplete.

In seeking to recall those great moments when the “apex-thought” of the complex vision revealed to us the secret of things, we find ourselves remembering how, when in the presence of some supreme work of art, or of some action of heroic sacrifice, or of some magical effect of nature, or of some heart-breaking gesture of tragic emotion in some simple character, we have suddenly been transported out of the closed circle of our personal life into something that was at once personal and impersonal. At such a moment it seems as if we literally “died” to ourself, and became something “other” than ourself; and yet at the same time “found” ourself, as we had never “found” ourself before.

What the complex vision seems to reveal to us about this great human experience is that it is an initiation into an “eternal vision,” into a “vision of the immortals,” into a mood, a temper, a “music of the spheres,” wherein the creative mystery of the emotion of love finds its consummation. The peculiar opportunity of an experience of this kind, its temporal “occasion,” shall we say, seems to be more often supplied by the intuition, than by any other attribute of the complex vision.

Intuition having this power, it is not surprising that many souls should misuse and abuse this great gift. The temptation to allow the intuition to absorb the whole field of consciousness is to certain natures almost irresistible. And yet, when intuition is divorced from the other aspects of the rhythm of life, its tendency towards what might be called “the passion of identity” very easily lapses into a

sort of spiritual sensuality, destructive to the creative freedom of the soul. Woe to the artist who falls into the quagmire of unbalanced intuition! It is as if he were drugged with a spiritual lust.

To escape from self-loathing, to escape from the odious monotony and the indecent realism of life—what a relief! How desirable to be confronted no longer by that impassable gulf between one's own soul and all other living souls! How desirable to cross the abyss which separates the "something" which is the substance of our being from the "something" which is the substance of the "objective mystery"!

And yet, according to the revelation of the complex vision, this "spiritual ecstasy" is a perversion of the true art of life. The true art of life finds in "the vision of the immortals," and in "the vision of the immortals" alone, its real escape from evil. This "passion of identity," offered us by the vice, by the madness of intuition, is not in harmony with the great moments of the soul. Its "identity" is but a gross, mystical, clotted "identity"; and its "heaven" is not the "heaven" of the Christ.

If the "ecstasy of identity," as the unbalanced attribute of intuition forces it upon us, were in very truth the purpose of life, how grotesque a thing life would be! It would then be the purpose of life to create personality, only in order to drown it in the impersonal. In other words it would be the purpose of life to create the "higher" in order that it should lose itself in the lower. At its very best this "ecstasy of identity" is the expression of what might be called the "lyrical" element in things. But the secret of life is not lyrical, as many of the prophets have supposed, but dramatic, as all the great artists have shown. For the essence of life is contradiction. And contradiction demands a "for" and an "against," a protagonist and an antagonist. What the

revelation of the complex vision discloses is the inherent duality of all things. Pleasure and pain, night and day, man and woman, good and evil, summer and winter, life and death, personality and fate, love and malice, the soul and the objective mystery, these are the threads out of which the texture of existence is woven; and there is no escape from these, except in that eternal "*nothingness*" which itself is the "contradiction" or "opposite" of that "*all*," which it reduces to chaos and annihilation. Thus runs the revelation of the complex vision.

This integral soul of ours, made of a stuff which for ever defies analysis; this objective mystery, made of a stuff which for ever defies analysis; these two things perpetually confront one another in a struggle that only annihilation can end. The vision of the eternal implies the passing of the transitory. For what cannot cease from being beautiful has no real beauty; and what cannot cease from being true has no real truth. The art of life according to the revelation of the complex vision, consists in giving to the transitory the form of the eternal. It is the art of creating a rhythm, a music, a harmony, so passionate and yet so calm, that the mere fact of having once or twice attained it is sufficient "to redeem all sorrows."

The assumption that death ends it all, is an assumption which the very nature of love calls upon us to make; for, if we did not make it make it, something different from love would be the object and purpose of our life. But the revelation of the complex vision, in our supreme moments, discloses to us that love itself is the only justification for life; and therefore, by making the assumption that the soul perishes, we put once and for all out of our thought that formidable revival of love, the idea of personal immortality.

For the idea of personal immortality, like the idea of an Absolute God, is a projection of the aboriginal "*inert*"

malice. It must be remembered that the revelation of the complex vision, by laying stress upon the creative energy of the soul in its grappling with the objective mystery, implies an element of *indeterminism*, or free choice, in regard to the ultimate nature of the world. Man, in a very profound sense, perpetually creates the world according to his will and desire. Nor can he ever know at what point, in the struggle between personality and destiny, the latter is bound to win. Such a point may *seem* to be reached; until some astounding "act of faith" on the part of the soul flings that "point" into a yet further remoteness. And this creative power in the soul of man may apply in ways which at present our own race has hardly dared to contemplate. It may apply, for instance, to the idea of personal immortality,

Personal immortality may be a thing which the soul, by a concentrated act of creative will, can secure for itself, or can reject for itself. It may be, if we take the whole conscious and subconscious purpose of a man's life, a *matter of choice*.

But when a man makes a choice of such a kind, when a man concentrates his energy upon surviving the death of his body, he is deliberately selecting a "lower" purpose for his life in place of a "higher." In other words, instead of concentrating his will upon the evocation of the emotion of love, he is concentrating his will upon self-realization or self-continuance. What he is really doing is even worse than this. For since what we call "emotion" is an actual projection into the matrix of the objective mystery, of the very substance and stuff of the soul, when the will thus concentrates upon personal immortality, it takes the very substance of the soul and perverts it to the satisfaction of inert malice. In other words it actually transforms the stuff of the soul from its posi-

tive to its negative chemistry, and produces a relative victory of malice over love.

The soul's desires for personal immortality is one of the aspects of the soul's "possessive" instinct. The soul desires to "possess" itself—itsself as it exactly is, itself in its precise and complete "status quo"—without interruption for ever. But love has a very different desire from this. Love is not concerned with time at all—for time has a "future"; and any contemplation of a "future" implies the activity of something in the soul which is different from love, implies something which is concerned with outward events and occurrences and chances. But love is not concerned with outward events, whether past or future. Love desires eternity and eternity alone. Or rather it does not "desire" eternity. It is eternity. It is an eternal Now, in which what *will* happen and what *has* happened are irrelevant and unimportant.

All this offers us an intelligible explanation of a very bewildering phenomenon in human life. I mean the instinctive disgust experienced by the aesthetic sense when men, who otherwise seem gentle and good, display an undue and unmeasured agitation about the fate of their souls.

Love never so much as even considers the question of the fate of the soul. Love finds, in the mere act of loving, a happiness so profound that all such problems seem tiresome and insignificant. The purpose of life is to attain the rhythmic ecstasy of all love's intrinsic potentialities. This desire for personal immortality is not one of love's intrinsic potentialities. When a human soul has lost by death the one person it has loved, the strength of its love is measured by the greater or less emphasis it places upon the problem of the lost one's "survival."

The disgust which the aesthetic sense experiences when



it encounters a certain sort of mystical and psychic agitation over the question as to whether the lost one "lives still somewhere" is a disgust based upon our instinctive knowledge that this particular kind of inquiry would never occur to a supreme and self-forgetful love. For this enquiry, this agitation, this dabbling in "psychic evidences," is a projection of the baser nature of the soul; is, in fact, a projection of the "possessive instinct," which is only another name for the original inert malice.

In the "ave atque vale" of the Roman poet, there is much more of the absolute quality of great love than in all these psychic dabbings. For in the austere reserve of that passionate cry there is the ultimate acceptance, by Love itself, of the tragedy of having lived and loved at all. There is an acceptance of that aspect of the "vision of the immortals" which implies that the possessive instinct has no part or lot in the eternal.

The inhuman cruelties which have been practised by otherwise "good" men under the motive of "saving" other people's souls, and the inhuman cruelties which have been practised by otherwise "good" men under the motive of saving their own souls, have, each of them, the same evil origin. Love sweeps aside, in one great wave of its own nature, all these doubts and ambiguities. It lifts the object of its love into its own eternity; and in its own eternity the ultimate tragedy of personal separation is but one chord of its unbroken rhythm.

The tragedy of personal separation is not a thing which love realizes for the first time when it loses the object of its love. It is a thing which is of the very nature of the eternity in which love habitually dwells. For the eternity in which love habitually dwells is its vision of the tragedy of all life.

This, then, is the original revelation of the complex vision. The soul is confronted by an ultimate duality which

extends through the whole mass of its impressions. And because this duality extends through every aspect of the soul's universe and can be changed and transformed by the soul's will, it is inevitable that what the world has hitherto named "philosophy" and has regarded as the effort of "getting hold" of a reality which exists already, should be named by the complex vision the "art of life" and should be regarded as the effort of reducing to harmony the unruly impulses and energies which perpetually transform and change the world.

## CHAPTER V

### THE ULTIMATE DUALITY

What we are really, all of us, in search of, whether we know it or not, is some concrete and definite symbol of life and the "object" of life which shall gather up into one living image all the broken, thwarted, devious, and discordant impressions which make up our experience. What we crave is something that shall, in some permanent form and yet in a form that can grow and enrich itself, represent and embody the whole circle of the joy and pain of existence. What we crave is something into which we can throw our personal joys and sorrows, our individual sensations and ideas, and know of a certainty that thrown into that reservoir, they will blend with all the joys and sorrows of all the dead and all the living.

Such a symbol in order to give us what we need must represent the ultimate reach of insight to which humanity has attained. It must be something that, once having come into existence, remains independent of our momentary subjective fancies and our passing moods. It must be something of clearer outlines and more definite lineaments than those vague indistinct ecstasies, half-physiological and half-psychic, which the isolated intuition brings us.

Such a symbol must represent the concentrated struggle of the human soul with the bitterness of fate and the cruelty of fate, its long struggle with the deadly malice in itself and the deadly malice in nature.

There is only one symbol which serves this purpose; a

symbol which has already by the slow process of anonymous creation and discovery established itself in the world. I mean the symbol of the figure of Christ.

This symbol would not have sufficed to satisfy the craving of which I speak if it were only a "discovery" of humanity. The "God-man" may be "discovered" in nature; but the "Man-god" must be "created" by man.

We find ourselves approaching this symbol from many points of view, but the point of view which especially concerns us is to note how it covers the whole field of human experience. In this symbol the ultimate duality receives its "eternal form" and becomes an everlasting standard or pattern of what is most natural and most rhythmic. As I advance in my analysis of the relation of the ultimate duality to this symbolic figure of Christ, it becomes necessary to review once more, in clear and concise order, the various stages of thought by means of which I prove the necessity of some sort of universal symbol, and the necessity of moulding this symbol to fit the drama of One ultimate duality.

A summary of the stages of thought through which we have already passed will thus be inevitable; but it will be a summary of the situation from the view-point of a different angle.

Philosophy then is an attempt to articulate more vividly the nature of reality than such "reality" can get itself articulated in the confused pell-mell of ordinary experience. The unfortunate thing is that in this process of articulating reality philosophy tends to create an artificial world of its own, which in the end gets so far away from reality that its conclusions when they are confronted with the pell-mell of ordinary experience appear remote, strange, fantastic, arbitrary, and even laughable.

This philosophical tendency to create an artificial world which when confronted with the real world appears

strange and remote is due to the fact that philosophers, instead of using as their instrument of research the entire complex vision, use first one and then another of its isolated attributes. But there must come moments when, in the analysis of so intricate and elaborate a thing as "reality" by means of so intricate and elaborate an instrument as the complex vision, the most genuine and the least artificial of philosophies must appear to be following a devious and serpentine path.

These moments of difficulty and obscurity are not, however—as long as such a philosophy attaches itself closely to "reality" and flows round "reality" like a tide flowing round submerged rocks or liquid metal flowing round the cavities of a mould—a sign that philosophy has deserted reality, but only a sign that the curves and contours and jagged edges of reality are so intricate and involved that only a very fluid element can follow their complicated shape. But these moments of difficulty and obscurity, these vague and impalpable links in the chain, are only to be found in the *process* by which we arrive at our conclusion. When our conclusion has been once reached it becomes suddenly manifest to us that it has been there, with us, all the while, implicit in our whole argument, the secret and hidden cause why the argument took the form it did rather than any other. The test of any philosophy is not that it should appeal immediately and directly to what is called "common-sense," for common-sense is no better than a crude and premature synthesis of superficial experiences; a synthesis from which the supreme and culminating experiences of a person's life have been excluded. For in our supreme and culminating experiences there is always an element of what might be called the "impossible" or of what must be recognized as a matter of faith or imagination.

It is therefore quite to be expected that the conclusions

of a philosophy like the philosophy of the complex vision, which derives its authority from the exceptional and supreme experiences of all souls, should strike us in our moments of "practical common-sense" as foolish, impossible, ridiculous and even insane. All desperate and formidable efforts towards creation have struck and will strike the mood of "practical common-sense" as ridiculous and insane. This is true of every creative idea that has ever emanated from the soul of man.

For the mood of "practical common-sense" is a projection of the baser instinct of self-preservation and is penetrated through and through with that power of inert malice which itself might be called the instinct of self-preservation of the enemy of life. "Practical common-sense" is the name we give to that superficial synthesis of our baser self-preservative instincts, which, when it is reinforced and inspired by "the will of malice" out of the evil depths of the soul, is the most deadly of all antagonists of new life.

We need suffer, therefore, no surprise or pain if we find the conclusions of the philosophy of the complex vision ridiculous and "impossible" to our mood of practical common-sense. If on the contrary they did not seem insane and foolish to such a mood we might well be profoundly suspicious of them. For although there are very few certainties in this world, one thing at least is certain, namely that for any truth or reality to satisfy the creative spirit in us it must present itself as something dangerous, destructive, ridiculous and insane to that instinct in us which resists creation.

But although "the appeal to common-sense" is no test of the truth of a philosophy, since common-sense is precisely the thing in us which has a malicious hostility to the creative spirit, yet no philosophy can afford to disregard an appeal to actual experience as long as actual ex-

perience includes the rare moments of our life as well as all the rest. Here is indeed a true and authentic test of philosophic validity. If we take our philosophical conclusions, so to speak, in our hands, and plunge with them into the very depths of actual experience, do they grow more organic, more palpable and more firm, or do they melt away into the flowing waters?

Who is not able to recall the distress of bitter disillusionment which has followed the collapse of some plausible system of "sweet reasonableness" under the granite-like impact of a rock of reality which has knocked the bottom out of it and left it a derelict upon the waves? This collapse of an ordered and reasonable system under the impact of some atrocious projection of "crass casuality" is a proof that if a philosophy has not got in it some "iron" of its own, if it has not got in it something formidable and unfathomable, something that can destroy as well as create, it is not of much avail against the winds and storms of destiny.

For a philosophy to be a true representation of reality, for it to be that reality itself, become conscious and articulate, it is necessary that it should prove most vivid and actual at those supreme moments when the soul of man is driven to the ultimate wall and is at the breaking-point.

The truth of a philosophy is not to be tested by what we feel about it in moods of practical common-sense; for in these moods we have, for some superficial reason, suppressed more than half of the attributes of our soul. The truth of a philosophy can only be tested in those moments when the soul, driven to the wall, gathers itself together for one supreme effort. But there is, even in less stark and drastic hours, an available test of a sound and organic philosophy which must not be forgotten. I refer to its capacity for being vividly and emphatically summed up and embodied in some concrete image or symbol.

If a philosophy is so rationalistic that it refuses to lend itself to a definite and concrete expression we are justified in being more than suspicious of it.

And we are suspicious of it not because its lack of simplicity makes it intricate and elaborate, for "reality" is intricate and elaborate; but because its inability to find expression for its intricacy in any concrete symbol is a proof that it is too simple. For the remote conclusions of a purely logical and rationalistic philosophy are made to appear much less simple than they really are by reason of their use of remote technical terms.

What the soul demands from philosophy is not simplicity but complexity, for the soul itself is the most complex thing we know. The thin, rigid, artificial outlines of purely rationalistic systems can never be expressed in ritual or symbol or drama, not because they are too intricate, but because they are not intricate enough.

A genuine symbol, or ritualistic image, is a concrete living organic thing carrying all manner of magical and subtle associations. It is an expression of reality which comes much nearer to reality than any rationalistic system can possibly do. A genuine symbolic or ritualistic image is a concrete expression of the complexity of life. It has the creative and destructive power of life. It has the formidable mysteriousness of life, and with all this it has the clear-cut directness of life's terrible and exquisite tangibility.

When suddenly confronted, then, in the mid-stream of life, by the necessity of expressing the starting-point, which is also the conclusion, of the philosophy of the complex vision, what synthetic image or symbol or ritualistic word are we to use in order to sum up its concrete reality?

The revelation of life, offered to us by the complex vision, is, as we have seen, no very simple or logical affair. We are left with the spectacle of innumerable "souls,"



human, sub-human and super-human, held together by some indefinable "medium" which enables them to communicate with one another. Each one of these "souls" at once creates and discovers its own individual "universe" and then by an act of faith assumes that the various "universes" created and discovered by all other souls are identical with its own.

That they *are* identical with its own the soul is led to assume with more and more certainty in proportion as its communion with other souls grows more and more involved. This identity between the various "universes" of alien souls is rendered more secure and more objective by the fact that time and space are found to be essential peculiarities of all of them alike. For since time and space are found to enter into the original character of all these "universes," it becomes a natural and legitimate conclusion that all these "universes" are in reality the same "universe."

We are left, then, with the spectacle of innumerable souls confronting a "universe" which in their interaction with one another they have half-created and half-discovered. There is no escape from the implication of this phrase "half-discovered." The creative activity of the complex vision perpetually modifies, clarifies and moulds the mystery which surrounds it; but that there is an objective mystery surrounding it, of which time and space are permanent aspects, cannot be denied.

The pure reason's peculiar power of thinking time and space away, or of lodging itself outside of time and space, is an abstraction which leads us out of the sphere of reality; because, in its resultant conception, it omits the activity of the other attributes of the complex vision.

The complex vision reveals to us, therefore, three aspects of objective mystery. It reveals to us in the first place the presence of an objective "something" outside the soul,

which the soul by its various energies moulds and clarifies and shapes. This is that "something" which the soul at one and the same moment "half-discovers" and "half-creates." It reveals to us, in the second place, the presence of an indefinable objective "something" which is the medium that makes possible the communion of one soul with another and with "the invisible companions."

This is the medium which holds all these separate personalities together while each of them half-creates and half-discovers his own "universe."

In the third place it reveals to us the presence, in each individual soul, of a sort of "substratum of the soul" or something beyond analysis which is the "vanishing point of sensation" and the vortex-point or fusion-point where the movement which we call "matter" loses itself in the movement which we call "mind."

In all these three aspects of objective mystery, revealed to us by the united activities of the complex vision, we are compelled, as has been shown, to use the vague and obscure word "something." We are compelled to apply this unilluminating and tantalizing word to all these three aspects of "objective mystery," because no other word really covers the complex vision's actual experience.

The soul recognizes that there is "something" outside itself which is the "clay" upon which its energy works in creating its "universe," but it cannot know anything about this "something" except that it is "there"; because, directly the soul discovers it, it inevitably moulds it and recreates it. There is not one minutest division of time between this "discovery" and this "creation"; so all that one can say is that the resultant objective "universe" is half-created and half-discovered; and that whatever this mysterious "something" may be, apart from the complex vision, it at any rate has the peculiarity of being forced to submit to the complex vision's creative energy.

But not only are we compelled to apply the provoking and unilluminating word "something" to each of these three aspects of objective mystery which the complex vision reveals; we are also compelled to assume that each one of these is dominated by time and space.

This implication of "time and space" is necessitated in a different way in each of these three aspects of what was formerly called "matter." In the first aspect of the thing we have time and space as essential characteristics of all the various "universes," reduced by an act of faith to one "universe," of the souls which fill the world.

In the second aspect of it we have time and space as essential characteristics of that indefinable "medium" which holds all these souls together, and which by holding them together makes it easier to regard their separate "universes" as "one universe," since they find their ground or base in one universal "medium."

In the third aspect of it we have time and space as essential characteristics of that "substratum of the soul" which is the vanishing-point of sensation and the fusion-point of "mind" and "matter."

We are thus inevitably led to a further conclusion; namely, that all these three aspects of objective reality, since they are all dominated by time and space, are all dominated by the *same* "time" and the same "space." And since it is unthinkable that three coexistent forms of objective reality should be all dominated by the same time and space and remain absolutely distinct from one another, it becomes evident that these three forms of objective mystery, these three indefinable "somethings," are not separate from one another but are in continual contact with one another.

Thus the fact that all these three aspects of objective reality are under the domination of the same time and space is a further confirmation of the truth which we have

already assumed by an act of faith, namely that all the various "universes," half-discovered and half-created by all the souls in the world, are in reality "one universe."

The real active and objective existence of this "one universe" is made still more sure and is removed still further from all possibility of "illusion," by the fact that we are forced to regard it as being not only "our" universe but the universe also of those "invisible companions" whose vision half-creates it and half-discovers it, even as our own vision does. It is true that to certain types of mind, for whom the definite recognition of mystery is repugnant, it must seem absurd and ridiculous to be driven to the acknowledgment of a thing's existence, while at the same time we have to confess complete inability to predicate anything at all about the thing except that it exists.

It must seem to such minds still more absurd and ridiculous that we should be driven to recognize no less than three aspects of this mysterious "something."

But since they are included in the same time and space, and since, consequently, they are intimately connected with one another, it becomes inevitable that we should take the yet further step and regard them as three separate aspects of one and the same mystery. Thus we are once more confronted with the inescapable trinitarian nature of the system of things; and just as we have three ultimate aspects of reality in the monistic truth of "the one time and space," in the pluralistic truth of the innumerable company of living souls and the dualistic truth of the contradictory nature of all existence; so we have three further ultimate aspects of reality, in the incomprehensible "something" which holds all souls together; in the incomprehensible "something" out of which all souls create the universe; and in the incomprehensible "something" which forms the substratum both of the souls of the invisible

"companions of men" and of the soul of every individual thing.

The supreme unity, therefore, in this complicated world, thus revealed to us by the activity of the complex vision, is the unity of time and space. This unity is eternally reborn and eternally re-discovered every time any living personality contemplates the system of things. And since "the sons of the universe" must be regarded as continually contemplating the system of things, struggling with it, moulding it, and changing it, according to their pre-existent ideal, we are compelled to assume that time and space are eternal aspects of reality and that their eternal necessity gives the system of things its supreme unity.

No isolated speculation of the logical reason, functioning apart from the other attributes of the complex vision, can undermine this supreme unity of time and space. The "a priori unity of apperception" is an unreality compared with this reality. The all-embracing cosmic "monad," contemplating itself as its eternal object, is an unreality compared with this reality.

We are left with a pluralistic world of individual souls, finding their pattern and their ideal in the vision of the "immortal gods" and perpetually rediscovering and recreating together "a universe" which like themselves is dominated by time and space and which like themselves is for ever divided against itself in an eternal and unfathomable duality.

The ultimate truth of the system of things according to the revelation of the complex vision is thus found to consist in the mystery of personality confronting "something" which *seems* impersonal. Over both these things, over the personal soul and over the primordial "clay" or "energy" or "movement" or "matter" out of which the personal soul creates its "universe," time and space are dominant. But since we can predicate nothing of this orig-

inal "plasticity" except that it is "plastic" and that time and space rule over it, it is in a strict sense illegitimate to say that this primordial "clay" or "world stuff" is in itself divided into a duality. We know nothing, and can never know anything about it, beyond the bare fact of its existence. Its duality comes from the duality in us. It is we who create the contradiction upon which its life depends. It is from the unfathomable duality in the soul of the "companions of men" that the universe is brought forth.

The ultimate duality which perpetually creates the world is the ultimate duality in all living souls and in the souls of "the sons of the universe." But although it is we ourselves who in the primal act of envisaging the world endow it with this duality, it would be an untrue statement to say that this duality in the material universe is an "illusion." It is no more an illusion than the objective material world itself is an illusion. Both are created by the inter-action between the mystery of personality and the mystery of what seems the impersonal. Thus it remains perfectly true that what we sometimes call "brute matter" possesses an element of malignant inertness and malicious resistance to the power of creation. This malice of the impersonal, this malignant inertness of "matter," is an ultimate fact; and is not less a fact because it depends upon the existence of the same malice and the same inert resistance in our own souls.

Nor are we able to escape from the conclusion that this malignant element in the indefinable "world-stuff" exists independently of any human soul. It must be thought of as dependent upon the same duality in the souls of "the sons of the universe" as that which exists in the souls of men. For although the primordial ideas of truth and nobility and beauty, brought together by the emotion of love, are realized in the "gods" with an incredible and

immortal intensity, yet the souls of the "gods" could not be souls at all if they were not subject to the same duality as that which struggles within ourselves.

It follows from this that we are forced to recognize the presence of a potentiality of evil or malice in the souls of "the sons of the universe." But although we cannot escape from the conclusion that evil or malice exists in the souls of the immortals as in all human souls, yet in their souls this evil or malice must be regarded as perpetually overcome by the energy of the power of love. This overcoming of malice by the power of love, or of evil by "good," in the souls of "the sons of the universe," must not be regarded as a thing once for all accomplished, but as a thing eternally re-attained as the result of an unceasing struggle, a struggle so desperate, so passionate and so unfathomable, that it surpasses all effort of the mind to realize or comprehend it.

It must not, moreover, be forgotten that what the complex vision reveals about this eternal struggle between love and malice in the souls of "the sons of the universe" and in the souls of all living things, is not that love and malice are vague independent elemental "forces" which obsess or possess or function *through* the soul which is their arena, but rather that they themselves *are* the very stuff and texture and essence of the individual soul itself.

Their duality is unfathomable because the soul is unfathomable. The struggle between them is unfathomable because the struggle between them is nothing less than the intrinsic nature of the soul. The soul is unthinkable without this unfathomable struggle in its inherent being between love and malice or between life and what resists life. We are therefore justified in saying that "the universe" is created by the perpetual struggle between love and malice or between life and what resists life. But when we say this we must remember that this is only true be-

cause "the universe" is half-discovered and half-created by the souls of "the sons of the universe" and by the souls of all living things which fill the universe. This unfathomable duality which perpetually re-creates Nature, does not exist in Nature apart from living things, although it does exist in nature apart from any individual living thing.

All those aspects of the objective universe which we usually call "inanimate," such as earth, water, air, fire, ether, electricity, energy, movement, matter and the like, including the stellar and planetary bodies and the chemical medium, whatever it may be, which unites them, must be regarded as sharing, in some inscrutable way, in this unfathomable struggle. We are unable to escape from this conception of them, as thus sharing in this struggle, because they are themselves the creation and discovery of the complex vision of the soul; and the soul is, as we have seen, dependent for its every existence upon this struggle.

In the same way, all those other aspects of the universe which are "animate" but sub-human, such as grass, moss, lichen, plants, sea-weed, trees, fish, birds, animals and the like, must be regarded as sharing in a still more intimate sense in this unfathomable struggle. This conception has a double element of truth. For not only do these things depend for their form and shape and reality upon the complex vision of the soul which contemplates them; but they are themselves, since they are things endowed with life, possessed of some measure or degree of the complex vision.

And if the souls of men and the souls of the "sons of the universe" are inextricably made up of the very stuff of this unfathomable struggle, between life and what resists life, we cannot escape from the conclusion that the souls of plants and birds and animals and all other living things are inextricably made up of the stuff of the same unfathomable struggle. For where there is life there must



be a soul possessed of life. Life, apart from some soul possessed with life, is an abstraction of the logical reason and a phantom of no more genuine reality than the "a priori unity of apperception" or "the universal self-conscious monad."

What we call reality, or the truth of the system of things, is nothing less than an innumerable company of personalities confronting an objective mystery; and while we are driven to regard the "inanimate," such as earth and air and water and fire, as the bodily expressions of certain living souls, so are we much more forcibly driven to regard the "animate," wherever it is found, as implying the existence of some measure of personality and some degree of consciousness.

Life, apart from a soul possessing life, is not life at all. It is an abstraction of the logical reason which we cannot appropriate to our instinct or imagination. A vague phrase, like the phrase "life-force," conveys to us whose medium of research is the complex vision, simply no intelligible meaning at all. It is on a par with the "over-soul"; and, to the philosophy of the complex vision, both the "life-force" and the "over-soul" are vague, materialistic, metaphorical expressions which do not attain to the dignity of a legitimate symbolic image.

They do not attain to this, because a legitimate symbolic image must appeal to the imagination and the aesthetic sense by the possession of something concrete and intelligible.

Any individual personal soul is concrete and intelligible. The personal souls of "the sons of the universe" are concrete and intelligible. But the "over-soul" and the "life-force" are neither concrete nor intelligible and therefore cannot be regarded as legitimate symbols. One of the most important aspects of the method of philosophical enquiry which the philosophy of the complex vision adopts is this

use of legitimate symbolic images in place of illegitimate metaphorical images.

This use of concrete, tangible, intelligible images is a thing which has to pay its price. And the price which it has to pay is the price of appearing childish, absurd and ridiculous to the type of mind which advocates the exclusive use of the logical reason as the sole instrument of philosophical research. This price of appearing naïve, childish and ridiculous has to be paid shamelessly and in full.

The type of mind which exacts this price, which demands in fact that the concrete intelligible symbols of the philosophy of the complex vision should be regarded as childish and ridiculous, is precisely the type of mind for whom "truth" is a smoothly evolutionary affair, an affair of steady "progress," and for whom, therefore, the mere fact of an idea being "a modern idea" implies that it is "true" and the mere fact of an idea being a classical idea or a mediaeval idea implies that it is crude and inadequate if not completely "false."

To the philosophy of the complex vision "truth" does not present itself as an affair of smooth and steady historical evolution but as something quite different from this—as a work of art, in fact, dependent upon the struggle of the individual soul with itself, and upon the struggle of "the souls of the sons of the universe" with themselves. And although the struggle of the souls of "the sons of the universe" towards a fuller clarifying of the mystery of life must be regarded as having its concrete tangible history in time and space, yet this history is not at all synonymous with what is usually called "progress."

An individual human soul, the apex-thought of whose complex vision has attained an extraordinary and unusual rhythm, must be regarded as having approached nearer to the vision of "the sons of the universe" although such an one may have lived in the days of the patriarchs or in

the Greek days or in the days of mediaevalism or of the renaissance, than any modern rationalistic thinker who is obsessed by "the latest tendencies of modern thought."

The souls of "the immortals" must certainly be regarded as developing and changing and as constantly advancing towards the realization of their hope and premonition. But this "advance" is also, as we have seen, in the profoundest sense a "return," because it is a movement towards an idea which already is implicit and latent. And in the presence of this "advance," which is also a "return," all historic ages of individual human souls are equal and co-existent.

All real symbols are "true," wherever and whenever they are invoked, because all real symbols are the expression of that rare unity of the complex vision which is man's deepest approximation to the mystery of life. The symbol of the cross, for instance, has far more truth in it than any vague metaphorical expression such as the "over-soul." The symbolic ritual of the Mass, for instance, has far more truth in it than any metaphorical expression such as the "life-force." And although both the Cross and the Mass are inadequate and imperfect symbols with regard to the vision of "the sons of the universe," because they are associated with the idea of an historic incarnation, yet in comparison with any modern rationalistic or chemical metaphor they are supremely true.

The philosophy of the complex vision, just because it is the philosophy of personality, must inevitably use images which appear to the rationalistic mind as naïve and childish and ridiculous. But the philosophy of the complex vision prefers to express itself in terms which are concrete, tangible and intelligible, rather than in terms which are no more than vague projections of phantom logic abstracted from the concrete activity of real personality.

In completing this general picture of the starting point of the philosophy of the complex vision there is one further implication which ought to be brought fully into the light. I refer to a doctrine which certain ancient and mediaeval thinkers adopted, and which must always be constantly re-appearing in human thought because it is an inevitable projection of the human conscience when the human conscience functions in isolation and in disregard of the other attributes. I mean the doctrine of the essentially evil character of that phenomenon which was formerly called "matter" but which I prefer to call the objective mystery.

According to this doctrine—which might be called the eternal heresy of puritanism—this objective mystery, this world-stuff, this eternal "energy" or "movement," this "flesh and blood" through which the soul expresses itself and of which the physical body is made, is "evil"; and the opposite of this, that is to say "mind" or "thought" or "consciousness" or "spirit" is alone "good."

According to this doctrine the world is a struggle between "the spirit" which is entirely good and "the flesh" which is entirely evil. To the philosophy of the complex vision this doctrine appears false and misleading. It detects in this doctrine, as I have hinted, an attempt of the conscience to arrogate to itself the whole field of experience and to negate all the other attributes, especially emotion and the aesthetic sense.

Such a doctrine negates the whole activity of the complex vision because it assumes the independent existence of "flesh and blood" as opposed to "mind." But "flesh and blood" is a thing which has no existence apart from "mind," because it is a thing "half-created" as well as "half-discovered" by "mind."

It negates the aesthetic sense because the aesthetic sense

requires the existence of "the body" or of "flesh and blood" or of what we call "matter," and cannot exert its activity without the reality of this thing.

It negates emotion, because the emotion of love demands, for its full satisfaction, nothing less than "the eternal idea of flesh and blood." And since love demands the "eternal idea of flesh and blood," "flesh and blood" cannot be "evil."

This doctrine of the evil nature of "matter" is obviously a perversion of what the complex vision reveals to us about the eternal duality. According to this doctrine, which I call the puritan heresy, the duality resolves itself into a struggle between the spirit and the flesh. But according to the revelation of the complex vision the true duality is quite different from this. In the true duality there is an evil aspect of "matter" and also an evil aspect of "mind."

In the true duality "spirit" is by no means necessarily good. For since the true duality lies in the depths of the soul itself, what we call "spirit" must very often be evil. According to the revelation of the complex vision, evil or malice is a positive force, of malignant inertness, resisting the power of creation or of love. It is, as we have seen, the primordial or chaotic weight which opposes itself to life.

But "flesh and blood" or any other definite form of "matter" has already in large measure submitted to the energy of creation and is therefore both "good" and "evil." That original shapeless "clay" or "objective mystery" out of which the complex vision creates the universe certainly cannot be regarded as "evil," for we can never know anything at all about it except that it exists and that it lends itself to the creative energy of the complex vision. And in so far as it lends itself to the creative energy of the complex vision it certainly cannot

be regarded as entirely evil, but must obviously be both good and evil; even as the complex vision itself, being the vision of the soul, is both good and evil.

According to the philosophy of the complex vision then, what we call "mind" is both good and evil and what we call "matter" being intimately dependent upon "mind" is both good and evil. We are forced, therefore, to recognize the existence of both spiritual "evil" and spiritual "good" in the unfathomable depths of the soul. But just because personality is itself a relative triumph of good over evil it is possible to conceive of the existence of a personality in whom evil is perpetually overcome by good, while it is impossible to conceive of a personality in whom good is *perpetually* overcome by evil.

In other words, all personalities are relatively good; and some personalities namely those of "the immortals" are, as far as we are concerned, absolutely good. All personalities including even the personalities of "the immortals" have evil in them, but no personality can be the embodiment of evil, in the sense in which "the sons of the universe" are the embodiment of good.

I thus reach the conclusion of this complicated summary of the nature of the ultimate duality and the necessity of finding a clear and definite symbol for it.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE ULTIMATE IDEAS

It now becomes necessary to consider in greater detail those primary human conceptions of truth, beauty, and goodness, which I have already referred to as the soul's "ultimate ideas." Let no one think that any magical waving of the wand of modern psychology can explain away these universal human experiences. They may be named by different appellations; but considering the enormous weight of historical tradition behind these names it would seem absurd and pedantic to attempt to re-baptize them at this late hour.

Human nature, in its essentials, has undergone no material change since we have any record of it; and to use any other word than "beauty" for what we mean by beauty, or than "goodness" for what we mean by goodness, would seem a mere superstition of originality. The interpretation offered, in what follows, of the existence of these experiences is sufficiently startling to require no assistance from novelty of phrasing to give it interest and poignancy. That our souls are actually able to touch, in the darkness which surrounds us, the souls of super-human beings, and that the vision of such super-human beings is the "eternal vision" wherein the mystery of love is consummated, is a doctrine of such staggering implications that it seems wise, in making our way towards it, to use the simplest human words and to avoid any "stylistic" shocks.

It seems advisable also to advance with scrupulous lei-

sureliness in this formidable matter and at certain intervals to turn round as it were, and survey the path by which we have come. The existence of super-human beings, immeasurably superior to man, is in itself a harmless and natural speculation. It is only when it presents itself as a necessary link in philosophical discussion that it appears startling. And the mere fact that it does appear startling when introduced into philosophy shows how lamentably philosophy has got itself imprisoned in dull, mechanical, mathematical formulae; in formulae so arid and so divorced from life, that the conception of personality, applied to man or to the gods, seems to us as exciting as an incredible fairy story when brought into relation with them.

As the souls of men, then, each with its own complex vision, move side by side along the way, or across one another's path, they are driven by the necessity of things to exchange impressions with regard to the nature of life. In their communications with one another they become aware of the presence, at the back of their consciousness, of an invisible standard of truth, of beauty, of goodness. It is from this standard of beauty and truth and goodness, from this dream, this vision, this hope, that all these souls seem to themselves to draw their motive of movement. But though they seem to themselves to be "moving" into an indetermined future still to be created by their wills, they also seem to themselves to be "returning" towards the discovery of that invisible standard of beauty, truth and goodness, which has as their motive-impulse been with them from the beginning. This implicit standard, this invisible pattern and test and arbitrement of all philosophizing, is what I call "the vision of the immortals." Some minds, both philosophical and religious, seem driven to think of this invisible pattern, this standard of truth and beauty, as the *parent* of the universe rather than as its



offspring. I cannot bring myself to take this view because of the fact that the ultimate revelation of the world as presented to man's complex vision is essential and unfathomably *dualistic*.

A "parent" of the universe can only be thought of as a stopping-place of all thought. He can only be *imagined*—for strictly speaking he cannot be thought of at all—as some unutterable mystery out of which the universe originally sprang. From this unutterable mystery, to which we have no right to attribute either a monistic or a pluralistic character, we may, I suppose, imagine to emerge a perpetual torrent of duality.

Towards this unutterable mystery, about which even to say "it is" seems to be saying too much, it is impossible for the complex vision to have any attitude at all. It can neither love it nor hate it. It can neither reject it nor accept it. It can neither worship it nor revolt against it. It is only *imaginable* in the illegitimate sense of metaphor and analogy. It is simply the stopping-place of the complex vision; that stopping-place beyond which anything is possible and nothing is thinkable.

This thing, which is at once everything and nothing, this thing which is *no thing* but only the unutterable limit where all things pass beyond thought, cannot be accepted by the complex vision as the parent of the universe. The universe has therefore no parent, no origin, no cause, no creator. Eternally it re-creates itself and eternally it divides itself into that ultimate duality which makes creation possible.

That monistic tendency of human thought, which is itself a necessary projection of the monistic reality of the individual soul, cannot, except by an arbitrary act of faith, resolve this ultimate duality into unity. Such a primordial "act of faith" it can and must make with regard to the objective reality of other souls. But such an "act of

faith" is not demanded with regard to the unutterable mystery behind the universe. We have not, strictly speaking, even the right to use the expression "an unutterable mystery." All we have a right to do is just to utter the final judgment—"beyond this limit neither thought nor imagination can pass."

What the complex vision definitely denies to us, therefore, is the right to regard this thing, which is *no* thing, with any emotion at all. The expression "unutterable mystery" is a misleading one because it appears to justify the emotions of awe and reverence. We have no right to regard this thin simulacrum, this mathematical formula, this stopping-place of thought, with any feelings of awe or reverence. We have not even a right to regard it with humorous contempt; for, being nothing at all, it is beneath contempt.

Humanity has a right to indulge in that peculiar emotional attitude which is called "worship" towards either side of the ultimate duality. It has a right to worship, if it pleases—though to do so several attitudes of the complex vision must be outraged and suppressed—the resistant power of malice. It has even a right to worship the universe, that turbulent arena of these primal antagonists. What it has no right to worship is the "unutterable mystery" *behind the universe*; for the simple reason that the universe is unfathomable.

Human thought has its stopping-place. The universe is unfathomable. Human thought has a definite limit. The universe has no limit. The universe is "unutterably mysterious"; and so also is the human soul; but as far as the soul's complex vision is concerned there can be no reality "behind the appearances of things" except the reality of the soul itself. Thus there is no "parent" of man and of the universe. But "the immortal companions" of men are implied from man's most intimate experiences of life. For

if there were no invisible watchers, no arbiters, no standards, no tests, no patterns, no ideals; our complex vision, in regard to certain basic attributes, would be refuted and negated.

Every soul which exists must be thought of as possessing the attribute of "emotion" with its duality of love and malice, the attribute of "taste" with its duality of beauty and hideousness, of conscience with its duality of good and evil, and the attribute of "reason" with its duality of the true and the false. Every one of these basic attributes would be reduced to a suicidal confusion of absolute sceptical subjectivity if it could not have faith in some objective reality to which it can appeal.

Such an appeal, to such an objective reality, it does, as a matter of fact, continually make, whether it makes it consciously or sub-consciously. And just as the soul's basic attributes of emotion, taste, conscience, and reason indicate an implicit faith in the objective reality of the ideas of beauty and nobility and truth; so the soul's basic attribute of self-consciousness indicates an implicit demand that the objective reality of these ideas should be united and embodied in actual living and self-conscious "souls" external to other "souls."

The most dangerous mistake we can make, and the most deadly in its implications, is to reduce these "companions of men" to a monistic unity and to make this unity what the metaphysicians call "absolute" in its embodiment of these ultimate ideas.

In comparison with the fitful and moody subjectivity of our individual conceptions of these ideas the vision of the immortals may be thought of as embodying them absolutely. But in itself it certainly does not embody them absolutely; otherwise the whole movement of life would end. It is unthinkable that it should ever embody them absolutely. For it is in the inherent nature of such a vision that it

should be growing, living, inexhaustible. The most withering and deadly of all conceivable dogmas is the dogma that there is such a thing as absolute truth, absolute beauty, absolute good and absolute love.

The attraction of such a dogma for the mind of man is undoubtedly due to the spirit of evil or of malice. For nothing offers a more frozen resistance to the creative power than such a faith. Compared with our human visions of these ideas the vision of these "companions of men" must be thought of as relatively complete. And complete it is, with regard to its general synthesis and orientation. But it is not really complete; and can never be so. For when we consider the nature of love alone, it becomes ridiculous to speak of an absolute or complete love. If the love of these "companions of men" became at any moment incapable of a deeper and wider manifestation, at that very moment the whole stream of life would cease, the malice of the adversary would prevail, and nothingness would swallow up the universe. It is because we are compelled to regard the complex vision, including all its basic attributes, as the vision of a personal soul, that it is a false and misleading conception to view these "companions of men" as a mere ideal.

An ideal is nothing if not expressed in personality. Subjectively every ideal is the ideal of "some one," an ideal of a conscious, personal, and living entity. Objectively every ideal must be embodied in "some one": and must be a standard, a measure, a rhythm, of various energies synthesized in a living soul. This is really the crux of the whole matter. Vaguely and obscurely do we all feel the pressure of these deep and secret impulses. Profoundly do we feel that these mysterious "ideas," which give life its dramatic intensity, are part of the depths of our own soul and part of the depths of the souls of the immortals. And yet though they are so essentially part

of us and part of the universe, they remain vague, obscure, contradictory, confused, inchoate; only gradually assuming coherent substance and form as the "rapport" between man and his invisible companions grows clearer and clearer.

We are confronted at this point by one of the most difficult of all dilemmas. If by reason of the fact that we are driven to regard personality as the most real thing in the universe we are compelled toward the act of faith which recognizes one side of the eternal duality of things as embodied in actual living souls, how is it that we are not equally compelled to a similar act of faith in relation to the other side of this duality? In simpler words, how is it that while we are compelled to an act of faith with regard to the existence of powers which embody the spirit of love, we are not compelled to an act of faith with regard to the existence of powers which embody the spirit of malice?

How is it that while we have a right to regard the ideas of truth, beauty, goodness as objectively embodied in living personalities we have no right to regard the ideas of falseness, hideousness, evil and malice, as objectively embodied in living personalities? To answer this question it is necessary to define more clearly the essential duality which we discover as the secret of the universe.

One side of this duality is the creative power of life, the other side is the resistant power which repels life. The emotion of love is the motive-force of the power of creation, a force which we have to recognize as containing in itself the power of destruction; for destruction is necessary to creation and is inspired by the creative energy.

The other side of the eternal duality is not a destructive force, but a resistant force. That is why it is necessary to define the opposite of love, not as hate—but as malice, which is a resistant thing. Thus it becomes clear why it

is that we are not driven by the necessity of the situation to any act of faith with regard to the existence of living souls which embody evil and malice. We are not compelled towards this act of faith because the nature of the "other side" of the eternal duality is such that it cannot be embodied, in any complete or objective way, in a living personality. It can and it does appear in every personality that has ever existed. We are compelled to assume that it exists, though in a state of suppression, even in the souls of the immortals. If it did not exist, in some form or other, in the souls of the immortals, the ideas of truth, beauty, and goodness would be absolute in them, and the life of the universe would cease.

For the nature of this eternal duality is such that the life of the universe depends upon this unending struggle between what creates and what resists creation. The power that creates must be regarded as embodied in personality, for creation always implies personality. But the power that resists creation—though present in every living soul—cannot be embodied in personality because personality is the highest expression of creation.

Every soul born into life must possess the attributes of taste, reason, conscience and emotion. And each of these attributes implies this fundamental duality; being resolvable into a choice between hideousness, falsehood, evil, malice, and the opposites of these. But the soul itself, being a living and personal thing, can never, however deeply it plunges into evil, become the embodiment of evil, because by the mere fact of existing at all it has already defeated evil.

Any individual soul may give itself up to malice rather than to love, and may do its utmost to resist the creative power of love. But one thing it cannot do. It cannot become the embodiment of evil, because, by merely being alive, it is the eternal defiance of evil. Personality is the

secret of the universe. The universe exists by reason of a struggle between what creates and what resists creation. Therefore personality exists by reason of a struggle between what creates and what resists creation. And the existence of personality, however desperate the struggle within itself may be, is a proof that the power of life is stronger than the power which resists life.

But we have to consider another and yet deeper dilemma. Since the existence of the universe depends upon the continuance of this unfathomable struggle and since the absolute victory of life over death, of love over malice, of truth over falsehood, of beauty over hideousness and of nobility over ignobility, would mean that the universe would end, are we therefore forced to the conclusion that evil is necessary to the fuller manifestation of good?

Undoubtedly we *are* forced to this conclusion. Not one of these primordial ideas, which find their synthesis in "the invisible companions of men," can be conceived without its opposite. And it is in the process of their unending struggle that the fuller realization of all of them is attained. And this struggle must inevitably assume a double character. It must assume the character of a struggle within the individual soul and of a struggle of the individual soul with other souls and with the universe. Such a struggle must be thought of as continually maintained in the soul of the "invisible companions of men" and maintained there with a depth of dramatic intensity at which we can only guess.

Only less false and dangerous than the dogma that the absolute victory of good over evil has already been achieved, is the dogma that these two eternal antagonists are in reality one and the same thing. They are only one and the same thing in the sense that neither is thinkable without the other; and in the sense that they create the universe by their conflict.

It is important in a matter as crucial as this matter, concerning "the invisible companions of men," not to advance a step beyond our starting-point till we have apprehended it from several different aspects and have gone over our ground again and again—even as builders of a bridge might test the solidity of their fabric stone by stone and arch by arch. By that "conscience in reason" which never allows us pleasantly to deceive ourselves, we are bound to touch, as it were with our very hands, every piece of stone work and every patch of cement which holds this desperate bridge together over the dark waters.

We have not, then, a right to say that every energy of the complex vision depends for its functioning upon the existence of these invisible companions. We have not a right to say—"if there were no such beings these energies could not function; but they do function; therefore there are such beings." What we have a right to say is simply this, that it is an actual experience that when two or more personalities come together and seek to express their various subjective impressions of these ultimate ideas there is always a tacit reference to some objective standard.

This objective standard cannot be thought of apart from personalities capable of embodying it. For these ultimate ideas are only real and living when embodied in personality. Apart from personality we are unable to grasp them; although we must recognize that the universe itself is composed of the very stuff of their contention. We have in the first place, then, completely eliminated from our discussion that "inscrutable mystery" behind the universe. In every direction we find the universe unfathomable; and though our power of thought stops abruptly at a certain limit, we have no reason to think that the universe stops there; and we have every reason to think that it contin-



ues—together with the unfathomable element in our souls—into impenetrably receding depths.

The universe, as we apprehend it, presents itself as a congeries of living souls united by some indefinable medium. These living souls are each possessed of that multi-form activity which I have named the complex vision. Among the basic energies of this vision are some which in their functioning imply the pre-existence of certain primordial ideas.

These ideas are at once the eternally receding horizon and the eternally receding starting-point—the unfathomable past and the unfathomable future—of this procession of souls. The crux of the whole situation is found in the evasive and tantalizing problem of the real nature of these primordial ideas. Can “truth,” can “beauty,” can “goodness” be conceived of as existing in the universe apart from any individual soul?

They are clearly not completely exhausted or totally revealed by the vision of any individual human soul or of any number of human souls. The sense which we all have when we attempt to exchange our individual feelings with regard to these things is that we are appealing to some invisible standard or pattern which already exists and of which we each apprehend a particular facet or aspect.

All human intercourse depends upon this implicit assumption; of which language is the outward proof.

The existence of language goes a long way in itself to destroy that isolation of individual souls which in its extreme form would mean the impossibility of any objective truth or beauty or nobility. Language itself is founded upon that original act of faith by which we assume the independent existence of other souls. And the same act of faith which assumes the existence of other souls assumes also that the vision of other souls does not essentially differ from our own vision.

Once having got as far as this, the further fact that these other visions do very considerably, though not essentially, differ from our own leads us by an inevitable, if not a logical, step to the assumption that all our different visions are the imperfect renderings of one vision, wherein the ideas of truth, beauty and nobility exist in a harmonious synthesis.

There is no reason why we should think of this objective synthesis of truth, beauty, and goodness as absolute or perfect. Indeed there is every reason why we should think of it as imperfect and relative. But it is imperfect and relative only in its relation to its own dream, its own hope, its own prophecy, its own premonition, its own struggle towards a richer and fuller manifestation. In its relation to our broken, baffled, and subjective visions it is already so complete as to be relatively absolute. To this objective ideal of our aesthetic and emotional values, I have given the name "the vision of the immortals" because we are unable to disassociate it from personality; and because, while the generations of man pass away, this vision does not pass away.

Have I, in giving to this natural human ideal, such a formidable name—a name with so many bold and startling implications—been merely tempted into an alluring metaphorical image, or have I been driven to make use of this expression by reason of the intrinsic nature of life itself?

I think that the latter of these two alternatives is the true one. The "logic" by which this conclusion is reached differs from the "logic" of the abstract reason in the sense of being the organic, dynamic, and creative "logic" of the complex vision itself, using the very apex-thought of its pyramidal activity in apprehending a mystery which is at once the secret of its own being and the secret of the

unfathomable universe into the depths of which it forces its way.

The expression, then, "the vision of the immortals" is not a mere pictorial image but is the definite articulation of a profound reality from which there is no escape if certain attributes of the human soul are to be trusted at all. We cannot get rid of this dilemma, one of those dilemmas which offer alternative possibilities so appallingly opposite, that the choice between them seems like a choice between two eternities.

Is the vision of these immortals, the existence of which as a standard of all philosophical discussion seems to be implied by the very nature of man's soul, to be regarded or not to be regarded as the vision of real and living personalities?

In other words, to put the case once more in its rigid outlines, is that objective vision of truth, beauty, and goodness of which our individual subjective visions are only imperfect representations, the real vision of actual living "gods" or only the projection, upon the evasive medium which holds all human souls together, of such beauty and such truth and such goodness as these souls find that they possess in common?

This is the crux of the whole human comedy. This is the throw of the dice between a world without hope and a world with hope. Philosophers are capable of treating this subject with quiet intellectual curiosity; but all living men and women—philosophers included—come, at moments, to a pitiless and adamant "impasse" where the eternal "two ways" branch off in unfathomable perspective.

In our normal and superficial moods we are able to find a plausible excuse for our struggles with ourselves, in a simple acceptance of the ultimate duality.

It is enough for us, in these moods, that we have on the

one hand a consciousness of "love" and on the other a consciousness of "malice." It is enough for us, in these moods, that we have on the one hand a consciousness of truth and beauty and nobility; and on the other a consciousness of unreality, of hideousness, and of evil. But there come other, deeper, more desperate moods, when, out of intolerable and unspeakable loneliness our soul sinking back into its own depths refuses to be satisfied with a mere recognition of this ultimate duality.

At these moments the soul seems to rend and tear at the very roots of this duality. It takes these ideas of beauty and truth and goodness and subjects them to a savage and merciless analysis. It takes the emotion of love and the emotion of malice and tries to force its way behind them. It turns upon itself, in its insane trouble, and seeks to get itself out of its own way and to efface itself, so that "something" beyond itself may flow into its place.

At these moments the soul's complex vision is roused to a supreme pitch of rhythmic energy. The apex-thought of its focussed attributes gathers itself together to pierce the mystery. Like a strain of indescribable music the apex-thought rests upon itself and brings each element of its being into harmony with every other.

This ultimate harmony of the complex vision may be compared to a music which is so intense that it becomes silence. And in this "silence," wherein the apex-thought becomes at once a creator and a discoverer, the pain and distress of the struggle seems suddenly to disappear and an indescribable happiness flows in upon the soul. At this moment when this consummation is reached the soul's complex vision becomes aware that the ideas of beauty, truth and goodness are not mental abstractions or material qualities or evolutionary by-products, but are the very purpose and meaning of life. It becomes aware that the emotion

of love is not a mental abstraction or a psychological accident or a biological necessity but the secret of the whole struggle and the explanation of the whole drama.

It becomes aware that this truth, this beauty, this nobility find their unity and harmony in nothing less than in the emotion of love. It becomes aware that these three primordial "ideas" are only varying facets and aspects of one unfathomable secret which is the activity of love. It becomes aware that this activity of love is the creative principle of life itself; that it alone is life, and the force which resists it is the enemy of life.

Such, then, is the ultimate reality grasped in its main outlines by the rhythmic energy of the soul's apex-thought when, in its desperate and savage struggle with itself, the complex vision reaches its consummation. And this reality, thus created and thus discovered by the apex-thought of the complex vision, demands and requires that very revelation, towards which we have been moving by so long a road.

It requires the revelation, namely, that the emotion of love of which we are conscious in the depths of our being, as an emotion flowing through us and obsessing us, should be conceived of as existing in a far greater completeness in these silent "watchers" and "companions" whom we name "the immortal gods." It requires, therefore, that these immortal ones should be regarded as conscious and living "souls"; for the ultimate reach of the complex vision implies the idea of personality and cannot interpret life except in terms of personality.

As I said above, there come moments in all our lives, when, rending and tearing at the very roots of our own existence, we seek to extricate ourselves from ourselves and to get ourselves out of the way of ourselves, as if we were seeking to make room for some deeper personality within us which is ourself and yet not ourself. This is that im-

personal element which the aesthetic sense demands in all supreme works of art so that the soul may find at once its realization of itself and its liberation from itself.

The "watchers" and "companions" of men must therefore be immortal and living "souls" existing side by side with our human "souls" and side by side with all other "souls," super-human or sub-human, which the universal medium of the world holds together. In arriving at this conclusion which seems to me to be the consummation vouched for and attested by the rhythmic energy of the complex vision, I have refused to allow any particular attribute of this vision, such as the will or the intuition or the conscience, to claim for its isolated discoveries any universal assent.

The soul's emotion of love passionately craves for the real existence of these "invisible companions." The soul's emotion of malice displays an abysmal resistance to such a reality. This is naturally a fact that we cannot afford to disregard. But in our final decision in so high and difficult a matter nothing can be allowed to claim an universal assent except the rhythmic activity of the soul's apex-thought in its supreme moments.

At this point in our argument it is advisable to glance backward over the way we have come; because the reality of this "eternal vision" depends, more than has as yet been understood, upon our whole attitude to the mystery of personality, and to the place of personality, as the secret of the world.

The feeling which we have about the emotion of love, as if it were a thing pouring through us from some unfathomable depth, does not imply that "the invisible companions" are themselves that depth. The "invisible companions" are not in any sense connected with the conception of an "oversoul." That "depth," from which the power of creative love pours forth, is not the "depth" of any "over-

soul" but is the depth of our own unfathomable nature.

The introduction of "something behind the universe," the introduction of some "parent" or "first cause" of the universe, from which we have to suppose this secret of love as emerging, is as unnecessary as it is unbeautiful. It does nothing but fling the mystery one step further back without in the least elucidating it; and in thus throwing it back it thins it out and cheapens it. There is nothing which appeals to the aesthetic sense about this hypothesis of an "oversoul" from whose universal being the ideas of beauty and truth and goodness may be supposed to proceed. It is a clumsy and crude speculation, easy to be grasped by the superficial mind, and with an air of profundity which is entirely deceptive.

So far from being a spiritual conception, this conception of an over-soul, existing just behind the material universe and pouring forth indiscriminately its "truth," "beauty," "nobility" and "love," is an entirely materialistic one. It is a clumsy and crude metaphor or analogy drawn from the objective world and projected into that region of sheer unfathomableness which lies beyond human thought.

When the conception of the oversoul is submitted to analysis it is found to consist of nothing else than vague images drawn from material sensation. We think of the world for instance as a vast porous sponge continually penetrated by a flood of water or air or vapour drawn from some hidden cistern or reservoir or cosmic lake. The modern theological expression "immanent" has done harm in this direction. There is nothing profound about this conception of "immanence." It is an entirely materialistic conception drawn from sense analogy.

The same criticism applies to much of the vague speculation which is usually called "mysticism." Mysticism is not a spiritual attitude. It is often no more than the expression of thwarted sex-desire directed towards the uni-

verse instead of towards the person who has repulsed it. The basic motive of mysticism, although in the highest cases it springs from intuition, is very often only an extension into the unknown of physiological misery or of physiological well-being.

The word "spiritual" retains, by some instinctive wisdom in human language, a far nobler significance than the word "mystical."

It is, so to speak, a purer word, and has succeeded, in its progress down the ages, in keeping itself more clear of physiological associations than any other human word except the word "soul." It must, however, be recognized, when we submit the two words to analysis, that the word "spirit" is less free from metaphorical materialism than the word "soul."

The word "spirit" is a metaphorical word derived from the material phenomenon of breath. For the purest and least tangible of all natural phenomena, except perhaps "ether" or electricity, is obviously nothing less than the wind. "The wind bloweth where it listeth," and this elementary "freedom of the wind," combined with our natural association of "breath" and "breathing" with all organic life, accounts for the traditional nobility of the word spirit.

"Spirit" and "life" have become almost interchangeable terms. The modern expression "the life-force" is only a metaphorical confusion of the idea conveyed by the word "spirit" or "breath" with the idea conveyed by the word "consciousness" when abstracted from any particular conscious soul. The use of the term "spirit" as applied to what metaphysical idealists name "the absolute" is the supreme example of this metaphorical confusion.

According to this use of the term "spirit" we have an arbitrary association of the ultimate fact of self-consciousness—a fact drawn from the necessity of thought—with



that attenuated and etherial materialism implied in the words "breath" or "breathing" and in the elemental "freedom of the wind." The word "spiritual" is a purer and nobler word than the word "mystical" for the same reason that the word "soul" is a purer and nobler word than the word "spirit."

The historic fact must, however, be recognized that in the evolution of human thought and in the evolution of philosophical systems the word "spirit" has in large measure usurped the position that ought to belong to the word "soul" as the highest and purest expression of what is most essential and important in life.

The history of this usurpation is itself a curious psychological document. But I cannot help feeling that the moment has arrived for reinstating the word "soul" in its rightful place and altering this false valuation.

The word "soul" is the name given by the common consent of language to that original "monad" or concrete unity or living "self" which exists, according to universal experience, "within" the physical body and is the indescribable "substratum" of self-consciousness and the unutterable "something" which gives a real concrete permanence to what we call "personality."

Here also we are confronted by the metaphorical danger, which is a danger springing from the necessity of thought itself; the necessity under which thought labours of being compelled to use sense-impressions if it is to function at all. But though thought cannot exist as thought without the use of sense-impressions it can at least concentrate its attention upon this primal necessity and be aware of it and cautious of it and hypercritical in its use. It can do more than this. It can throw back, so to speak, the whole weight of the mystery and drive it so rigorously to the ultimate wall, that the materialistic and metaphorical element is reduced to a mere gap or space or lacuna in the mind that

only a material element can fill and yet that we cannot imagine being filled by any material element which we are able to define.

This is precisely what we have to do with regard to that "vanishing-point of sensation" which is the substratum of the soul. The situation resolves itself into this. The highest, deepest, most precious thing we know or can imagine is *personality*. Personality is and must be our ultimate synthesis, our final ideal, and the origin of all our ideals. Nothing can be conceived more true, more real, more spiritual than personality.

All conceptions, qualities, principles, forces, elements, thoughts, ideas, are things which we abstract from personality, and project into the space which surrounds us, as if they could be independent of the personal unity from which they have been taken. We are compelled by the inevitable necessity of thought itself, which cannot escape from the world of sense-impressions, to think of personality as possessing for its "substratum" "something" which gives it concrete reality. This "something" which is utterly indefinable, is the last gesture, so to speak, made by the sense-world before it vanishes away.

This "something" which is the substratum of the soul and the thing which gives unity and concreteness to the soul is the thinnest and remotest attenuation of the world of sense-impression. It is far thinner and more remote than the sense-element in our conception of spirit. Why, it may be asked, can we not get rid of this "something" which fills that gap or lacuna in the identity of the soul which can only be thought of in material terms?

We cannot get rid of it because directly we attempt to do so we are left with that vague idealistic abstraction upon our hands which we call "thought-in-the-abstract"—or "pure thought" or "pure self-consciousness." But it may be asked—"Why cannot the physical body serve this nec-

essary purpose of giving personality a local and concrete identity?"

First—and this is the psychological reason—it cannot do so because our feeling of the soul as "something within" our physical body is an ultimate fact of experience which would then remain as an experience denied and contradicted.

Secondly—and this is the metaphysical reason—it cannot do so because our physical body is itself only a part of that objective universe of sense-impressions which the soul is conscious of as essentially distinct from its own inmost identity.

Metaphysical idealism seems to hold that the ultimate monad of self-consciousness is not this personal microcosmic monad which I am conscious of as the empirical self or "soul" but an impersonal macrocosmic monad or "unity of apperception" which underlies the whole field of impressions and is unable, by reason of its inherent nature, to contemplate itself as an "object" at all.

What the complex vision seems to me to disclose, is a revelation which includes at one and the same moment "the universal monad" and the "personal monad"; but it indicates clearly enough that the former is an abstraction from the latter. My thought can certainly think of the whole universe, including time and space, as one enormous mass of impressions or ideals presenting itself inside the circle of my mind.

Of this mass of impressions, including time and space, my thought, thus abstracted from my personal soul, becomes the circumference. Outside my thought there is nothing at all. Inside my thought there is all that is. The metaphysical reason insists that this all-comprehensive thought or all-embracing consciousness cannot contemplate itself as an object but is compelled to remain an universal sub-

ject whose object can only be the mass of impressions which it contains.

If it is possible to speak of this "a priori" background of all possible perception as a "monad" at all, it is a monad which certainly lacks the essential power of the individual monad which we know as our real self, for this latter can and does contemplate itself as an object.

But as I have hinted before, the complex vision's attribute of self-consciousness projects a second abstraction, which takes its place between this ultimate monad which is pure "subject" and our real personal self which is so much more than subject and object together.

This second abstraction, "thrown off" by our pure self-consciousness just as the first one is "thrown off" by our pure reason, becomes therefore an intervening monad which exists midway between the monad which is pure "subject"—if that can be called a monad at all—and the actual individual soul which is the living reality of both these thought-projections.

The whole question resolves itself into a critical statement of the peculiar play of thought when thought is considered in its own inherent nature apart from concrete objects of thought. This original play of thought, apart from what it may think, can result in nothing better than isolated abstractions; because thought, apart from concrete objects of thought, is itself nothing more than one attribute of the complex vision, groping about in a vacuum and finding nothing. We are, however, bound by the "conscience of reason," and by what might be called reason's sense of honour" to articulate as clearly as we can all these movements of pure thought working in the void; but we certainly are forbidden by the original revelation of the complex vision to accept them as the starting point of our philosophical enquiry. And we cannot accept them as a

starting point, because the complex vision includes much more than self-consciousness and reason. It includes indeed so much more than these, that these, when indulging in their isolated conjuring-tricks, seem like-irrelevant and tiresome clowns who insist upon interrupting with their fantastic pedantry the great tragic-comedy wherein the soul of man wrestles with its fate.

As I have already indicated, it is necessary in dealing with a matter as dramatic and fatal as this whole question of ultimate reality, to risk the annoyance of repetition. It is important to go over our tracks again so that no crevice should be left in this perilous bridge hung across the gulf.

Reason, then, working in isolation, provides us with the recognition of an ultimate universal "subject" or, in metaphysical language, with an "a priori unity of apperception." Simultaneously with this recognition, self-consciousness, also working in isolation, provides us with the recognition of an universal self-conscious "monad" or "cosmic self" which is not only able but is compelled to think of itself as its own object.

Both these recognitions imply a consciousness which is outside time and space; but while the first, the outer edge of thought, can only be regarded as "pure subject," the second can be regarded as nothing else than the whole universe contemplating itself as its own object.

In the third place the complex vision, working with all its attributes together, provides us with the recognition of a personal or empirical self which is the real "I am I" of our integral soul. This personal self, or actual living soul, must be thought of as possessing some "substratum" or "vanishing point of sensation" as the implication of its permanence and continuous identity. This "vanishing point of sensation," or in other words this attenuated form of "matter" or "energy" or "movement," must not be allowed to disappear from our conception of the soul. If

it *were* allowed to disappear, one of the basic attributes of the soul's complex vision, namely its attribute of sensation, would be negated and suppressed.

Directly we regarded the "I am I" within us as independent of such a "vanishing point of sensation" and as being entirely free from any, even from the most attenuated form, of what is usually called "matter," then, at that very moment, the complex vision's revelation would be falsified. Then, at that very moment, the integrity of the soul would dissolve away, and we should be reduced to a stream of sensations with nothing to give them coherence and unity, or to that figment of abstract self-consciousness, "thought-in-itself," apart from both the thing "thinking" and the thing "thought." The soul, therefore, must be conceived if we are to be true to the original revelation of the complex vision, as having an indefinable "something" as its substratum or implication of identity. And this something, although impossible to be analysed, must be regarded as existing within that mysterious medium which is the uniting force of the universe. The soul must, in fact, be thought of as possessing some sort of "spiritual body" which is the centre of its complex vision and which, therefore, expresses itself in reason, self-consciousness, will, sensation, instinct, intuition, memory, emotion, conscience, taste, and imagination. All this must necessarily imply that the soul is within, and not outside, time and space. It must further imply that although the physical body, which the soul uses at its will, is only one portion of the objective universe which confronts it, this physical body is more immediately connected with the soul's complex vision and more directly under the influence of it than any other portion of the external universe.

The question then arises, can it be said that this "vanishing point of sensation," this "substratum" composed of "something" which we are only able to define as the

limit where the ultimate attenuation of what we call "matter" or "energy" passes into unfathomableness, this centre of the soul, this "spiritual body," this invisible "pyramid base" of the complex vision, is also, just as the physical body is, a definite portion of that objective universe which we apprehend through our senses?

The physical body is entirely and in all its aspects a portion of this objective universe. Is the substratum of the soul a portion of it also? I think the answer to this question is that it *is* and also *is not* a portion of this universe. This "spiritual body," this "vanishing point of sensation," which is the principle of permanence and continuity and identity in the soul, is obviously the very centre and core of reality. Being this, it must necessarily be a portion of that objective world whose reality, after the reality of the soul itself, is the most vivid reality which we know.

The complex vision demands and exacts the reality of the objective world. The whole drama of its life depends upon this. Without this the complex vision would not exist. And just as the complex vision could not exist without the reality of the objective world, so the objective world could not exist without the reality of the complex vision. These two depend upon one another and perpetually recreate one another.

Any metaphysical system which denies the existence of the objective world, or uses the expression "illusion" with regard to it, is a system based, not upon the complex vision in its entirety, but upon some isolated attribute of it. The "substratum" of the soul, then, must be a portion of the objective world so as to give validity, so to speak, and assurance that this objective world with its mysterious medium crowded with living bodies and inanimate objects is not a mere illusion. But the "substratum" of the soul must be something else in addition to this. Being the essential meeting-point between what we call thought on the

one hand, and what we call "matter" or "energy" on the other, the "substratum" of the soul must be a point of perpetual movement where the life of thought passes into the life of sensation.

The "substratum" of the soul must be regarded as the ultimate attenuation of "matter" on the one hand, and on the other as perpetually passing into "mind." For since it is the centre-point of life it must be composed of a stuff woven, so to speak, out all the threads of life. That is to say it must be the very centre and vortex of all the contradictions in the universe.

Since the "substratum" or "spiritual body" of the soul is the most real thing in the universe it must, in its own nature, partake of every kind of reality which exists in the universe. It must therefore be, quite definitely, a portion of the objective world existing within time and space. But it must also be the ultimate unity of "the life of thought." And since, as we have seen, it is within the power of reason and self-consciousness to isolate themselves from the other attributes of the soul and to project themselves outside of space and time, it must be the perpetual fatality of the "substratum" of the soul to recall these wanderers back to the true reality of things, which does not lie outside of space and time but within space and time, and which must justify time and space as something very different from illusion.

But because, within time and space, the universe is unfathomable, and because, also within time and space, personality is unfathomable, the "substratum" of the soul, which is the point where the known and the unknown meet, must be unfathomable also, and hence must sink away beyond the limit of our thought and beyond the limit of our sensation.

Since it does this, since it sinks away beyond the limit of our thought, it must be regarded as "something" whose



reality is partly known and partly unknown. Thus it is true to say that the "substratum" of the soul *is* and *is not* a portion of the objective universe. The substratum of the soul is, in fact, the essential and ultimate reality, where all that we know loses itself in all that we do not know. Because we are compelled to admit that only one aspect of the "substratum" of the soul is a portion of the objective universe as we know it, this does not justify us in asserting that the "substratum" of the soul is at once within space and time and outside of space and time.

Nothing is outside of space and time. This conception of "outside" is, as we have seen, an abstraction evoked by the isolated activity of the logical reason. The fact that only one aspect of the "substratum" of the soul—and even that one with the barest limit of definition—can be regarded as a portion of the objective universe does not give the soul any advantage over the universe. For the universe, like the soul, has also its unfathomable depths. That indefinable medium, for instance, which we are compelled to think of as making it possible that various souls should touch one another and communicate with one another, is in precisely the same position as regards any ultimate analysis as is the soul itself. It also sinks away into unfathomableness. It also becomes a portion of that part of reality which we do *not* know.

At this point in our enquiry it is not difficult to imagine some materialistic objector asking the question how we can conceive such a vaguely defined entity as the soul possessing such very definite attributes as those which make up the complex vision.

Is it not, such an one might ask, a fantastic and ridiculous assumption to endow so obscure a thing as this "soul" with such very definite powers as reason, instinct, will, intuition, imagination, and the rest? Surely, such an one might protest, it is in the physical body that these find

their unity? Surely, if we must have a meeting-place where thought and the objects of thought lose themselves in one another, such a meeting-place can be nothing else than the cells of the brain?

The answer to this objection seems to me quite a final one. The physical body cannot supply us with the true meeting-place between "the life of thought" and "the life of sensation" because the physical body does not *in itself* sink away into unfathomableness as does the substratum of the soul. The physical body can only be regarded as unfathomable when definitely included in the whole physical universe. But the substratum of the soul is doubly unfathomable. It is unfathomable as being the quintessence or vanishing-point of "matter" or "energy," and it is unfathomable as being the quintessence of that personal self which confronts not only the objective universe but the physical body also as part of that universe. It is undoubtedly true that this real self which is the centre of its own universe is bound to contemplate itself as occupying a definite point in space and time.

This is one of its eternal contradictions; that it should be at the same time the creator of its universe and an unfathomable portion of the very universe it creates. The answer which the philosophy of the complex vision makes to the materialistic questioner who points to the "little cells of the brain" may be briefly be put thus.

The soul functions through the physical body and through the cells of the brain. The soul is so closely and so intimately associated with the physical body that it is more than possible that the death of the physical body implies the annihilation of the soul. But when it comes to the question as to where we are to look for the essential self in us which is able to say "I am I" it is found to be much more fantastic and ridiculous to look for it in the "little cells of the brain" than in some obscure "some-

thing," or "vanishing point of sensation," where mind and matter are fused together. That this "something" which is able to say "I am I" should possess instinct, reason, will, intuition, conscience and the rest, may be hard to imagine. But that the "little cells of the brain" should possess these is not only hard to imagine—it is unimaginable. The mysterious relation which exists between our soul and our body lends itself to endless speculation; and much of this speculation tends to become far more fantastic and ridiculous than any analysis of the attributes of the soul. Experiment and experience alone can teach us how far the body is actually malleable by the soul and amenable to the soul's purpose.

The arbitrary symbol which I have made use of to indicate the nature of the soul's essential reality, the image of a pyramidal wedge of flames, is certainly felt to be but a thin and rigid fancy when we consider how in the actual play of life the soul expresses itself through the body.

As I have already indicated, the original revelation of the complex vision accepts without scruple the whole spectacle of natural life. The philosophy of the complex vision insists that no rationalistic necessity of pure logic gives it the right to reject this natural objective spectacle. The philosophy of the complex vision insists that this obvious, solid, external, so-called "materialistic" spectacle of common life, be accepted, included and continually returned to. It insists that the word "illusion" be no more used about this spectacle. It insists that this vast unfathomable universe of time and space be recognized as an ultimate reality, and that all these projected images of the pure reason, all these circles, cubes, squares and straight lines, all these "unities of apperception," universal "monads" and the like, be recognized as by-products of the abstracting energy of human logic and as entirely without reality when compared with this objective spectacle. My

own symbolic or pictorial image of the activity of the complex vision, this pyramidal wedge or arrow-head of concentrated and focussed flames, must be recognized as no more adequate or satisfactory than any of these.

The complex vision, with its rhythmic apex-thought, is not really a "pyramid" or a "wedge of flame" any more than it is a circle or a cube or a square or an "a priori synthetic unity of apperception" or "an universal self-conscious monad." It is the vision of a living personality, surrounded by an unfathomable universe.

To keep our thoughts firmly and harmoniously fixed on the real objective spectacle of life and on the real subjective "soul," or personality, contemplating this spectacle, it is advisable to revert to the magical and mysterious associations called up by the classical word *Nature*. The mere utterance of the word "Nature" serves to bring us back to the things which are essential and organic, and to put into their proper place of comparative unreality all these "unities" and circles, all these pyramids and "monads." When we think of the astounding beauty and intricacy of the actual human body; when we think of the astounding beauty and intricacy of the actual living soul which animates this body, and when we think of the magical universe which surrounds them both, we are compelled to recognize that in the last resort Nature herself is the great mystery. The word "Nature" conveys a more living and less metaphysical connotation than the word "universe," and may be regarded as implying more of that indetermined future of all living souls, which is still in the process of creation.

The "universe" is a static conception. Nature is a dynamic conception. When we speak of Nature we think of the whole struggle towards a fuller life of all the living entities which the indefinable medium of the universe contains. Nature from this point of view becomes the whole

unfathomable spectacle, seen as something living and growing and changing.

The "invisible companions" of men who supply the pattern and standard of all human ideas, become in this way the immortal children of Nature. The creative energy of the complex vision is itself an integral portion of the creative energy of Nature; for "Nature" is no more than the beautiful and classical word which recalls us to the objective spectacle which is the ultimate revelation of the complex vision. Nature is the supreme artist; but the apex-point of her artistry is nothing less than the apex-point of the artistry of the immortal gods.

The artistry of the human soul, when its rhythm is most harmonious and complete, implies the magical artistry of Nature, for "Nature" is nothing more than the whole objective spectacle finding its myriad creative centres of new life in all living souls. The value of the word Nature, the value of the conception of Nature, is that it reminds us that, held together by the indefinable medium which fills the universe, there are innumerable entities both sub-human and super-human, all of whom, in their various degrees, possess living souls.

Nature's supreme art is nothing more than the natural impulses of all these, as they are thus held together, and to "return to Nature" is nothing more than to return to the objective spectacle of real life, and to the objective ideal of real life as it is embodied in "the invisible companions."

These "invisible companions" just because they are the most "natural" of all living personalities, are the supreme manifestation of the secret of Nature. It is because the objective spectacle of life, the spectacle which includes the stars, the planets, plants, trees, grass, moss, lichen, earth, birds, fish, animals, is a spectacle continually shifting and changing under the pressure of innumerable conscious and sub-conscious souls, that we find ourselves turning to these

invisible companions whose supreme "naturalness" is the test and pattern of all Nature.

And it is because our physical bodies in their magical mysteriousness are so much more real than any rationalistic symbols, such as circles, cubes, squares, wedges, pyramids, and the like, that when we seek to visualize the actual appearance of these "invisible companions," it seems much more appropriate to image their souls as clothed, like the souls of plants, trees, grass, planets, animals and men, in some tangibleness of physical form, than in nothing but the insubstantial stuff of air or wind or vapour, or "spirit."

But since all that we call "Nature" continually changes, passes away in dissolution and is reborn again in other forms; and since no physical body is exempted from death, it is apparent that if the "immortals" possessed physical bodies such as our own, they also would be subject to this law along with the rest of the universe. But the generations of mankind come and go and the "invisible companions" of men remain; therefore the "invisible companions" cannot be supposed, except pictorially and in a symbolic sense, to be subject to the laws which govern our mortal bodies.

It is this freedom from the laws which govern the physical body and from all the intimate and intricate relations which exist between our human soul and our human body, which makes it possible for these companions of men to remain in perpetual contact with every living soul born into the world. The difficulty we experience in realizing the nearness to our individual souls of these invisible companions, is due to a false and exaggerated emphasis laid upon the material spectacle of nature.

This spectacle of the objective universe is undoubtedly one of the ultimate realities revealed to us by the complex vision; but it is only one of these ultimate realities. The complex vision is itself another one of these; and the real

existence of the soul is implied in the activity of the complex vision. The reality of the external universe, the reality of Nature, is so closely associated with the activity of the soul that it is impossible to think of the one apart from the other.

The soul's attribute of sensation is alone responsible for the greater portion of this objective spectacle; for apprehended through any other senses than the ones we possess the whole universe would be transformed. It is only when the soul's essential part in the creation of Nature is fully realized that we see how false and exaggerated an emphasis we are placing upon this "externality" when we permit it to hinder our recognition of the nearness of the immortal gods.

The laws which govern the physical body and "the thousand ills that flesh is heir to" obstruct, confuse, conceal, and distort the soul and hold the gods at a distance. But although the brain and the senses may be tortured, atrophied, perverted; and although the soul may be driven back into its unfathomable depths and held there as if in prison; and although madness intervene between the soul's vision and the world, and sleep may fling it into oblivion, and death may destroy it utterly; tortured or perverted or atrophied or semi-conscious or unconscious, while the soul *lives*, the "invisible companions of men" remain nearer to it than any outward accident, chance, circumstance, fatality or destiny, and are still the arbiters of its hope.

Retracing once more our steps over this perilous bridge of ultimate thought, we may thus indicate the situation. Our starting-point cannot be the "a priori synthetic unity of apperception," because this is an abstraction of the pure reason, and if accepted as a real fact would contradict and negate all the other attributes of the soul.

Our starting-point cannot be the universal "monad" of self-consciousness, because this is an abstraction of the "I

am I" and if accepted as a real fact would negate and suppress every attribute of the soul except the attributes of self-consciousness and emotion.

Our starting-point cannot be the objective world, considered in its evolutionary externality, because this external world depends for its very existence upon the attributes of the soul, especially upon the attribute of sensation.

Our starting-point can therefore be nothing less than the complex vision, which on the one hand implies the reality of the soul and on the other the reality of the external world, and which itself is the vision of a real concrete personality. The individual is thus disclosed as something more than the universal, the microcosm as something more than the macrocosm, and any living personality as something more than any conceivable absolute being.

By an original act of faith, towards which we are helped by the soul's attribute of imagination, we are compelled to conceive of every other soul in the world as being the centre of a universe more or less identical in character with the universe of which our own soul is the centre. These separate universes we have to conceive as being subjective impressions of the same objective reality, the beauty, truth, and goodness of which are guaranteed for us by those "invisible companions of men" in whose eternal vision they find their synthesis.

The tragedy of our life consists in the fact that it is only in rare exalted moments, when the rhythmic harmony of the complex vision is most intense and yet most calm, that the individual soul feels the presence of those supreme companions whose real and personal existence I have attempted to indicate. These ideal and yet most real companions of humanity make their presence felt by the soul in just the same immediate, direct and equivocal way in which we feel the influence of a friend or lover whose



spirit, in his bodily absence, is concentrated upon our spirit, even as ours is upon his.

To the larger vision of these "invisible companions" we find ourselves consciously and sub-consciously turning whenever the burden of our flesh oppresses us more than we can bear. We are compelled to turn to them by reason of the profound instinct in us which recognizes that our ideas of truth, of beauty, and goodness are not mere subjective fancies but are actual objective realities. These ideas do not spring from these "companions" or find their origin and cause in them, any more than they spring from some imaginary "parent" of the universe and find their origin and cause in something "behind life." They do not "spring" from anything at all; but are the very stuff and texture of our own unfathomable souls, just as they are the very stuff and texture of the unfathomable souls of the immortal gods. What we are conscious of, when our complex vision gathers itself together, is the fact that the inevitable element of subjectivity in our individual feeling about these things is transcended and supplemented by an invisible pattern or standard or ideal in which these things are reconciled and fused together at a higher pitch of harmony than we individually, or even in contact with one another, are capable of attaining.

The vision of these "invisible companions"—absolute enough in relation to our own tragic relativity—is itself relative to its own hope, its own dream, its own prophecy, its own permonition. The real evolution of the world, the real movement of life, takes therefore a double form. It takes the form of an individual *return* to the fulness of ideas which have always been implicit and latent in our individual souls. And it takes the form of a co-operative *advance* towards the fulness of ideas which are foreshadowed and prophesied in the vision of these immortals' companions. Thus for us, as well as for them, the eternal

movement is at once an advance and a return. Thus for us, as well as for them, the eternal inspiration is at once a hope and a reminiscence.

It will be seen from what I have said that this philosophy of the complex vision finds a place for all the nobler and more desperate struggles of the human race towards a solution of the mystery of life. It accepts fully the fact that the human reason playing isolated games with itself, is driven by its own nature to reduce "all objects of all thought" to the circle of one "synthetic unity" which is the implied "a priori" background of all actual vision. It accepts fully the fact that human self-consciousness, playing isolated games with itself, is driven by the necessity of its own nature to reduce all separate "selves" to one all embracing "world self" which is the universe conscious of itself as the universe.

It accepts fully the fact that we have to regard the apparent objectivity of the external universe, with its historic process, as an essential and unalterable aspect of reality, so grounded in truth that to call it an "illusion" is a misuse of language. But although it accepts both the extreme "materialistic" view and the extreme "idealistic" view as inevitable revelations of reality, it does not regard either of them as the true starting-point of enquiry, because it regards both these extremes as the result of the isolated play of one or the other of the complex vision's attributes.

The philosophy of the complex vision refuses to accept as its starting-point any "synthetic unity" other than the synthetic unity of personality; because any other than this it is compelled to regard as abstracted from this by the isolated play of some particular attribute of the mind. The philosophy of the complex vision refuses to accept as its starting-point any attenuated materialistic hypothesis, such as may be indicated by the arbitrary words "life-force" or "energy" or "movement" or "ether" or

"atoms" or "molecules" or "electrons" or "vortices" or "evolutionary progress," because it recognizes that all these hypothetical origins of life are only projected and abstracted aspects of the central reality of life, which is, and always must be, personality.

But what is the relation of the philosophy of the complex vision to that modern tendency of thought which calls itself "pragmatism" and which also finds in personality its starting-point and centre? The philosophy of the complex vision seems to detect in the pragmatic attitude something which is profoundly displeasing to its taste. Its own view of the art of life is that it is before everything else a matter of rhythm and harmony and it cannot help discerning in "pragmatism" something piece-meal, pell-mell and "hand-to-mouth." It seems conscious of a certain outrage to its aesthetic sense in the method and the attitude of this philosophy. The pragmatic attitude, though it would be unfair to call it superficial, does not appeal to the philosophy of the complex vision as being one of the supreme, desperate struggles of the human race to overcome the resistance of the Sphinx. The philosophy of the complex vision implies the difficult attainment of an elaborate harmony. It regards "philosophy" as the most difficult of all "works of art." What it seems to be suspicious of in pragmatism is a tendency to seek mediocrity rather than beauty, and a certain humorous opportunism rather than the quiet of an eternal vision. It seems to look in vain in "Pragmatism" for that element of the *impossible*, for that strain of Quixotic faith, in which no high work of art is found to be lacking. It seems unable to discover in the pragmatic attitude that "note of tragedy" which the fatality of human life demands.

It certainly shares with the pragmatic philosophy a tendency to lay more stress upon the freedom of the will than is usual among philosophies. But the "will" of the com-

plex vision moves in closer association with the aesthetic sense than does the "will" of pragmatism. It is perhaps as a matter of "taste" that pragmatism proves most unsatisfactory to it. It seems to be conscious of something in pragmatism, which, though itself perhaps not precisely "commercial," seems curiously well adapted to a commercial age. It is aware, in fine, that certain high and passionate intimations are roused to unmitigated hostility by the whole pragmatic attitude. And it refuses to outrage these intimations for the sake of any psychological contentment.

In regard to the particular kind of "truth" championed by pragmatists, the "truth" namely which gives one on the whole the greatest amount of practical efficiency, the philosophy of the complex vision remains unconvinced. The pragmatic philosophy judges the value of any "truth" by its effective application to ordinary moments. The philosophy of the complex vision judges the value of any "truth" by its relation to that rare and difficult harmony which can be obtained only in extraordinary moments. To the pragmatic philosopher a shrewd, efficient and healthy-minded person, with a good "working" religion, would seem the lucky one, while to the philosophy of the complex vision some desperate, unhappy suicidal wastrel, who by the grace of the immortals was allowed some high unutterable moment, might approach much more closely to the vision of those "sons of the universe" who are the pattern of us all.

This comparison of the method we are endeavouring to follow with the method of "pragmatism" helps to throw a clear light upon what the complex vision reveals about these "ultimate ideas" in the flow of an indiscriminate mass of mental impression.

To the passing fashion of modern thought there is something stiff, scholastic, archaic, rigid, and even Byzantine,

about the words "truth," "beauty," "goodness," thus pedestalled side by side. But just as with the old-fashioned word "matter" and the old-fashioned word "soul," we must not be misled by a mere "superstition of novelty" in these things.

Modern psychology has not been able, and never can be able, to escape from the universal human experiences which these old-fashioned words cover; and as long as the experiences are recognized as real, it surely does not make much difference what *names* we give to them. It seems, indeed, in a point so human and dramatic as this, far better to use words that have already acquired a clear traditional and natural connotation than to invent new words according to one's own arbitrary fancy. It would not be difficult to invent such words. In place of "truth" one could say "the objective reality of things" rhythmically apprehended by the complex vision. Instead of "beauty" one could say "the world seen under the light of a peculiar creative power in the soul which reveals a secret aspect of things otherwise concealed from us." Instead of "goodness" one could say "the power of the conscious and living *will*, when directed towards love." And in place of "love" itself one could say "the projection of the essence of the soul upon the objective plane; when such an essence is directed towards life."

But it would be futile to continue this "fancy-work," of definition by an individual temperament. The general traditional meaning of these words is clear and unmistakable; though there may be infinite minute shades of difference between one person's interpretation of such a meaning and another's. What it all really amounts to is this. No philosophic or scientific interpretation of life, which does not include the verdict of life's own most concentrated moments, can possibly be adequate.

Human nature can perfectly well philosophize about its

normal stream of impressions in "cold blood," so to speak, and according to a method that discounts all emotional vision. But the resultant conclusions of such philosophizing, with their easy-going assumption that what we call "beauty" and "goodness" have no connection with what we call "truth," are conclusions so unsatisfying to more than half of our being that they carry their refutation on the face of them.

To be an "interpretation of life" a philosophical theory cannot afford to disregard the whole turbulent desperate dramatic content of emotional experience. It cannot disregard the fact, for instance, that certain moments of our lives bring to us certain reconciliations and revelations that change the whole perspective of our days. To "interpret life" from the material offered by the uninspired unconcentrated unrhythmical "average" moods of the soul is like trying to interpret the play of "Hamlet" from a version out of which every one of Hamlet's own speeches have been carefully removed. Or, to take a different metaphor, such pseudo-psychological philosophy is like an attempt to analyse the nature of fire by a summary of the various sorts of fuel which have been flung into the flame.

The act of faith by which these ultimate ideas are reduced to the vision of living personalities is a legitimate matter for critical scepticism. But that there are such ultimate ideas and that life cannot be interpreted without considering them is not a matter for any sort of scepticism. It is a basic assumption, without which there could be no adequate philosophy at all. It is the only intelligible assumption which covers the undeniable human experience which gathers itself together in these traditional words.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE NATURE OF ART

The only adequate clue to the historic mystery of that thing which the human race has come to call "beauty," and that other thing—the re-creation of this through individual human minds—which we have come to call "art"—is found, if the complex vision is to be trusted at all, in the contact of the emotion of love with the "objective mystery," and its consequent dispersion, as the other aspects of the soul are brought to bear upon it, into the three primordial ideas of goodness, beauty, and truth.

The reason why this one particular aspect of the soul which we call emotion is found to be the synthesis of what is discovered by all the other aspects of the soul functioning together is that the nature of emotion differs radically from reason, conscience, will, imagination, taste, and the rest, in that it is not only a clarifying, directing and discriminating activity but is also—as none of these others are—an actual mood, or temper, or state of the soul, possessing certain definite vibrations of energy and a certain sort of psychic fluidity or out-flowing which seems perpetually to spring up from an unfathomable depth.

This synthetic rôle played by emotion in unifying the other activities of the complex vision and preparing the psychic material for the final activity of the apex-thought may perhaps be understood better if we think of emotion as being an actual outflowing of the soul itself, springing up from unfathomable depths. Thinking of it in this way we may conceive the actual size or volume of the "soul monad" to be increased by this centrifugal expansion.

By such an increase of the soul's volume we do not mean an actual increase; because the depths of all souls are equally unfathomable when their recession inwards is considered. By such an increase we refer to the forth-flowing of the soul as it manifests itself through the physical body. Thus our theory brings us back, as all theories must if they are consonant with experience, to the traditional language of the human race. For in ordinary language there is nothing strange about the expression "a great soul." Such an expression simply refers to the volume of the soul's outflowing through the body. And this outflowing is the fulness, more or less, of the soul's well-spring of emotion.

A "great soul" is thus a soul whereof the outflowing emotion—on both sides of its inherent duality—is larger in volume as it manifests itself through the body than in normal cases; and a "small soul" is a soul whose volume of outflowing emotion is less than in normal cases.

It must be remembered, however, when we speak of the outflowing emotion of the soul that we do not mean that there *pours through* the soul from some exterior source a stream of emotion distinct from the integral being of the soul itself. What we mean is that the soul itself finds itself divided against itself in an eternal contradiction which may be compared to the positive and negative pole of electricity.

This outflowing of emotion is not, therefore, the outflowing of something which emerges from the soul but is the outflowing, or the expansion and dilation through the body, or the soul itself. What we are now indicating, as to the less or greater degree of volume in the soul's manifestation through the body, is borne witness to in the curious fact that the bodies of persons under strong emotion—whether it be the emotion of love or the emotion of malice—do actually seem to dilate in bulk and stature.



All that we have been saying has a clear bearing upon the problem of the relation between the emotional aspect of the soul and the other aspects. The emotion of the soul is the outflowing of the soul itself, on one side or other of its inherent duality; while the other aspects of the soul—such as will, taste, imagination, reason, and so forth—are the directing, selecting, clarifying, interpreting activities of the soul as it flings itself upon the objective mystery.

Thus, while it is by means of that activity of the soul which we call conscience that we distinguish between good and evil; and by means of that activity called the aesthetic sense that we distinguish between beauty and hideousness; and by means of that activity called reason that we distinguish between reality and unreality; it is all the while from its own emotional outflowing that the soul directed and guided by these critical energies, creates the universe which becomes its own, and then discovers that the universe which it has created is also the universe of the immortals.

It is because this emotional duality of love and malice is the inherent "psychic stuff" of all living souls whether mortal or immortal that the soul of man comes at last to comprehend that those primordial ideas of goodness, beauty and truth, out of which the universe is half-created and half-discovered, draw, so to speak the sanction of their objective reality from the eternal vision of the immortals.

The distinction we have thus insisted upon between the nature of emotion and the nature of the other aspects of the soul makes it now clear how it is that we are compelled to regard these three primordial ideas of beauty, truth and goodness as finding their unity and their original identity in the emotion of love.

It has been necessary to consider these ultimate movements of the soul in order that we may be in a position to understand the general nature of this mysterious thing we

call "art," and be able to track its river-bed, so to speak, up to the original source. From a consideration of the fact that the outflowing of the soul takes the form of emotion, and that this emotion is at perpetual war within itself and is for ever contradicting itself, we arrive at our first axiomatic principle with regard to art, namely that art is, and must always be, penetrated through and through by the spirit of contradiction. Whatever else art may become, then, one thing we can predicate for certain with regard to it, namely that it springs from an eternal conflict between two irreconcilable opposites.

We are, further than this, able to define the nature of these opposites as the everlasting conflict between creation and what resists creation, or between love and malice. It is just here, in regard to the character of these opposites, that the philosophy of the complex vision differs from the Bergsonian philosophy of the "élan vital."

According to Bergson's monistic system the only genuine reality is the flux of spirit. The spirit of some primordial self-expansion projects what we call "matter" as its secondary manifestation and then is condemned to an unending and exhausting struggle with what it has projected.

Spirit, therefore, is pure energy and movement and matter is pure heaviness and resistance. Out of the necessity of this conflict emerge all those rigid logical concepts and mathematical formulae, of which space and time, in the ordinary sense of those words, are the ultimate generalization.

Our criticism of this theory is that both these things—this "spirit" and this spirit-evoked "matter"—are themselves meaningless concepts, concepts which, in spite of Bergson's contempt for ordinary metaphysic, are in reality entirely metaphysical, being in fact, like the old-fashioned entities whose place they occupy, nothing but empty bodiless generalizations abstracted from the concrete living

reality of the soul. But quite apart from our criticism of the Bergsonian "spirit" and "matter" on the ground of their being unreal conceptions illegitimately abstracted from real personality we are compelled to note a second vivid difference between our point of view and his in regard to this matter of opposites and their contradiction. Bergson's monism, as we have seen, resolves itself into a duality which may be defined as conscious activity confronted by unconscious inertness.

Our duality, on the contrary, which has behind it, not monism, but pluralism, may be defined as conscious creation, or conscious love, confronted by conscious resistance to creation, or conscious inert malice. Thus while Bergson finds his ultimate axiomatic "data" in philosophical abstractions, we find our ultimate axiomatic "data" in the realities of human experiences. Bergson seeks to interpret human life in terms of the universe. We seek to interpret the universe in terms of human life. And we contend that we are justified in doing this since what we call "the universe," as soon as it is submitted to analysis, turns out to be nothing but an act of faith according to which an immense plurality of separate personal universes find a single universe of inspiration and hope in the vision of the immortal gods.

The ultimate duality revealed by the complex vision is a duality on both sides of which we have unfathomable abysses of consciousness. On the one side this consciousness is eternally creative. On the other side this consciousness is eternally malicious, in its deliberate inert resistance to creation. It is natural enough, therefore, that while Bergson's "creative evolution" resolves itself into a series of forward-movements which are as easy and organic as the growth of leaves on a tree, our advance toward the real future which is also a return to the ideal past, resolves itself in a series of supremely difficult rhythms, wherein

eternally conscious "good" overcomes eternally conscious "evil."

Our philosophy, therefore, may, in the strictest sense, be called a "human" philosophy in contra-distinction to a "cosmic" philosophy; or, if you please, it may be called a "dramatic" philosophy in contra-distinction to a "lyric" philosophy. From all this it will be clearly seen that it would be impossible for us to hypostasize a super-moral or sub-moral universe in complete disregard of the primordial conscience of the human soul. It will be equally clearly seen that it would be impossible for us to project a theoretical universe made up of "cosmic streams of tendency," whether "spiritual" or "material," in complete disregard of the soul's primordial aesthetic sense.

The logical scrupulosity and rationalistic passion which drive a cosmic philosopher forward, in his attempt to construct a universe in disregard of the human conscience and the human aesthetic sense, are themselves evidence that while he has suppressed in himself the first two of the three primordial ideas of which we speak, he has become an all-or-nothing slave of the last of these three ideas—namely, the idea of truth. He has sacrificed his conscience and his taste to this isolated and abstracted "truth," the quest of pure reason alone, and, as a result of this fanaticism, the real "true truth," that is to say the complete rhythmic vision of the totality of man's nature, has been suppressed and destroyed.

It must be fully admitted at this point that the fanaticism of the so-called "pure saint" and the so-called "pure artist" who suppress, the one for the sake of "goodness" and the other for the sake of "beauty," the third great primordial idea which we have called "truth," is a fanaticism just as one sided and just as destructive of the complete harmonious vision as those other kinds.

That this is the case can easily be proved by recalling

how thin, how strained, how morbid, how ungracious, how inhuman, those so-called "saints" and "artists" become, when, in their neglect of reason and truth, they persist in following their capricious, subjective, fantastic, individual dreams, out of all concrete relation to the actual world we live in.

We arrive, therefore, at a point from which we are able to detect the true inner spirit of the nature of art; and what we discover may thus be stated. Art is the expression, through the medium of an individual temperament, of a beauty which is one of the primordial aspects of this pluralistic world. The eternal duality of things implies that this beauty is always manifested as something in perpetual conflict with its opposite, namely with that antagonistic aspect of the universe which we name the hideous or the ugly.

This duality exists as the eternal condition of each one of the three primordial ideas out of which the universe is evoked. Each of these three ideas is only known to us as the result of a relative victory over its opposite. Beauty is known to us as a relative victory over hideousness. Goodness is known to us as a relative victory over evil. Truth is known to us as a relative victory over the false and the unreal. The fact that each of these ideas can only be known in a condition of conflict with its opposite and in a condition of relative victory over its opposite is due to the fact that all three of them are in their own nature only clarifying, selecting, and value-giving activities; whereas the actual material upon which they have to work, as well as the energy from which they derive their motive-power, is nothing else but that mysterious out-flowing of the soul itself which we call emotion.

For since emotion is eternally divided against itself into love and malice, the three primordial ideas which deal with this emotion are also eternally divided against themselves,

into beauty and hideousness, into goodness and evil, into reality and unreality. And since the very existence of emotion depends upon the struggle between love and malice, in the same way the very existence of our aesthetic sense depends upon the struggle between beauty and hideousness; and the very existence of reason depends upon the struggle between reality and unreality. The only love we can possibly have to deal with is a love which is for ever overcoming malice. The only beauty we can possibly have to deal with is a beauty which is for ever overcoming hideousness.

And the same assertion must be made both with regard to goodness and with regard to truth. If any one of them absolutely overcame the other, so as completely to destroy it, the ebb and flow of life would at that moment cease.

A world where all minds could apprehend all truth without any illusion or admixture of unreality, would not be a world at all, as we know the world. It would be the colourless dream of an immobile plurality of absolutes. As far as we are concerned it would be synonymous with death. Thus the ultimate nature of the world is found to be unfathomably dualistic. A sharp dividing line of irreconcilable duality intersects every living soul; and the secret of life turns out to be the relatively victorious struggle of personality with the thing that in itself resists its fuller life.

This verdict of the complex vision is in unison with the natural feeling of ordinary humanity and it is also in unison with the supreme illuminated moments when we seem to apprehend the vision of the gods. When once we have apprehended the inherent nature of beauty, we are in a position to understand what the spirit of art must be, whose business it is to re-create this beauty in terms of personality. The idea of beauty itself is profoundly personal even before art touches it, since it is one

of the three primordial ideas with which every conscious soul sets forth.

But it is not only personal. It is also objective and impersonal. For it is not only the reaction of a particular soul to its own universe; it is also felt, in the rare moments when the apex-thought of the complex vision is creating its world rhythm, to be nothing less than the vision of the immortals.

Art, therefore, which is the representation in terms of some particular personal temperament, of that sense of beauty which is the inheritance of all souls born into the world, must be profoundly penetrated by the victorious struggle of the emotion of love with the emotion of malice. For although the human sense of the beauty of the world, which may be called the objective sense of the beauty of the world, since the vision of the immortals lies behind it, is the thing which art expresses, it must be remembered that this sense is not an actual substance or concrete entity, but is only a principle of selection or a process of mental reaction, in regard to life.

The thing which may be called an actual substance is that out-flowing of the soul itself in centrifugal waves of positive and negative vibration which we have chosen to name by the name "emotion." This may indeed be called an actual concrete extension of the psychic-stuff of the substantial soul. None of the three primordial ideas resemble it in this. They are all attitudes of the soul; not conscious enlargements or lessenings of the very stuff of the soul.

The idea of beauty is a particular reaction to the universe. The idea of truth is a particular reaction to the universe. The idea of goodness is a particular act of the will with regard to our relation to the universe. But the emotion of love, in its struggle with the emotion of malice, is much more than this. It is the actual out-flowing of

the soul itself; and it offers, as such, the very stuff and material out of which truth and beauty and goodness are distinguished and discerned.

Some clear hints and intimations as to the nature of art may be arrived at from these considerations. We at any rate reach a general criterion, applicable to all instances, as to the presence or absence in any particular case of the authentic and objective "note" of true art. This "note" is the presence in a work of art of the decisive relative victory of love over malice. When, on the contrary, in any work of art, the original struggle of love with malice issues in a relative overcoming of love by malice, then such a work of art belongs, ipso facto, to an inferior order of excellence.

This criterion is one of easy intuitive application, although any exact analysis of it, in a particular case, may be difficult and obscure. Roughly and generally expressed it amounts to this. In the great works of art of the world, wherein the subjective vision of the artist expresses itself in mysterious reciprocity with the objective vision of the immortals, there is always found a certain large "humanity." This humanity, wherein an infinite pity never for a moment degenerates into weak sentiment, reduces the co-existence of cruelty and malice to the lowest possible minimum, consonant with the ebb and flow of life.

Some residuum of such malice and cruelty there must be, even in the supremest work of art, else the eternal contradictions upon which life depends would be destroyed. But the emotion of love, in such works, will always be found to have its fingers, as it were, firmly upon the throat of its antagonist, so that the resultant rhythm shall be felt to be the ultimate rhythm of life itself, wherein the eternal struggle of love with malice issues in the relative overcoming of the latter by the former.

It would be invidious perhaps to name, in this place,



any particular works of art in which the predominant element is malice rather than love. But such works of art exist in considerable number, and the lacerated and distorted beauty of them remains as a perpetual witness to what they have missed. In speaking of these inferior works of art the aesthetic psychologist must be on his guard against the confusion of such moods as the creative instinct of destruction or the creative instinct of simple sensuality with the inert malice we are considering.

The instinct of destruction is essentially connected with the instinct of creation and indeed must be regarded as an indirect expression of that instinct; for, as one can clearly understand, almost every creative undertaking implies some kind of destructive or at least some kind of suppressive or renunciant act which renders such an undertaking possible.

In the same way it is not difficult to see that the simple impulse of natural sensuality, or direct animal lust, is profoundly connected with the creative instinct, and is indeed the expression of the creative instinct on the plane of purely material energy. But it must be understood, however, that neither the will to destruction nor the will to sensuality are by any means always as innocent as the forms of them I have indicated above.

It often happens indeed that this destructive instinct is profoundly penetrated by malice and derives the thrill of its activity from malice; and this may easily be observed in certain famous but not supreme works of art. It must also be understood that the impulse to sensuality or lust is not always the direct simple animal instinct to which I have referred. What has come to be called "Sadism" is an instance of this aberration of an innocent impulse.

The instinct of "sadism," or the deriving of voluptuous pleasure from sensual cruelty, has its origin in the legitimate association of the impulse to destroy with the impulse

to create, as these things are inseparably linked together in the normal "possession" of a woman by a man. In such "possession" the active masculine principle has to exercise a certain minimum of destruction with a view to a certain maximum of creation; and the normal resistance of the female is the mental corollary of this.

The normal resistance of the artist's medium to the activity of his energy is a sort of aesthetic parallel to this situation; and it is easy to see how, in the creation of a work of art, this aesthetic overcoming of resistance may get itself mentally associated with the parallel sensation experienced on the sensual plane. The point we have to make is this: that while in normal cases the impulse to sensuality is perfectly direct, innocent, animal, and earth-born; in other cases it becomes vitiated by the presence in it of a larger amount of destructive energy than can be accounted for by the original necessity.

Thus in a great many quite famous works of art there will be found an element of sadism. But it will always remain that in the supreme works of art this sadistic element has been overcome and transformed by the pressure upon it of the emotion of love. There exists, however, other instances, when the work of art in question is obviously inferior, in which we are confronted by something much more evil than the mere presence of the sadistic impulse. What I refer to is a very subtle and complicated mood wherein the simple sadistic impulse to derive sensual pleasure from the contemplation of cruelty has been seized upon and taken possession of by the emotion of malice.

The complicated mood resulting from this association of sadistic cruelty with inert malice is perhaps the most powerful engine of evil that exists in the world; although a pure unmitigated condition of unsensualized, unimpasioned, motiveless malice is, in its inmost self, more essentially and profoundly evil. For while the energy of sad-

ism renders the actual destructive power of malice much more formidable, we must remember that what really constitutes the essence of evil is never the energy of destruction but always the malicious inertness of resistance to creation. We have thus arrived at some measure of insight as to the nature of art and we find that whatever else it may be it must be penetrated through and through by the overcoming of malice by love. It must, in other words, have the actual out-flowing of the soul as the instrument of its expression and as the psycho-material medium with which it inscribes its vision upon the objective mystery that confronts it.

We have at least arrived at this point in our search for a definite criterion: that when in any work of art a vein of excessive cruelty or, worse still, a vein of sneering and vindictive malice, dominates the emotional atmosphere, such a work of art, however admirable it may be in other respects, falls below the level of the most excellent. The relation between the idea of beauty as expressed by the aesthetic sense and those other ideas, namely of truth and goodness, which complete the circle of human vision, is a relation which may be suggested thus.

Since all three of these primordial ideas are unified by the emotion of love it is clear that the emotion of love is the element in which each of them severally moves. And since it is impossible that love should be antagonistic to itself we must conclude that the love which is the element or substratum of beauty is the same love that is the element or substratum of goodness and truth. And since all these three elements are in reality one element, which is indeed nothing less than the dominant out-flowing of the soul itself, it follows that those portions of the soul's out-flowing which have been directed by reason and by conscience, which we call the idea of truth and the idea

of goodness, must have an ultimate identity with that portion of the soul's out-flowing which has been directed by the aesthetic sense and which we call the idea of beauty.

This identity between truth and goodness on the one hand and beauty on the other cannot be regarded as an absolute identity. The idea of truth continues to represent one facet of the universe, the idea of goodness another, and the idea of beauty another or a third. What we mean by the use of the term "identity" is simply this: that the universe revealed by each one of these three ideas is the same universe as is revealed by the others, and the emotional out-flowing of the individual soul, which reveals each of these separate facets or aspects of the universe, is the same in each of the three ideas which govern its direction.

It is, however, only at their supreme point, when they are fused together by the apex-thought of the complex vision, that the activity of these separate ideas is found to be in complete harmony. Short of this extreme limit they tend to deviate from each other and to utter contradictory oracles. We may therefore lay it down as an unalterable law of their activity that when any one of these ideas contradicts another it does so because of a weakness and imperfection in its own intensity or in the intensity of the idea it contradicts.

Thus if an idea of goodness is found irreconcilable with an idea of beauty, something is wrong with one or the other of these ideas, or perhaps with both of them. And we are not only able to say that something is wrong with such ideas when they contradict one another, we are able to predicate with certainty as to what precisely is wrong. For the "something wrong" which leads to this contradiction, the "something wrong" which stands in the way of the rhythmic activity of the soul's apex-thought, will in-

variably be found to be a weakening of the out-flowing of the emotion of love in one or other or perhaps all three of the implicated ideas.

For the out-flowing of the soul's emotion is not only the life of the root of this "tree of knowledge"; it is also the life of the sap of the uttermost branches; it is the force that makes the fragrance of each topmost leaf mingle with that of all the rest, in that unified breath of the whole tree which loses itself in the air.

Thus we arrive at our final conclusion as to the nature of art. And when we apply our criterion to any of the supreme works of art of the world we find it does not fail us. The figure of Christ, for instance, remains the supreme incarnation of the idea of goodness in the world; and few will deny that the figure of Christ represents not only the idea of goodness but the ideas of truth and beauty also. If one contemplates many another famous "good man" of history, such as easily may be called to mind, one is at once conscious that the "goodness" of these admirable persons is a thing not altogether pleasing to the aesthetic taste, and a thing which in some curious way seems to obscure our vision of the real truth of life.

A great work of art, such as Leonardo's "Virgin of the Rocks," or Dostoievsky's "Idiot," is intuitively recognized as being not only entirely satisfying to the aesthetic sense but also entirely satisfying to our craving for truth and our longing for the inmost secret of goodness. Every great work of art is the concentrated essence of a man's ultimate reaction to the universe. It has an undertone of immense tragedy; but in the depths of this tragedy there is no despair, because an infinite pity accompanies the infinite sorrow, and in such pity love finds itself stronger than fate. No work of art, however appealing or magical, can carry the full weight of what it means to be an inheritor of human tradition, of what it means to be a living soul,

until it has arrived at that rhythm of the apex-thought which is a fusion of what we call the "good" with what we call the "beautiful" and the "true."

It is only when our notion of what is good and what is true falls short of the austere demands of the aesthetic sense that a certain uneasiness and suspicion enters into a discussion of this kind. And such an uneasiness is justified by reason of the fact that the popular notion both of goodness and truth does so often fall lamentably short of such demands. The moral conscience of average humanity is a thing of such dull sensibility, of such narrow and limited vision, that it is inevitable that its "goodness" should clash with so exacting a censor as the aesthetic sense.

The rational conscience of average humanity is a thing of such dense and rigid and unimaginative vision that it is inevitable that its "truth" should clash with the secrets revealed by the aesthetic sense. The cause, why the aesthetic sense seems to come on the scene with an apparatus of valuation so much more advanced and refined than that possessed by the conscience or by the reason, is that both conscience and reason are continually being applied to action, to conduct, to the manipulation of practical affairs, and are bound in this commerce with superficial circumstance to grow a little blunt and gross and to lose something of their fine edge.

Conscience and reason, in the hurly-burly and pell-mell of life, are driven to compromise, to half-measures, to the second-best.

Conscience is compelled to be satisfied with something less than its own rigid demands. Reason is compelled to accept something less than its own rigid demands. Both of these things tend to become, under the pressure of the play of circumstance, pragmatical, time-serving, and opportunistic. But the aesthetic sense, although in itself it has always room for infinite growth, is in its inherent

nature unable to compromise; unable to bend this way and that; unable to dally with half-measures.

Any action, in a world of this kind, necessarily implies compromise; and since goodness is so largely a matter of action, goodness is necessarily penetrated by a spirit of compromise. Indeed it may be said that a certain measure of common-sense is of the very essence of goodness. But what has common-sense to do with art? Common-sense has never been able, and never will be able, to understand even the rudiments of art. For art is the half-discovery of something that must always seem an impossibility to common-sense; and it is the half-creation of something that must always render common-sense irrelevant and unimportant. Truth, again, in a world of so infinite a complication, must frequently have to remain an open question, a suspended judgment, an antinomy of opposites. The agnostic attitude—as, for instance, in the matter of the immortality of the soul—may in certain cases come to be the ultimate gesture of what we call the truth.

But with the aesthetic sense there can never be any suspension of judgment, never any open question, never any antinomy of opposites, never the least shadow of the pragmatic, or “working” test. It is therefore natural enough that when persons possessed of any degree of cultivated taste hear other persons speak of “goodness” or “truth” they grow distrustful and suspicious, they feel uneasy and very much on guard. For they know well that the conscience of the ordinary person is but a blunt and clumsy instrument, quite as likely to distort and pervert the essential spirit of “goodness” as to reveal it, and they know well that the “truth” of the ordinary person’s reason is a sorry compound of logical rigidity and practical opportunism; with but small space left in it for the vision of imagination.

It is because of their primary importance in the sphere

of practical action that the conscience and the reason have been developed out of all proportion to the aesthetic sense. And it is because the deplorable environment of our present commercial system has emphasized action and conduct, out of all proportion to contemplation and insight, that it is so difficult to restore the balance. The tyranny of machinery has done untold evil in increasing this lack of proportion; because machinery, by placing an unmalleable and inflexible material—a material that refuses to be humanized—between man's fingers and the actual element he works in, has interrupted that instinctive aesthetic movement of the human hands, which, even in the midst of the most utter clumsiness and grossness, can never fail to introduce some touch of beauty into what it creates.

We have thus arrived at a definite point of view from which we are able to observe the actual play of man's aesthetic sense as, in its mysterious fusion with the energy of reason and conscience, it interprets the pervading beauty of the system of things, according to the temperament of the individual. It remains to note how in the supreme works of art this human temperamental vision is caught up and transcended in the high objectivity of a greater and more universal vision; a vision which is still personal, because everything true and beautiful in the universe is personal, but which, by the rhythm of the apex-thought, has attained a sort of impersonal personality or, in other words, has been brought into harmony with the vision of the immortals.

The material upon which the artist works is that original "objective mystery," confronting every individual soul, out of which every individual soul creates its universe. The medium by means of which the artist works is that out-flowing of the very substance of the soul itself which we name by the name of emotion. This actual passing of the substantial substance of the soul into whatever form



or shape of objective mystery the soul's vision has half-discovered and half-created is the true secret of what happens both in the case of the original creation of the artist and in case of the reciprocal re-creation of the person enjoying the work of art.

For Benedetto Croce, the Italian philosopher, is surely right when he asserts that no one can enter into the true spirit of a work of art without exercising upon it something of the same creative impulse as that by the power of which it originally came into existence. In the contemplation of a statue or a picture or a piece of bric-à-brac, in the enjoyment of a poem or an exquisite passage of prose, just as much as in the hearing of music, the soul of the recipient is projected beyond its normal limitation in the same way as the soul of the creator was projected beyond its normal limitation.

The soul which thus gives itself up to Beauty is actually extended in a living ecstasy of vibration until it flows into, and through, and around, the thing it loves. But even this is an inadequate expression of what happens; for this out-flowing of the soul is the very force and energy which actually is engaged in re-creating this thing out of what at present I confine myself to calling the "objective mystery."

The emotion of the soul plays therefore a double part. It half-discovers and half-creates the pervading beauty of things; and it also loses itself in receptive ecstasy, in embracing what it has half-created and half-found.

We have now reached a point from which we are able to advance yet another step.

Since what we call beauty is the evocation of these two confronted existences, the existing thing which we call the soul and the existing thing which we call the objective mystery, it follows that there resides, as a potentiality, in the nature of the objective mystery, the capacity for

being converted into Beauty at the touch of the soul. There is thus a three-fold complication of reality in this thing we call the beauty of the universe.

There is the individual, human, subjective reality of it, dependent upon the temperament of the observer. There is the universal potential reality of it, existing in the objective mystery. And finally there is the ideal reality of it, objective and absolute as far as we are concerned, in the vision that I have called "the vision of the immortals." If it be asked why, in all these ultimate problems, it is necessary to introduce the vision of the immortals, my answer is that the highest human experience demands and requires it.

At those rare moments when the "apex-thought" reaches its rhythmic consummation the soul is conscious that its subjective vision of Truth and Beauty merges itself and loses itself in an objective vision which carries the "imprimatur" of eternity. This is a definite universal experience which few introspective minds will dare to deny.

But since, as we have already proved, the ultimate reality of things is personality, or, to be more exact, is personality, confronting the objective mystery, it is clear that if the subjective vision of the soul is to correspond with an objective reality outside the soul, that objective reality outside the soul must itself be the vision of personality. It may be asked, at this point, why it is that the potentiality or the capacity for being turned into beauty at the touch of the soul, which resides in the objective mystery is not enough to explain this recognition by the soul of an eternal objective validity in its ultimate ideas.

It is not enough to explain it, because this potentiality remains entirely unrecognized until it is touched by personality, and it is therefore quite as much a potentiality of inferior beauty, inadequate truth, and second-rate goodness, as it is a potentiality of the rarest of these things.

The objective mystery by itself cannot explain the soul's experience of an eternal validity in its deepest ideas because the objective mystery in its rôle of pure potentiality is capable of being moulded into the form of *any* ideas, whether deep or shallow. Thus our proof of the real existence of "the vision of the immortals" depends upon two facts.

It depends upon the fact that the soul experiences an intuitive assurance of objective reality in its ideas. And it depends upon the fact that there is no other reality in the world, with any definite form or outline, except the reality of personality. For an idea to be eternal, therefore, it must be the idea of a personality, or of many personalities, which themselves are eternal; and since we have no evidence that the human soul is eternal and does not perish with the body we are compelled to assume that somewhere in the universe there must exist beings whose personality is able to resist death and whose vision is an immortal vision.

It might be objected at this point, by such as follow the philosophy of Epicurus, that, even though such beings exist, we have no right to assume that they have any regard for us. My answer to this is that in such moments as I have attempted to describe, when the rhythmic activity of the soul is at its highest, we become directly and intuitively conscious of an immense unutterable harmony pervading all forms of life, whether mortal or immortal; a harmony which could not be felt if there were not some mysterious link binding all living souls together.

We become aware at such moments that not only are all living souls thus bound together but that all are bound together by the fact that the ideal vision of them all is one and the same. This is not only my answer to such as maintain that though there may be Beings in the system of things superior to man, such Beings have no neces-

sary connection with man; it is also my answer to the question as to how, considering the capricious subjectivity of our human vision, we can be assured that the ideal vision of the immortals does not vary in the same way among themselves. We are assured against both these possibilities; against the possibility of the immortals being indifferent to humanity, and against the possibility of the immortals being divided among themselves, by the fact that, according to the very basic revelation of the complex vision, wherever there is a living soul, that living soul is dependent for its continued existence upon the overcoming of malice by love.

This duality is so much the essence of what we call personality that we cannot conceive of personality without it. If, therefore, the immortals are possessed of personality they must be subject to this duality; and the fact that they are subject to it puts them necessarily in at least a potential "rapport" with all other living souls, since the essence of every living soul is to be found in the same unfathomable struggle.

But granting that there *are* superior Beings, worthy to be called Gods, who in their essential nature resemble humanity, how can we be assured that there is any contact between them and humanity? We are assured of this in the intuitive revelation of a most definite human experience, an experience which few philosophers have been sceptical enough to deny, although their explanations of it may have been different from mine.

William James, for instance, whose psychological investigations into the phenomena of religious feeling are so thorough and original, describes the sense we have of the presence of these unseen Powers in a very interesting and curious way. He points out that the feeling we experience at such moments is that there exists below the level of our ordinary consciousness a deep and limitless reservoir or

cistern containing "more" of the same stream of spiritual emotion which we are conscious of as being our very inmost self or soul of our soul.

On the waves of this subconscious ocean of deeper life we are, so to speak, able to "ride"; if once, in a sudden revolution of absolute humility, we can give ourselves up to it.

It is needless to indicate how the Ideas of Plato, the "*subspecie aeternitatis*" of Spinoza, the "Liberation" from "the Will" of Schopenhauer, the "Beatific Vision" of the Catholic saints are all analogues and parallels, expressed under different symbols, of the same universal feeling. The difference between these philosophic statements of the situation and mine, is that, whereas these are content, with the doubtful exception of Plato, to eliminate from this subconscious "more" of what is "best" in our own soul, every trace and element of personality, I am unable to escape from the conviction that compared with personality no power in the universe, whether it be called "Idea" or "Substance" or a "Will to annihilate Will" or "Life Force" or "Stream of consciousness" or any other name, is worthy to be regarded as the cause and origin of that intimation of "something more" by which our soul comes into contact with the secret of the system of things.

To assume that the vision of unutterable truth which is reached in the supreme works of art is anything less than the vision of super-human Personality is to assume that something other than Perapity is the secret of life. And how can man, who feels so profoundly conscious that his own personal "I am I" is the inmost essence of his being, when it comes to the question of the cause of his sensation of "riding on the waves" of this something "more," be content to find the cause in mere abstractions from per-

sonality, such as "streams of consciousness" or "life-force" or "Absolute Substance"?

What we *know for certain*, in this strange imbroglio, is that what we call Beauty is a complex of two mysteries, the mystery of our own "I am I" and the mystery of the "objective something" which this "I am I" confronts. And if, as is the case, our most intense and passionate experience, when the rhythm of our nature is at the fullest, is the intuition of some world-deep authority or sanction giving an eternal validity to our ideas, this authority or sanction cannot be interpreted in mere metaphors or similes abstracted from personality, or in any material substance without a mind, or in any "stream of thought" without a thinker; but can only be interpreted in terms of what alone we have an inside consciousness of, namely in terms of personality itself.

To some temperaments it might seem as though this reduction of the immense unfathomable universe to a congeries of living souls were a strangling limitation. There are certain human temperaments, and my own is one of them, whose aesthetic sense demands the existence of vast interminable spaces of air, of water, of earth, of fire, or even of blank emptiness. To such a temperament it might seem as though to be jostled throughout eternity by other living souls were to be shut up in an unescapable prison. And when to this unending population of fellow-denizens of space we add this doctrine that our deepest ideas of Beauty remain subjective and ephemeral until they have received the "imprimatur" of some mysterious super-human Being or Beings, such rebellious temperaments as I am speaking of might conceivably cry aloud for the Psalmist's "wings of a dove."

But the aspect of things which I have just suggested is after all only a superficial aspect of the situation. Those

hollow spaces of unplumbed darkness, those gulfs filled with primordial nothingness, those caverns of midnight where the hoary chemistry of matter swirls and ferments in eternal formlessness; these indeed *are* taken away from us. But as I have indicated again and again, no movement of human logic, no energy of human reason, can destroy the unfathomableness of Nature. The immense spectacle of the material universe, with its perpetually receding background of objective mystery, is a thing that cannot be destroyed. Those among us who reluct at every human explanation of this panorama of shadows, are only too easily able to "flee away and be at rest" in the bottomless gulf they crave.

The fact that man's apex-thought reveals the presence of an unending procession of living souls, each of whose creative energy moulds this mystery to its own vision, does not remove the unfathomableness of the world-stuff whereof they mould it. As we have already seen, this aboriginal world-stuff, so impenetrable to all analysis, assumes as far as we are concerned a three-fold form. It assumes the form of the material element in that fusion of matter and consciousness which makes up the substance of the soul. It assumes the form of the universal medium which binds all souls together. And it assumes the form of the objective mystery which confronts the vision of all souls. Over these three forms of the "world-stuff" hangs irrevocably the great "world-curve" or "world-circle" of omnipresent Space, which gives the final and ultimate unity to all possible universes.

The temperamental revolt, however, which I am endeavouring to describe, against our doctrine of personality, does not stop with a demand for de-humanized air and space. It has a passionate "penchant" for the projection of such vague imaginative images as "spirit" and "life." Forgetful that no man has ever seen or touched this "spirit,"

apart from a personal soul, or this "life," apart from some living thing, the temperament I am thinking of loves to make imaginative excursions into what it supposes to be vast receding abysses of pure "spirit" and of impersonal inhuman "life."

It gains thus a sense of liberation from the boundaries of its own personality and a sense of liberation from the boundaries of all personality. The doctrine, therefore, that the visible universe is a mysterious complex of many concentrated mortal visions, stamped, so to speak, with the "imprimatur" of an ideal immortal vision, is a doctrine that seems to impede and oppose such a temperament in this abysmal plunge into the ocean of existence. But my answer to the protest of this temperament—and it is an answer that has a certain measure of authority, since this temperament is no other than my own—is that this feeling of "imprisonment" is due to a superficial understanding of the doctrine against which it protests. It is superficial because it does not recognize that around, above, beneath, within, every form of personality that the "curve of space" covers, there is present the aboriginal "world-stuff," unfathomable and inexplicable, out of which all souls draw the material element of their being, in which all souls come into contact with one another, and from which all souls half-create and half-discover their personal universe.

It was necessary to introduce this question of temperamental reaction just here, because in any conclusion as to the nature of Beauty it is above all things important to give complete satisfaction to every great recurrent exigency of human desire. And this desire for liberation from the bonds of personality is one of the profoundest instincts of personality.

We have now arrived at a point of vantage from which it is possible to survey the outlines of our final problem;



the problem, namely as to what it really is which renders one object in nature more beautiful than another object, and one work of art more beautiful than another work of art. We know that in the intuitive judgment which affixes these relative valuations there must be the three elements of mortal subjective vision, of immortal objective vision, and of the original "world-stuff" out of which all visions are made.

But upon what criteria, by what rules and standards, do we become aware that one tree is more beautiful than another tree, one landscape than another landscape, one poem or person or picture than another of the same kind? The question has already been lifted out of the sphere of pure subjective taste by what has been said with regard to the eternal Ideal vision. But are there any permanent laws of Beauty by which we may analyse the verdict of this objective vision? Or are we made aware of it, in each individual case, by a pure intuitive apprehension?

I think there *are* such laws. But I think the "science," so to say, of the aesthetic judgment remains at present in so rudimentary a stage that we are not in a position to do more than indicate their general outline. The following principles seem, as far as I am able to lay hold upon this evasive problem, of more comprehensive application than any others.

A thing to be beautiful must form an organic totality, even though in some other sense it is only a portion of a larger totality.

It must carry with it the impression, illusive or otherwise, that it is the outward form or shape of a living personal soul.

It must satisfy, at least by symbolic association, the physical desires of the body.

It must obey certain hidden laws of rhythm, proportion,

balance, and harmony, both with regard to colour and form, and with regard to magical suggestiveness.

It must answer, in some degree, the craving of the human mind for some symbolic expression of the fatality of human experience.

It must have a double effect upon us. It must arouse the excitement of a passion of attention, and it must quiet us with a sense of eternal rest.

It must thrill us with a happiness which goes beyond the pleasure of a passing physical sensation.

It must convey the impression of something unique and yet representative; and it must carry the mind through and beyond itself, to the very brink and margin of the ultimate objective mystery.

It must suggest inevitableness, spontaneity, a certain monumental ease, and a general feeling of expansion and liberation.

It must, if it belong to nature, convey that magical and world-deep sadness which springs from an inarticulate appeal; or, if it belong to art, that wistful loneliness which springs from the creation of immortality by the hands of mortality.

The above principles are not offered as in any way exhaustive. They are outlined as a temporary starting point and suggestion for the more penetrating analysis which the future will surely provide. And I have temporarily excluded from them, as can be seen, all references to those auxiliary elements drawn from reason and conscience which, according to the philosophy of the complex vision, must be included in the body of art, if art is to be the final expression of human experience.

But after gathering together all we have accumulated among these various paths leading to the edge of the mystery of art, what we are compelled to recognize, when we

confront the palpable thing itself, is that, in each unique embodiment of it, it arrests and entrances us, as with a sudden transformation of our entire universe.

Out of the abysses of personality—human or super-human—every new original work of art draws us, by an irresistible magnetism, into itself, until we are compelled to become *what it is*, until we are actually transformed into its inmost identity.

What hitherto has seemed to us mere refuse and litter and dreariness and debris—all the shards and ashes and flints and excrement of the margins of our universe—take upon themselves, as they are thus caught up and transfigured, a new and ineffable meaning.

The terrible, the ghastly, the atrocious, the abominable, the apparently meaningless and dead, suddenly gather themselves together and take on strange and monumental significance.

What has hitherto seemed to us floating jetsom and blind wreckage, what has hitherto seemed to us mere brutal lumps of primeval clay tossed to and fro by the giant hands of chaos, what has hitherto seemed to us slabs of inhuman chemistry, suddenly assumes under the pressure of this great power out of the abyss a strange and lovely and terrible expressiveness.

Deep calls to Deep; and the mysterious oceans of Personality move and stir in a terrific reciprocity.

The unfathomable gulfs of the eternal duality within us are roused to undreamed-of response in answer to this abysmal stirring of the powers that create the world.

What is good in us is enlarged and heightened; what is evil in us is enlarged and deepened; while, under the increasing pressure of this new wave of the perilous stuff “of emotion,” slowly, little by little, as we give ourselves up to the ecstasy of contemplation, the intensified “good” overcomes the intensified “evil.”

It is then that what has begun in agitation and disturbance sinks by degrees into an infinite peace; as, without any apparent change or confusion, the waves roll in, one after another, upon our human shore, and we are lifted up and carried out on that vast tide into the great spaces, beneath the morning and the evening, where the eternal vision awaits us with its undescribable calm.

Let art be as bizarre, as weird, as strange, as rare, as fantastic, as you please, if it be true art it must spring from the aboriginal duality in the human soul and thus must remain indestructibly personal. But since the two elements of personality wrestle together in every artist's soul, the more personal a work of art becomes the more comprehensive is its impersonality.

For art, by means of the personal and the particular, attains the impersonal and the universal. By means of sinking down into the transitory and the ephemeral, by means of moulding chance and accident to its will, it is enabled to touch the eternal and the eternally fatal.

From agitation to peace; from sound to silence; from creation to contemplation; from birth and death to that which is immortal; from movement to that which is at rest—such is the wayfaring of this primordial power.

It is from the vantage-ground of this perception that we are able to discern how the mysterious beauty revealed in apparently "inhuman" arrangements of line and colour and light and shade is really a thing springing from the depths of some personal and individual vision.

The controversy as to the superior claims of an art that is just "art," with an appeal entirely limited to texture and colour and line and pure sound, and an art that is imagistic, symbolic, representative, religious, philosophical, or prophetic, is rendered irrelevant and meaningless when we perceive that all art, whether it be a thing of pure line and colour or a thing of passionate human content, must

inevitably spring from the depths of some particular personal vision and must inevitably attain, by stressing this personal element to the limit, that universal impersonality which is implied in the fact that every living soul is composed of the same elements.

It may require no little subtlety of vision to detect in the pure beauty of line, colour, and texture that compose, say, some lovely piece of bric-à-brac, the hidden presence of that primordial duality out of which all forms of beauty emerge, but the metaphysical significance latent in the phrase "the sense of difficulty overcome" points us towards just this very interpretation. The circumstantial and the sexual "motifs" in art, so appealing to the mob, may or may not play an aesthetic part in the resultant rhythm. If they do, they do so because such "interest" and such "eroticism" were an integral portion of the original vision that gave unity to the work in question. If they do not, but are merely dragged in by the un-aesthetic observer, it is easy enough for the genuine virtuoso to disregard such temptation and to put "story," "message," "sentiment," and "sex-appeal" rigidly aside, as he seeks to respond to the primordial vision of an "unstoried" non-sexual beauty springing from those deeper levels of the soul where "story," "sentiment," and sex have no longer any place.

More dangerous, however, to art, than any popular craving for "human interest" or for the comfort of amorous voluptuousness, is the unpardonable stupidity of puritanical censorship. Such censorship, in its crass impertinence, assumes that its miserable and hypocritical negations represent that deep, fierce, terrible "imperative" uttered by the soul's primordial conscience.

They represent nothing of the sort.

The drastic revelations of "conscience" are, as I have pointed out again and again, fused and blended in their

supreme moments with the equally drastic revelations of reason and the aesthetic sense.

They are inevitably blended with these, because, as we have proved, they are all three nothing less than divergent aspects of the one irresistible projection of the soul itself which I have named "creative love."

Thus it comes about that in the great, terrible moments of tragic art there may be an apparent catastrophic despair, which in our normal moods seems hopeless, final, absolute.

It is only when the complex rhythm of the apex-thought is brought to bear upon these *moments of midnight* that a strange and unutterable healing emerges from them, a shy, half-hinted whisper or something deeper than hope, a magical effluence, a "still, small voice" from beneath the disastrous eclipse, which not only "purges our passions by pity and terror" but evokes an assured horizon, beyond truth, beyond beauty, beyond goodness, where the mystery of love, in its withdrawn and secret essence, transforms all things into its own likeness.

The nature of art is thus found to be intimately associated with the universal essence of every personal life. Art is not, therefore, a thing for the "coteries" and the "cliques"; nor is it a thing for the exclusive leisure of any privileged class. It is a thing springing from the eternal "stuff of the soul," of every conceivable soul, whether human, sub-human, or super-human.

Art is nearer than "philosophy" or "morality" to the creative energy; because, while it is impossible to think of art as "philosophy" or "morality," it is inevitable that we should think of both of these as being themselves forms and manifestations of art.

All that the will does, in gathering together its impressions of life and its reactions to life, must, even in regard to the most vague, shadowy, faint and obscure ficherings

of contemplation, be regarded as a kind of intimate "work of art," with the soul as the "artist" and the flow of life as the artist's material.

Every personal soul, however "inartistic," is an artist in this sense; and every personal life thus considered is an effective or ineffective "work of art."

The primal importance of what in the narrow and restricted sense we have come to call "art" can only be fully realized when we think of such "art" as concentrating upon a definite material medium the creative energy which is for ever changing the world in the process of changing our attitude to the world.

The deadly enemy of art—the power that has succeeded, in these commercial days, in reducing art to a pastime for the leisured and wealthy—is the original inert malice of the abyss.

This inert malice assumes, directly it comes in contact with practical affairs, the form of the possessive instinct. And the attitude towards art of the "collector" or the leisured "epicurean," for whom it is merely a pleasant sensation among other sensations, is an attitude which undermines the basis of its life. The very essence of art is that it should be a thing common to all, within the reach of all, expressive of the inherent and universal nature of all. And that this is the nature of art is proved by the fact that art is the personal expression of the personal centrifugal tendency in all living souls; an expression which, when it goes far enough, becomes *impersonal*, because, by expressing what is common to all, it reaches the point where the particular becomes the universal.

It thus becomes manifest that the true nature of art will only be incidentally and occasionally manifested, and manifested among us with great difficulty and against obstinate resistance, until the hour comes when, to an extent as yet hardly imaginable, the centripetal tendency of

the possessive instinct in the race shall have relinquished something of its malicious resistance to the out-flowing force which I have named "love." And this yielding of the centripetal power to that which we call centrifugal can only take place in a condition of human society where the idea of communism has been accepted as the ideal and, in some effective measure, realized in fact.

For every work of art which exists is the rhythmic articulation, in terms of any medium, of some personal vision of life. And the more entirely "original" such a vision is, the more closely—such is the ultimate *paradox* of things—will it be found to approximate to a re-creation, in this particular medium, of that "eternal vision" wherein all souls have their share.



## CHAPTER VIII

### THE NATURE OF LOVE

The secret of the universe, as by slow degrees it reveals itself to us, turns out to be personality. When we consider, further, the form under which personality realizes itself, we find it to consist in the struggle of personality to grapple with the objective mystery. When, in a still further movement of analysis, we examine the nature of this struggle between the soul and the mystery which surrounds the soul, we find it complicated by the fact that the soul's encounter with this mystery reveals the existence, in the depths of the soul itself, of two conflicting emotions, the emotion of love and the emotion of malice.

The word "love" has been used so indiscriminately in its surprising history that it becomes necessary to elucidate a little the particular meaning I give to it in connection with this ultimate duality. A strange and grotesque commentary upon human life, these various contradictory feelings that have covered their "multitude of sins" under this historic name!

The lust of the satyr, the affectionate glow of the domestic habitué, the rare exalted passion of the lover, the cold, clear attraction of the intellectual platonist, the will to possession of the sex-maniac, the will to voluptuous cruelty of the sex-pervert, the maternal instinct, the race-instinct, the instinct towards fetish-worship, the instinct towards art, towards nature, towards the ultimate mystery—all these things have been called "love" that we should follow them and pursue them; all these things have been

called "love" that we should avoid them and fly from them.

The emotion of love in which we seem to detect the ultimate creative force is not precisely any of these things. Of all normal human emotions it comes nearest to passionate sympathy. But it is much more than this. The emotion of love is not a simple nor an easily defined thing. How should it be that, when it is one aspect of the outpouring of the very stuff of the soul itself? How should it be that when it is the projection, into the heart of the objective mystery, of the soul's manifold and complicated essence?

The best definition of love is that it is the creative apprehension of life, or of the objective mystery, under the form of an eternal vision. At first sight this definition might seem but a cold and intellectual account of love; an account that has omitted all feeling, all passion, all ecstasy.

But when we remember that what we call "the eternal vision" is nothing less than the answer of love to love, nothing less than the reciprocal rhythm of all souls, in so far as they have overcome malice, with one another and with the mystery which surrounds them, it will be seen that the thing is something in which what we call "intellect" and what we call "feeling" are both transcended. Love, in this sense, is an ecstasy; but it is an ecstasy from which all troubling, agitating, individual exactions have been obliterated. It is an ecstasy completely purged of the possessive instinct. It is an ecstasy that brings to us a feeling of indescribable peace and calm. It is an ecstasy in which our personal self, in the fullest realization of its inmost identity, loses itself, even at the moment of such realization, in something which cannot be put into words.

At one moment our human soul finds itself harassed by a thousand vexations, outraged by a thousand miseries. Physical pain torments it, spiritual pain torments it; and

a great darkness of thick, heavy, poisonous obscurity wraps it round like a grave-cloth. Then, in a sudden movement of the will, the soul cries aloud upon love; and in one swift turn of the ultimate wheel, the whole situation is transformed.

The physical pain seems to have no longer any hold upon the soul. The mental misery and trouble falls away from it like an unstrapped load. And a deep, cool, tide—calm and still and full of infinite murmurs—rolls up around it, and pours through it, and brings it healing and peace. The emotion of love in which personality, and therefore in which the universe, finds the secret of its life, has not the remotest connection with sex. Sexual passion has its place in the world; but it is only when sexual passion merges itself in the sort of love we are now considering that it becomes an instrument of real clairvoyance.

There is a savage instinct of cruel and searching illumination in sexual passion, but such an instinct is directed towards death rather than towards life, because it is dominated, through all its masks and disguises, by the passion of possession.

Like the passion of hate, to which it is so closely allied, sexual passion has a kind of furious intensity which is able to reveal many deep levels of human obliquity. But one thing it cannot reveal, because of the strain of malice it carries with it, and that is the spring of genuine love. "Like unto like" is the key to the situation; and the deeper the clairvoyance of malice digs into the subterranean poison of life, the more poison it finds. For in finding poison it creates poison, and in finding malice it doubles malice.

The great works of art are not motivated by the clairvoyance of malice; they are motivated by the clairvoyance of love. It is only in the inferior levels of art that malice is the dominant note; and even there it is only effec-

tive because, mixed with it, there is an element of destructive hatred springing from some perversion of the sexual instinct. Whatever difficulty we may experience in finding words wherewith to define this emotion of love, there is not one of us, however sceptical and malign, who does not recognize it when it appears in the flesh. Malice displays its recognition of it by a passion of furious hatred; but even this hatred cannot last for ever, because in every personality that exists there must be a hidden love which answers to the appeal of love.

The feeling which love has, at its supreme moments, is the feeling of "unity in difference" with all forms of life. Love may concentrate itself with a special concentration upon one person or upon more than one; but what it does when it so concentrates itself is not to make an alliance of "attack and defence" with the person it loves, but to flow outwards, through them and beyond them, until it includes every living thing. Let it not, however, be for a moment supposed that the emotion of love resembles that vague "emotion of humanity" which is able to satisfy itself in its own remote sensationalism without any contact with the baffling and difficult mystery of real flesh and blood.

The emotion of love holds firmly and tightly to the pieces and fragments of humanity which destiny has thrown in its way. It does not ask that these should be different from what they are, except in so far as love inevitably makes them different. It accepts them as its "universe," even as it accepts, without ascetic dismay, the weakness of the particular "form of humanity" in which it finds *itself* "incarnated."

By gradual degrees it subdues these weaknesses of the flesh, whether in its own "form" or in the "form" of others; but it is quite contrary to the emotion of love to react against such weaknesses of the flesh with austere or

cruel contempt. It is humorously indulgent to them in the form of its own individual "incarnation" and it is tenderly indulgent to them in the form of the "incarnation" of other souls.

The emotion of love does not shrink back into itself because in the confused pell-mell of human life the alien souls which destiny has chosen for its companions do not satisfy, in this detail or the other detail, the desire of its heart. The emotion of love is always centrifugal, always out-flowing. It concentrates itself upon this person or the other person, as the unaccountable attractions of likeness and difference dictate or as destiny dictates; but the deepest loyalty of love is always directed to the eternal vision; for in the eternal vision it not only becomes one with all living souls but it also becomes one—though this is a high and difficult mystery—with all the dead that have ever loved and with all the unborn that will ever love.

For the apprehension of the eternal vision is at once the supreme creation and the supreme discovery of the soul of man; and not of the soul of man alone, but of all souls, whether of beasts or plants or demi-gods or gods, who fill the unfathomable circle of space.

The secret of this kind of love, when it comes to the matter of human relationships, may perhaps best be expressed in those words of William Blake which imply the difficulty which love finds in overcoming the murderous exactions of the possessive instinct and the cruel clairvoyance of malice. "And throughout all eternity, I forgive you: you forgive me: As our dear Redeemer said—This is the wine: this is the bread."

This "forgiveness" of love does not imply that love, as the old saying runs, is "blind." Love sees deeper than malice; for malice can only recognize its own likeness in everything it approaches. It must be remembered too that this process of laying bare the faults of others is not a

pure process of discovery. Like all other forms of apprehension it is also a reproduction of itself. The situation, in fact, is never a static one. These "faults" which malice, in its reproductive "discoveries" lays bare, are not fixed, immobile, dead. They are organic and psychic conditions of a living soul. They are themselves in a perpetual state of change, of growth, of increase, of withering, of fading. They are affected at every moment by the will and by the emotion of the subject of them. They project themselves; they withdraw themselves. They dilate; they diminish. Thus it happens that at the very touch of this "discovering," the malice which is thus "discovered" dilates with immediate reciprocity to meet its "discoverer"; and this can occur—such is the curious telepathic vibration between living things—without any articulate act of consciousness.

The art of psychological investigation is therefore a very dangerous organ of research in the hands of the malicious; for it goes like a reproductive scavenger through the field of human consciousness increasing the evil which it is its purpose to collect. The apostolic definition of "charity" as the thing which "thinketh no evil" is hereby completely justified; and the profound Goethean maxim, that the way to enlarge the capacities of human beings is to "assume" that such capacities are larger than they really are, is justified also.

Malice naturally assumes that the "faults" of people are "static," immobile, and unchanging. It assumes this even in the very act of increasing these faults. For the static and unchanging is precisely what malice desires and seeks to find; for death is its ideal; and, short of pure nothingness, death is the most static thing we know.

Love is not blind or fooled or deluded when it waives aside the faults of a person and plunges into the unknown depths of such a person's soul. It is not blind, when, in

the energy of the creative vision, such faults subside and fall away and cease to exist. It is completely justified in its declaration that what it sees and feels in such a person is a hidden reservoir of unsatisfied good. It does see this; it does feel this; because there arises, in answer to its approach, an upward-flowing wave of its own likeness; because in such a person's inmost soul love, after all, remains the creative impulse which is the life of that soul and the very substance of that soul's personality.

The struggle between the emotion of love and the emotion of malice goes on perpetually, in the depths of life, below a thousand shifting masks and disguises. What we call the "universe" is nothing but a congeries of innumerable "souls," manifested in innumerable "bodies," each one confronted by the objective mystery, each one surrounded by an indescribable ethereal "medium."

What we call the emotion of love is the outflowing of any one of these souls towards the body and soul of any other, or again, in a still wider sense, towards all bodies and souls covered by the unfathomable circle of space.

I will give a concrete example of what I mean. Suppose a man to be seated in the yard of a house with a few patches of grass in front of him and the trunk of a solitary tree. The slanting sunshine, we will suppose, throws the shadows of the leaves of the tree and the shadows of the grass-blades upon a forlorn piece of trodden earth-mould or dusty sand which lies at his feet. Something about the light movement of these shadows and their delicate play upon the ground thrills him with a sudden thrill; and he finds he "loves" this barren piece of earth, these grass-blades, and this tree. He does not only love their outward shape and colour. He loves the "soul" behind them, the "soul" that makes them what they are. He loves the "soul" of the grass, the "soul" of the tree, and that dim, mysterious, far-off "soul" of the planet, of

whose "body" this barren patch of earth is a living portion.

What does this "love" of his actually imply? It implies an outflowing of the very stuff and substance of his own towards the thing he loves. It implies, by a mysterious vibration of reciprocity, an indescribable response to his love from the "soul" of the tree, the plant, and the earth. Let an animal enter upon the scene, or a bird, or a wind-blown butterfly, or a flickering flight of midges or gnats, their small bodies illumined by the sun. These new comers he also loves; and is obscurely conscious that between their "souls" and his own there vibrates a strange reciprocity. Let a human being enter, familiar or unfamiliar, and if his will be set upon "love," the same phenomenon will repeat itself, only with a more conscious interchange.

But what of "malice" all this time? Well! It is not difficult to indicate what "malice" will seek to do. Malice will seek to find its account in some physical or mental annoyance produced in us by each of these living things. This annoyance, this jerk or jolt to our physical or mental well-being, will be what to ourselves we name the "fault" of the offending object.

The shadows will tease us by their incessant movement. The tree will vex us by the swaying of its branches. The grass will present itself to us as an untidy intruder. The barren patch of earth will fill us with a profound depression owing to its desolate lack of life and beauty. The dog will worry us by its fuss, its solicitation, its desire to be petted. The gnats or midges will stir in us an indignant hostility; since their tribe have been known to poison the blood of man. The human invader, above all; how loud and unpleasing his voice is! The eternal malice in the depths of our soul pounces upon this tendency of grass to be "a common weed," of gnats to bite, of dogs to bark, of shadows to flicker, of a man to have an evil temper, of



a woman to have an atrocious shrewishness, or an appalling sluttishness; and out of these annoyances or "faults" it feeds its desire; it satisfies its necrophilistic lust; and it rouses in the grass, in the earth, in the tree, in the dog, in the human intruder, strange and mysterious vibrations of response which add to the general poison of the world. But the example I have selected of the activity of emotion may be carried further than this. All these individual "souls" of human, animal, vegetable, planetary embodiment, are confronted by the same objective mystery and surrounded by the same ethereal "medium."

By projecting a vision poisoned by malice into the matrix of the objective mystery, the resultant "universe" becomes itself a poisoned thing, a thing penetrated by the spirit of evil. It is because the universe is always penetrated by the malice of the various visions whose "universe" it is, that we suffer so cruelly from its ironic "diablerie." A universe entirely composed of the bodies and souls of beings whose primordial emotion is so largely made up of malice is naturally a malicious universe. The age-old tradition of the witchery and devilry of malignant Nature is a proof as to how deep this impression of the system of things has sunk. Certain great masters of fiction draw the "motive" of their art from this unhappy truth.

And just as the universe is penetrated through and through by the malice of those whose universe it is, so we may suppose that the ethereal "medium" which surrounds all souls, before they have visioned their various "universes" and found them to be one, is a thing which also may be affected by malice. It is an open question and one which, in the words of Sir Thomas Browne, "admits a wide solution," whether or not this ethereal "medium," which in a sense is of one stuff both with the objective mystery and with the substratum of the soul, is itself the "elemental body," as it were, of a living ubiquitous soul.

If this should be the case—and it is no fantastic hypothesis—we are then provided with an explanation of the curious malignant impishness of those so-called “elementals” who tease, with their enigmatic oracles, the minds of unwise dabblers in “psychic manifestations.”

But what we are concerned with noting now is that just as the primordial malice of all the souls it contains continually poisons the universe, so the primordial love of all the souls it contains continually redeems and transforms the universe. In other words it is no exaggeration to say that the unfathomable universe is continually undergoing the same ebb and flow between love and malice, as are the souls and bodies of all the living things whereof it is composed.

And what precisely is the attitude of love towards the physical body? Does it despise the physical body? Does its activity imply an ascetic or a puritanical attitude towards the body and the appetites of the body? The truth is quite the contrary of this. What the revelation of the complex vision indicates is that this loathing of the body, this revulsion against the body, this craving to escape from the body, is a mood which springs up out of the eternal malice. It is from the emotion of love in its attitude to the body that we arrive at the idea of the sacredness of the body and at the idea of what might be called “the eternal reality of the body.”

This idea of the eternal reality of the body springs directly from those ideas of truth, beauty and goodness which are pre-existent in the universe and therefore springs directly from that emotion of love which is the synthesis of these.

The forms and shapes of stars and plants and rivers and hills are all realized and consummated in the form and shape of the human body. The magic of the elements, the mystery of earth and air and water and fire, are incar-

nated in this miracle of flesh and blood. In the countenance of a human child, in the countenance of a man or a woman, the whole unfathomable drama of life is expressed. The most evil of the children of men, asleep or dead, has in his face something more tragic and more beautiful than all the waters and all the land.

Not to "love" flesh and blood, not to will the eternal existence of flesh and blood, is not to know "love" at all. To loathe flesh and blood, to will the annihilation of flesh and blood, is to be a victim of that original "motiveless malignity" which opposes itself to the creative force.

This insistence upon "the eternal idea of the body" does not necessarily limit "the idea of the body" to the idea of the human body; but practically it does so. And it practically does so because the human body evidently incarnates the beauty and the nobility of all other forms and shapes and appearances which make up our existing universe.

There may be other and different bodies in the unfathomable spaces of the world; but for those among us who are content to deal with the actual experiences which we have, the human body, summing up the magical qualities of all other terrestrial forms and shapes, must, as far as we are concerned, remain our permanent standard of truth and beauty.

The substitution in art, in philosophy, and in religion, of other symbols, for this natural and eternal symbol of the human body is always a sign of a weakening of the creative impulse. It is a sign of a relative disintegration of the power of "love" and a relative concentration of the power of "malice." Thus when, by an abuse of the metaphysical reason, "thought-in-the-abstract" assumes the rights of a personality the principle of love is outraged, because the eternal idea of the body is denied.

And when, by an abuse of the psychological reason, the other activities of the soul are so stressed and emphasized

that the attribute of sensation is forgotten, the principle of love is outraged, because the eternal idea of the body is denied. The principle of love, by the necessity of its own nature, demands that the physiological aspect of reality should retain its validity.

When, therefore, we come to consider the relation of this "eternal idea of the body" to those invisible "sons of the universe" whose power of love is inconceivably greater than our own, we are compelled, by the necessity of the complex vision, to encounter one of those ultimate dilemmas from which there appears to be no escape. The dilemma to which we are thus led may be defined in the following manner.

Because the secret of the universe and the ultimate harmony between the pre-existent ideas by which all souls must live can be nothing less than what, in this rarified and heightened sense, we have named "love" and because the objective pattern and standard of this love is the creative energy of those personal souls we have named "the sons of the universe," therefore "the sons of the universe" must be regarded as directing their desire and their will towards what satisfies the inherent nature of such love. And because the inherent nature of such love demands nothing less than the eternalizing of the idea of flesh and blood, therefore the "sons of the universe" must be regarded as directing their desire and their will towards the eternalizing of the idea of flesh and blood.

And just as the will and desire of these "invisible companions of men" must be regarded as directed towards the eternalizing of this idea whose magical "stuff of dreams" is one of the objects of their love, so the will and desire of all living souls must be directed towards the eternalizing of this same reality. And because the love of all living souls remains restless and unsatisfied when directed to any object except the "eternal vision" and

because when directed to the "eternal vision" such love loses the misery of its craving and becomes satisfied, therefore the "eternal vision" must be regarded as the only object which can ultimately and really satisfy the eternal restlessness of the love of all living souls.

But the inherent nature of love demands, as we have seen, the permanent reality of the physiological aspect of the universe. That is to say, the inherent desire of the love of all living souls is directed towards the eternalizing of the idea of flesh and blood. From this it follows that since the "eternal vision" satisfies the desire of love "the eternal vision" must include within it the eternal idea of the body.

Both "the sons of the universe," therefore, and all other living souls are compelled, in so far as they give themselves up to the creative energy, to direct their will towards the eternalization of this idea. But is there not an inevitable frustration and negation of this desire and this will?

Are not both the "companions of men" and men themselves denied by the very nature of things the realization of this idea? Is not the love of man for "the sons of the universe" frustrated in its desire in so far as "the sons of the universe" cannot be embodied in flesh and blood? And is not the love of "the sons of the universe" for man frustrated in its desire in so far as the physical form of each individual soul is destroyed by death?

It seems to me that this dilemma cannot be avoided. Love insists on the eternity of the idea of the body. Therefore every soul who loves "the sons of the universe" desires their incarnation. But if "the sons of the universe" could appear in flesh and blood for the satisfaction of any one of their lovers, all other souls in the wide world would lose them as their invisible companions. But although this dilemma cannot in its literal outlines be avoided, it seems that the same inherent nature of love which leads to

this dilemma leads also to the vanishing point or gap or lacuna in thought where the solution, although never actually realized, may conceivably exist.

What love desires is the eternalizing of the idea of flesh and blood. It desires this because the idea of flesh and blood is a necessary aspect of the fulness and completeness of personality. But though the idea of flesh and blood is a necessary aspect of personality, every actual incarnation of personality leaves us aware that the particular soul we love has something more of beauty and nobility than is expressed.

This "something more" is not a mere hypothetical quality but is an actual and real quality which we must assume to exist in the very stuff and texture of the soul. It exists, therefore, in that "vanishing-point of sensation," as I called it, which we have to think of, although we cannot define it, as constituting the soul's essential self. Those pre-existed ideas which find their synthesis in the emotion of love are undoubtedly part of the unfathomable universe. But they are this only because they are interwoven with the unfathomable soul which exists in each of us. The "something," therefore, which is the substratum of the soul and its centre of identity is a thing woven out of the very stuff of these ideas.

This is the "vanishing point of sensation" to which I have referred, the point namely where what we call "mind" blends indissolubly with what we call "matter." The emotion of love which desires the eternalization of the idea of flesh and blood would be on the way to satisfaction, even if it never altogether reached it, if it were able to feel that this beauty and nobility and reality which exist in this "vanishing point of sensation" which is the very self of the soul were actually the living essence of flesh and blood, were, in fact, a real "spiritual body," of which the material body was the visible expression.

It is the inherent nature of love itself, with its craving for reality, which leads us to the verge of this conception; and although this conception can never, as we have seen, become more than a "vanishing-point of sensation" we have at least the satisfaction of knowing that if we were able to define the thing more clearly it would cease at once to be the object of love; because it would cease to be that mysterious fusion of "mind" and "matter" which it is the nature of love to crave.

Without the necessity then that these immortal ones whom I call the "sons of the universe" should satisfy the love of human souls by any physical incarnation, they may be considered as leading such love upon the true way by simply being what they are; that is by being living souls. For, as living souls, they also must possess as the centre of their being, a "spiritual body," or fusion-point of "mind" and "matter," which is the inner reality of flesh and blood.

This "spiritual body" of "the gods" or the "sons of the universe" must necessarily be more noble and more beautiful than any visible embodiment of them could possibly be; though human imagination and human art have a profound right to attempt to visualize such an impossible embodiment; and the purest and most natural form of "religion" would be the form which struggled most successfully to appropriate such a visualization.

And just as the human soul can satisfy something, though not all, of its desire for the eternalizing of flesh and blood in the "spiritual bodies" of these "invisible companions," so the gods can themselves satisfy something, though not all, of their love for the individual soul in the reality of the soul's "spiritual body."

All this may carry to certain minds an ambiguous and even distasteful association; but I think it will only do so to such minds as are reluctant to analyse, to the furthest

limit, their own capacity for the kind of "love" I have attempted to describe; and possibly also such minds as are debarred, by some sub-conscious element of "malice" in them, from even desiring to develop such a capacity.

The ambiguity and unsatisfactory vagueness in what I have been attempting to indicate may perhaps be in a measure dissipated by a direct appeal to concrete experience. When one analyses this emotion of love in relation to any actual human object I think it becomes clear that in our attitude to the physical body of the person we love there is a profound element of pity.

The sexual emotion may destroy this pity; and any emotion which is sensual as well as sexual may not only destroy it but turn it into a very different kind of pity; into the "pity," namely, of a torturer for his victim. But I feel I am not wrong in my analysis of the kind of "love" I have in my mind, when I say that the element of pity enters profoundly into our attitude towards the body of the person we love.

It enters into it for this reason; namely because the physical body of the person we love does so inadequately and so imperfectly express the beauty of such a person's soul. "Love is not love" when the blemishes and defects and maladies of the physical form of the person loved interfere with our love and cause it to diminish. And such blemishes and defects and maladies *would* interfere with love if love were not in its essence profoundly penetrated by pity.

It may be asked—"how can love, which is naturally associated with beauty and nobility, endure for a moment in the presence of such lamentable hideousness and repulsiveness and offensiveness, as exists in some degree in the physiological aspects of us all?" It is able to endure because in the presence of this what it desires is, as I have said, not so much the actual physical body of the object of its love as the "eternal idea" of such a body.



When the individual soul allows itself to demand with too desperate a craving the actual incarnation of these "sons of the universe" it is in reality false to its desire for the "eternal idea of the body," because no actual incarnation of these immortal ones could realize in any complete sense this "eternal idea."

In the same way when we feel the emotion of love towards any human soul, our attitude towards the physical form of such a soul must of necessity be profoundly penetrated by pity and by a tender and humorous recognition that such a physical form only expresses a very limited portion of the unfathomable soul which we love.

If, with a desperate craving to contradict the essential nature of love, we insist upon regarding the physical body as the complete expression of the soul, we fall into the same fatal weakness as that into which those fall who demand a physical incarnation of the "companions of men," and along with such as these we are false to love's true craving for the "eternal idea of flesh and blood."

In other words, this craving of love for "the eternal idea of the body" does not imply that we are false to love when we are unable to change our natural repugnance in the presence of the repulsive and the offensive into attraction to these things. Love certainly does not mean a morbid attraction to what is unattractive. The sexual emotion, the emotion which we call "being in love," does sometimes include this morbidity, just because, by reason of its physiological origin, it tends to remain the slave of the physiological. But although love does not imply a morbid attraction to the repulsive and the offensive, and although the presence of the repulsive and offensive in connection with those we love is a proof to us that "the eternal idea of the body," is not realized in the actual body, it is clear that "love is not love" when it allows itself to be

diminished or destroyed by the presence of these things.

What love really demands, both with regard to the universe and with regard to any individual soul in the universe, is not so much the retention of the physiological aspect of these things, *as we know them now*, but of the physiological aspect of them implied in such a phrase as "the eternal idea of matter" or "the eternal idea of flesh and blood."

It may be put still more simply by saying that what love demands is the existence of something in what we call "matter" or the "body" which guarantees the eternal reality of these aspects of life. It does not demand that we should love the repulsive, the offensive, the false, or the evil, because these exist in the bodies and the souls of those we love.

Everything in the universe partakes of the eternal duality. The hideous, the false and the evil are not confined to what we call "mind" but exist in what we call "matter" also. Consequently love, when in its craving for complete reality it demands "the eternal idea of the body" does not demand that this eternal idea should be realized in any actual body.

When a demand of this kind is made, it is not made by love but by the sexual instinct, and it is invariably doomed to a ghastly disillusion. For it is just this very craving, namely that in some actual human body "the eternal idea of the body" should be realized, that the sweet and terrible madness of sexual love continually implies. But real love, the love which is the supreme synthesis of those ideas which represent the creative power in the ultimate duality, can never be disillusioned.

And it cannot be disillusioned because it is able to see, beneath the chaotic litter and unessential debris of "matter," the eternal idea of "matter" and because it is able

to see, under the lamentable repulsiveness and offensiveness of so much actual flesh and blood," the eternal idea of flesh and blood."

Love's attitude toward this element of litter and chaos in the universe is sometimes an attitude of humorous toleration and sometimes an attitude of destructive fire. Love's attitude towards the repulsive and the offensive in human souls and bodies is sometimes an attitude of humorous toleration and sometimes an attitude of destructive fire.

But along with this passion of destruction, which is so essential a part of the passion of creation, and along with this humorous indulgence, there necessarily mingles, where human beings are concerned, an element of profound pity. The best concrete example of the mood I am trying to indicate is the emotion which any one would naturally feel in the presence of some torturer or tyrant whom he had slain, or even whom he had surprised asleep. For the prerogative of both sleep and death is that they obliterate the repulsive elements of flesh and blood and set free its eternal idea.

And this is true of death even after the ghastly process of chemical dissolution has actually begun. A loathing of matter as matter, a hatred and contempt for the body as the body, is therefore a manifestation not of love but of the opposite of love. Such a loathing of the physiological is a sign of a weakening of the creative energy. It is also a sign of the stiffening of the resistant "malice," or " motiveless malignity," which opposes creation. What the energy of love directs its desire and its will towards, is first the "eternal idea of the soul," the idea of the rhythmic harmony of "mind" and "matter" fused and lost in one another, and then "the eternal idea of the body," the idea of the rhythmic projection of this invisible harmony upon the visible fabric of the world.

Thus we arrive at the only definition of the nature of

love which is satisfactory to the deepest moments of feeling experienced by the human soul. In such moments the soul gathers itself together on the verge and brink of the unknown. Something beyond the power of our will takes possession then of all that we are. In our momentary and transitory movement of the complex vision we are permitted to pass across the ultimate threshold.

We enter then that mysterious rhythm which I have called "The Eternal Vision"; and in place of our desire for personal immortality, in place of our desire for the possession of any person or thing, in place of our contemplation of "forces" and "energies" and "evolution" or "dissolution," in place of our struggle for "existence" or for "power," we become suddenly aware that in the out-flowing and reciprocal inter-action of the emotion of love there is something that reduces all these to insignificance, something that out of the very depths of the poisonous misery of the world and the irony of the world and the madness of the world utters its defiant Rabelaisian signal, "Bon espoir y gist au fond."

## CHAPTER IX

### THE NATURE OF THE GODS

We must now return to our original definition of the true philosophical instrument of research in order to see if we can secure from it a clearer notion as to the nature of the Gods. Such an instrument is, as we have seen, the apex-thought of the complex vision using all its attributes in rhythmic unison. For the complex vision using all its attributes in unison is only another name for the soul using the body and using something more than the body.

If the soul could use no attributes except those given to it by the body, it might, or it might not, arrive at the idea of the "sons of the universe." It certainly could not enter into any relation with such immortal beings. But since it has arrived at such a conception "it is impossible for it ever to fall entirely away from what it has reached." For the same unfathomable duality which gave birth to the sons of the universe has given birth to men; and between these two, between the ideal figures who cannot perish and the generations of souls who for ever appear and for ever pass away there is an eternal understanding. And the understanding between these two depends upon the fact that they are both children of the same unfathomable duality.

But this duality which is the cause why the universe is the universe and not something other than the universe, must remain as great a mystery to the souls of the "companions of men" as it is to all the souls in the world who recognize them as their ideal.

We cannot escape the impression that this complex vi-

sion of ours, which is our instrument of research and which leaves us in the presence of an unfathomable duality, finds a parallel in the complex vision of the sons of the universe which is their instrument of research and which leaves them also in the presence of an unfathomable duality. We cannot escape from the impression that to these children of the eternal duality the mystery of this duality is as dark as it is to ourselves.

They find themselves struggling to overcome malice with love, even as we find ourselves struggling to overcome malice with love. They find themselves driven to creation and destruction. The complex vision, which is their instrument of research, is baffled in the same way as the complex vision which is our instrument of research.

If, therefore, in our desperate struggle with the unfathomable nature of this duality, we demand why it is that the gods have failed, in spite of their love, to give us any clue to some ultimate reconciliation, the answer must be that such an ultimate reconciliation is as much beyond the reach of their vision as it is beyond the reach of ours. The attainment of such a reconciliation would seem to mean the absolute end of life as we know it and of creation as we know it. Such a reconciliation would seem to mean nothing less than the swallowing up of the universe in unthinkable nothingness.

The truth is that in this ultimate revelation of the complex vision we are confronted with an inevitable triad, or trinity, of primordial aspects. We are compelled to think of a plurality of living souls of which our own is one; of certain ideal companions of all souls whose vision gives to our vision its objective value; and of an external universe which is the creation of this vision.

What the complex vision indicates, therefore, is a system of things which has a monistic aspect, for there is only one space and only one succession of time; a pluralistic

aspect, for the system of things gives birth continually to innumerable individual souls; and a dualistic aspect, for the universe itself is created by the struggle between love and malice.

What the complex vision does not indicate is any ultimate principle which reduces this complex system of things to the unbroken mass of one integral unity. The nearest approach to such an unbroken, integral unity is to be found in that indefinable "medium" which makes it possible for the innumerable souls which compose the universe to communicate with one another and with their invisible pre-existent companions. It is only the existence of this indefinable medium which makes it possible for us to speak of a universe at all. For this medium is the objective ground, or basis, so to say, from the midst of which each individual vision creates its own universe, always appealing as it does so to that objective standard or pattern of truth offered by the vision of man's invisible companions. What we roughly and loosely call "the universe" or "nature" is therefore an accumulated projection or creation of all the souls which exist, held together by this pervading medium which enables them to communicate with one another. In this eternal process of creating the universe by their united visions, all these souls must inevitably appeal, consciously or unconsciously, to the vision of their pre-existent companions.

The best justification which can be offered for the expression *sons* of the universe as applied to these invisible companions is to be found in the inevitable anthropomorphism of all human thought. The breaking point, so to speak, of man's vision, that ecstasy of comprehension which I call his apex-thought, is the moment which makes him aware of these companions' existence. And, at this ecstatic moment, all individual souls find their personality deepened to such a point that they feel themselves possessed of

the very secret of the ultimate duality, feel themselves to be, in fact, unfathomable personifications of that duality. And their intimation or vision with regard to the gods presents itself to them at that moment as the very nature and true being of the gods. Yet it must be remembered that this intimation is a thing which we reach only by pain and exquisite effort; is a thing, in fact, which is the culminating point of an elaborate and difficult "work of art" requiring a rhythm and a harmony in our nature attained by no easy road.

Since, therefore, the reality of these invisible companions though implied in all our intercourse with one another, is only visualized as actual and authentic when our subjective vision is at its highest point, and since when our subjective vision is at its highest point it conveys the sensation, rightly or wrongly, that what we call our "universe" is *their* universe also, it is not without justification that we use the anthropomorphic expression "the sons of the universe" to describe these invisible companions.

This expression, the sons of the universe, this idea of an objective standard of all ideas, is something that we attain with difficulty and not something that we just pick up as we go along. The "objective," in this sense, is the supreme attainment of the "subjective." And although when we have found these companions they become real and actual, we must not forget that, in the long process of escaping from the subjectivity of ourselves into the objectivity of their existence, it was our own subjective vision with the rhythmic ecstasy of its apex-thought which led us to the brink of this discovery. Thus the expression "the sons of the universe" finds its justification. For they are the objective discovery, as well as the objective implication, of all our human and subjective visions. We and they together create the universe and together become the "children" of the world we create.



And although the universe when thus created remains the creation of man, assisted by the gods, it now presents itself to us, in its acquired and attained objectivity, as a pre-existent thing which is rather our parent than our creation. This objective reality of it, with the inevitable implication that it existed before we came on the scene at all, and will exist after we have disappeared from the scene, is a truth towards which our subjective vision has led us, but which, when once we reach it, seems to become independent of our subjective vision.

Here again, therefore, in connection with the universe as in connection with the gods, the creation of our subjectivity is found to be something independent of our subjectivity and something that, all the while, has been implicit in the energy of our subjective vision. And precisely as the subjective vision of man creates the companions of men and then discovers them to be an objective reality, so the subjective vision of man creates the universe and then discovers the universe to be an objective reality. And in both cases this discovering finds its justification in a recognition that the idea of this resultant objectivity was implicit in the subjective energy from the beginning. But the universe once created or discovered, is found to be the eternal manifestation of that ultimate duality which is the essence of our own souls and of the souls of the immortals.

In no other way can we think of the objectivity of the universe; for in no other way can we think of ourselves. And because it is the evocation of that ultimate duality which is the very stuff and texture of our creative vision, the universe becomes naturally the parent of man's invisible companions as it becomes the parent of man himself. And thus are we justified in speaking of these mysterious ones as the "sons of the universe."

It is out of pain and grief that we arrive at the concep-

tion of the nature of the gods. "Those who have not eaten their bread with tears, they know them not, the Heavenly Powers!" Pain and sorrow, both physical and mental, seem to soften the porous shell, so to speak, of the human intelligence, seem to throw back certain shutter-like shards or scales with which it protects its malignant ignorance.

It is when our loneliness becomes intolerable, it is when the poisonous teeth of the eternal malice in Nature have us by the throat, it is when our malice rises up, in the miserable torture of hatred, to answer the malice of the system of things, that, out of the depths, we cry to the darkness which surrounds us for some voice or some signal that shall give us an intimation of help. Merely to know that our wretched pain is known to some one besides ourselves is an incredible relief. Merely to know that some sort of super-human being, even without special preoccupation with human fate, can turn an amused or an indulgent clairvoyance towards our wretchedness, can "note" it with dispassionate sympathy, as we note the hurts of animals or plants, is a sort of consolation. It is a relief to know that what we feel when we are hurt to the breaking-point is not absolutely wasted and lost in the void, but is stored up in an immortal memory along with many other pains of the same kind. That cry, "Only He do know what I do suffer" of the Wessex peasant is a cry natural to the whole human race. It is not that we ask to be confronted and healed by our immortal friend. We ask merely that our sorrows should not be altogether drowned in the abyss as though they had never been. There is a certain outrage about this annihilation of the very memory of pain against which humanity protests.

But it is necessary at this point to beware of the old pathetic fallacy of human thought, the fallacy of assuming that to be true, which we desire to be true. What our complex vision reveals as to the nature of the gods does not

satisfy in any obvious or facile manner this bitter need of humanity. If it did so satisfy it, then for some profound and mysterious reason man's own aesthetic sense would revolt against it, would indignantly reject it, as too smooth an answer to life's mystery.

For man's aesthetic sense seems in some strange way to be in league with a certain inveterate tragedy in things, which no facile optimism can ever cajole or melt.

That the gods are aware of our existence can hardly be doubted. That they feel pity for us, in this or that significant hour, can easily be imagined. That the evil in us draws towards us what is evil in them seems likewise a not unnatural possibility. That the love in us draws towards us the love in them is a thing in complete accordance with our own relation to forms of life lower than ourselves. That even at certain moments the gods may, by a kind of celestial vampirizing, use the bodily senses of men to "fill out," as it were, what is lacking in their own materiality, is a conceivable speculation.

But it is not in any definite relation between the individual soul of man and the individual soul of any one of the immortals that our hope lies. If this were all that we could look for, our condition would be as miserable as the condition of those unhappy ones who seek intermittent and fantastic relief in attempted intercourse with the psychic and the occult.

Our hope lies in that immemorial and traditional human gesture which has, in the unique figure of Christ, gathered up and focused, as it were, all the vague and floating intimations of super-human sympathy, all the shadowy rumours and intimations of super-human help, which move to and fro in the background of our apprehension.

The figure of Christ has thus become something more than a mere name arbitrarily given by us to some nameless god. The figure of Christ has become a symbol, an

intermediary, a kind of cosmic high-priest, standing between all that is mortal and all that is immortal in the world, and by means of the love and pity that is in him partaking of the nature of every living thing.

When, therefore, out of the bitterness of our fate we cry aloud upon the Unknown, the answer to our cry comes from the heart of Christ. In other words it comes from the epitome and personification of all the love in the universe. For to the figure of Christ has been brought, down the long ages of the world, all the baffled, thwarted, broken, unsatisfied love in every soul that has ever lived. It is in the heart of Christ that all the nameless sorrows and miseries, of the innumerable lives that Nature gives birth to, are stored up and remembered. Not one single pang, felt by plant or animal or bird or fish or man or planet, but is embalmed for ever in that mysterious store-house of the universal pity. Thus, if there were no other super-human Beings in the world and if apart from the creative energy of all souls Christ would never have existed, as it is now He *does* exist because He *has* been created by the creative power of all souls.

But while in one sense the figure of Christ is the supreme work of art of the world, the culminating achievement of the anonymous creative energy of all souls, the turning of the transitory into the eternal, of the mortal into the immortal, of the human into the divine; in another sense the figure of Christ is a real and living personality, the one personality among the gods, whose nature we may indeed assume that we understand and know.

How should we not understand it, when it has been in so large a measure created by our sorrow and our desire?

But the fact that the anonymous striving of humanity with the objective mystery has in a sense created the figure of Christ does not reduce the figure of Christ to a mere

Ideal. As we have seen with regard to the primordial ideas of truth, beauty, and goodness, nothing can be an Ideal which has not already, in the eternal system of things, existed as a reality.

What we call the pursuit of truth, or the creation of truth, what we call the pursuit of beauty or the creation of beauty, is always a *return* to something which has been latent in the eternal nature of the system of things. In other words, in all creation there is a rediscovery, just as in all discovery there is creation.

The figure of Christ, therefore, the everlasting intermediary between mortality and immortality, has been at once created and discovered by humanity. When any living soul approaches the figure of Christ, or cries aloud upon Christ out of the depths of its misery, it cries aloud upon all the love that has ever existed in the world. It enters at such a moment into definite communion with all the suffering of all the dead and with all the suffering of all the unborn.

For in the heart of Christ all the dead are gathered up into immortality, and all their pain remembered. In the heart of Christ all the unborn live already, in their pain and in their joy; for such pain and such joy are latent in the ultimate duality of love and malice, and in the heart of Christ this ultimate duality struggles with such terrible concentration that all the antagonisms which the procession of time evokes, all the "moments" of this abysmal drama, in the past, in the present, in the future, are summed up and comprehended in what that heart feels.

The ancient human doctrine of "vicarious suffering," the doctrine that upon the person of Christ all the sins and sorrows of the world are laid, is not a mere logical conclusion of a certain set of theological axioms; but is a real and true secret of life, discovered by our most intimate experience.

The profoundest of all the oracles, uttered out of the depths, is that saying of Jesus about the "losing" of life to "save" it. This "losing of life" for Christ's sake is that ultimate act of the will by which the lusts of the flesh, the pride of life, the possessive instinct, the hatred of the body, the malice which resists creation, the power of pride, are all renounced, in order that the soul may enter into that supreme vision of Christ, wherein by a mysterious movement of sympathy, all the struggles of all living things are comprehended and shared.

Thus it is true to say that the object of life for all living souls is the eternal vision. Towards the attainment of the eternal vision the love in all living souls perpetually struggles; and against the attainment of the eternal vision the malice in all living souls perpetually struggles. We arrive, therefore, at the only adequate conception of the nature of the gods which the complex vision permits us.

The nature of the gods, or of the immortals, or, as I have preferred to call them, the sons of the universe, is a nature which corresponds to our nature, even as our nature corresponds to the nature of animals or of plants. The ultimate duality is embodied in the nature of the gods more richly, more beautifully, more terribly, in a more dramatic and articulate concentration, than it is embodied in our nature. Between us and the gods there must be a reciprocal vibration, as there is a reciprocal vibration between us and plants and beasts and oceans and hills. The precise nature of such reciprocity may well be left a matter for vague and unphilosophical speculation; because the important aspect of it, in regard to the mystery of life and the object of life, is not the method or manner of its functioning but the issue and the result of its functioning. And this issue and result of the reciprocity between mortal and immortal, between man and his invisible companions,

is the eternal vision which they both share, the vision in which love attains its object.

And the eternal vision, which was, and is, and is to come, is the vision in which Christ, the Intermediary between the transitory and the permanent, contemplates the spectacle of the unfathomable world; and is able to endure that spectacle, by reason of the creative power of love.

## CHAPTER X

### THE FIGURE OF CHRIST

In considering the figure of that great Intermediary between mortality and immortality whom we have come to name Christ, the question arises, in view of the historic existence of other world-saviours, such as the Indian Buddha, whether it would not be better to invent, out of our arbitrary fancy, some completely new symbol for the eternal vision which should be entirely free from those merely geographical associations which have limited the acceptance of this Figure to so much less than one-half of the inhabitants of our planet.

The question arises—can there be invented any concrete, tangible symbol which shall appeal to every attribute of the complex vision and be an accumulated image of that side of the unfathomable duality from which we draw our ideas of truth, beauty, and goodness?

For the complex vision itself I have projected my own arbitrary image of an arrow-head of many concentrated flames; but when we approach a matter as important as the choice of a symbolic image for the expression of the ultimate synthesis of the good as contrasted with the evil something very different from a mere subjective fancy is required.

If it were possible for me, the present writer, to give myself up so completely to the creative spirit as to become suddenly inspired with the true idea of such a symbolic image, even then my image would remain detached, remote and individualistic. If it were possible for me to gather up, as it were, and to bring into focus all the symbolic



images used by all the supreme prophets and artists and poets of the world, my synthetic symbol, including all these different symbols, would still remain remote and distant from the feelings and experiences of the mass of humanity.

But the ideas of truth, beauty, goodness, together with that emotion of love which is their synthesis, are not confined to the great artists and prophets of the world. They are felt and experienced by the common mass of humanity. They have indeed an even wider scope than this, since they exist in the depths of the souls of the sons of the universe, and in the depths of that unfathomable universe whose objective reality depends upon their energy. They have the widest scope which it is possible for the complex vision to grasp. Wherever time and space are, they are; and, as we have seen, time and space make up the ultimate unity within whose limits the drama of life proceeds.

Although the universe depends for its objective reality upon the vision of the immortals and incidentally upon all the visions of all the souls born into the world, it is not true to say that either the vision of the immortals or the visions of all souls, or even both of these together, exhaust the possibilities of the universe and sound the depths of its unfathomableness. The complex vision of man stops at a certain point; but the unfathomable nature of the universe goes on beyond that point. The complex vision of the immortals stops at a definite point; but the unfathomable nature of the universe goes on beyond that point.

If it be asked, "how can it be said that an universe, which depends for its objective reality upon the complex vision, goes on beyond the point where the complex vision stops?" I would answer that the complex vision does not only create reality; it discovers reality. There is always

the primordial objective mystery outside the complex vision; that objective mystery, or world-stuff, or world-clay, out of which, in its process of half-creation and half-discovery, the complex vision evokes the universe.

And although apart from the activity of the complex vision this primordial world-clay or objective mystery is almost nothing because it is only of its bare existence that we are aware, yet it is not altogether nothing, because it is, in a sense, the origin of everything we discover. When, therefore, we speak of the unfathomable as receding into depths beyond the point where the vision of man stops and beyond the point where the vision of the immortals stops, we do not contradict the statement that the vision of man and the vision of the immortals create the universe. They create the universe in so far as they discover the universe; but the universe must be thought of as always capable of being further discovered and further created. Perhaps the most adequate way of putting the situation would be to image the objective mystery as a kind of colourless screen across which a coloured picture is slowly moved. This coloured picture is the universe as we know it. Without the white screen as a background there could be no picture. All the colours of the picture are latent and potential in the whiteness of the screen; but they require the focussed lime-light of the magic-lantern to call them forth. The lantern from which the light comes, half-creates, so to speak, and half-discovers the resultant colours.

When we say, therefore, that the universe, although created by the complex vision, recedes into unfathomable depths beyond the reach of the complex vision, what we mean is that the boundary line between the moving colour-picture, which is the universe, and the original whiteness of the screen across which the picture is moved, which is the objective mystery, is capable of endless recession. The blank whiteness of the part of the screen over which the

picture has not yet moved is capable of revealing every kind of colour as soon as the focussed lime-light of the complex vision reaches it. The colours are in the whiteness of the screen as well as in the lime-light which is thrown upon the screen; but neither the lantern which throws the light nor the screen upon which the light is thrown, can, in isolation from one another, produce colour.

The universe, therefore, is half-created and half-discovered by the complex vision; and it may be said to go on beyond the point where the complex vision stops, although strictly speaking what goes on beyond the stopping place of the complex vision is not the universe as we know it but a potential universe as we may come to know it; a universe, in fact, which is at present held in suspense in the unfathomable depths of the objective mystery.

This potential universe, this universe which will come into existence as soon as the complex vision discovers it and creates it, this universe across which gathers already the moving shadow of the complex vision, is not a new universe but only an extension into a further depth of the objective mystery, of the universe which we already know.

We are not justified in saying of this objective mystery or of this white screen across which the colours will presently flow, that it is outside time and space. We are not justified in saying anything at all about it, except that it exists and that it lends itself to the advance of the complex vision. If in place of a white screen we could figure to ourselves this objective mystery as a mass of impenetrable darkness, we should thus be able to envisage the complex vision as I have tried to envisage it, namely as a moving arrow-head of focussed flames with the point of it, or what I have named the apex-thought of it, illuminating that mass of darkness with all the colours of life.

But, as I have said, none of these subjective images can serve as the sort of symbol we are in search of, because by

reason of their being arbitrary and individualistic they lack the organic and magical associations which cling round such symbols as have become objective and historical. We can content ourselves with such fanciful symbols as white screens and arrow-heads and pyramids of fire in regard to the organ of our research and the original protoplasmic stuff out of which this organ of research creates the world; but when it comes to the purpose of life and the meaning of life, when it comes to that unfathomable duality which is the essence of life, we require for our symbol something that has already gathered about it the whole desperate stream of life's tears and blood and dreams and ecstasies and memories and hopes.

We can find no symbol for the adversary of life, no symbol for the malignant obscurantism and the sneering malice that resist creation. To endow this thing which is in the way, this unfathomable depth of spiritual evil, with the vivid and imaginative life of a symbolic image would be to change its inherent nature. No adequate symbol can be found for evil, any more than a complete embodiment can be found for evil. Directly evil becomes personal it ceases to be evil, because personality is the supreme achievement of life. And directly evil is expressed in a living, objective, historic, mythological image it ceases to be evil, because such an image instantaneously gathers to itself some potency of creative energy. Evil is a positive thing, a spiritual thing, an eternal thing; but it is positive only in its opposition to creation, in its corruption of the soul, and in its subtle undermining of the divine moments of the soul by the power of eternal dreariness and disillusion.

What we need above everything is a symbolic image which shall represent the creative energy of life, the creative power of love, and those eternal ideas of truth and beauty and nobility which seem in some mysterious way

derogated from, rendered less formidable and unfathomable, by being named "the good."

The desire for a symbol of this kind, which shall gather together all the tribes and nations of men and all conflicting ideals of humanity, is a desire so deep and universal as to be perhaps the supreme desire of the human race. No symbol arbitrarily invented by any one man, even though he were the greatest genius that ever lived, could supply this want or satisfy this desire. And it could not do so because it would lack the organic weathering and bleaching, so to speak, of the long panorama of time. An individual genius might hit upon a better symbolic image, an image more comprehensive, more inclusive, more appealing to the entire nature of the complex vision; but without having been subjected to the sun and rain of actual human experience, without having endured the passion of the passing of the generations, such an image would remain, for all its appropriateness, remote, intellectual and barren of magical suggestiveness.

I do not mean to indicate that there is necessarily any determined or fatalistic process of natural selection in these things by which one symbol rather than another gathers about it the hopes and fears of the generations. Chance no doubt plays a strange part in all this. But the concrete necessities of living human souls play a greater part than chance; and without believing in any steady evolutionary process or even in any law of natural selection among the evocations of human desire, it must still remain that the symbol which survives will be the symbol adapted to the deepest instincts of complicated souls and at the same time palpable and tangible to the touch of the crudest and most simple.

It cannot be denied that there are serious difficulties in the way of the acceptance of any historic symbol, the anonymous evocation of the generations of men. Just be-

cause it has a definite place in history such a symbol will necessarily have gathered to itself much that is false and much that is accidental and unessential. It will have entered into bitter controversies. It will have been hardened and narrowed by the ferocious logic of rationalistic definition. It will have been made the rallying cry of savage intolerances and the mask for strange perversions. Evil will naturally have attached itself to it and malice will have left its sinister stain upon it. Because chance and accident and even evil have had much to do with its survival, it may easily happen that some primary attribute of the complex vision, such for instance as the aesthetic sense with its innate awareness of the humorous and the grotesque, will have been forgotten altogether in the stuff out of which it is made.

Considering such things, considering above all this final fact that it may not satisfy every attribute of the complex vision, and may even completely suppress and negate some essential attribute, it remains still a perilous question whether it were not, after all, better to invent a new symbol that shall be deliberately adapted to the entire complex vision, than to accept an already existing symbol, which in the shocks and jolts and casualties, of history has been narrowed, limited and stiffened by the malice of attack and defence.

This narrowing and hardening process by which such a symbol, the anonymous creation of humanity under the shocks of circumstance, becomes limited and inadequate, is a process frequently assisted by those premature and violent syntheses of the ultimate contradiction which we name dogmatic religions. To make such a symbol once more fluid and flexible, to restore it to its place in the organic life of the soul, it is necessary to extricate it from the clutch of any dogmatic religion. I do not say that it is necessary to extricate it from religion, or even from

every aspect of dogma; for it is of the very essence of such symbol to be a stimulus to the religious ecstasy and there are many dogmas which are full of imaginative poetry.

But it is necessary to extricate it from dogmatic religion because dogmatic religion may be defined as a premature metaphysical synthesis, masquerading beneath a system of imaginative ritual. The truth of religion is in its ritual and the truth of dogma is in its poetry. Where a dogmatic religion becomes dangerous to any human symbol is when it tries to rationalize it and interpret it according to a premature metaphysical synthesis. In so far as it remains purely symbolic and does not attempt to rationalize its symbolism, a dogmatic religion must always contain within the circle of its creed many profound and illuminating secrets. The false and ephemeral portion of a dogmatic religion is its metaphysical aspect, because the whole science of metaphysics is an ambiguity from the start, since it is a projection of one isolated attribute of the complex vision.

What the apex-thought of the complex vision does is to undermine metaphysic; not by the use of metaphysic but by the use of the rhythmic totality of all the attributes of the soul. The philosophy of the complex vision has its metaphysical, as it has its psychological and its physiological aspect, but its real starting point must transcend all these, because it must emanate from personality. And personality is something super-metaphysical; as it is something super-psychological, and super-physiological.

The creed of a dogmatic religion is not to be condemned because it calls upon us to believe the impossible. Some sort of belief in the impossible, some primordial act of faith is an essential part of the process of life and, without it, life could not continue. It is where dogmatic religion attempts to justify its belief in the impossible by the use of meta-

physical reason that we must regard it as an enemy of the truth of its own symbolism.

The supreme example of the evil and dangerous influence of metaphysic upon religion is to be found in connection with that inscrutable nothingness behind the universe, and also behind the objective mystery out of which the soul creates the universe. I refer to that ambiguous and un-beautiful phantom, which has acquired for itself the name of "the absolute," or the parent or first cause of life.

That the conception of "the sons of the universe," to which certain basic facts and experiences in regard to the intercourse between living human souls has led humanity, is not a metaphysical conception, is proved by the fact that it is a conception of a reality existing inside and not outside the ultimate unity of time and space. Any pure metaphysical conception must, as we have seen, remain outside the categories of time and space, and remaining there bear perpetual witness to its essential unreality.

The sons of the universe are living personal souls; and being this, they must be, as all personalities are, super-metaphysical, super-psychological, and super-physiological.

The perilous choice between the invention of an arbitrary symbol which shall represent in its full complexity this idea of the sons of the universe, and the acceptance of a symbol already supplied by that chaotic mixture of accident and human purpose which we call history is a choice upon which more than we can imagine or surmise may ultimately depend. It is necessary in all matters of this kind, wherein the rhythmic totality of the complex vision is involved, to remain rigorous in our suppression of any particular usurpation of the whole field by any isolated attribute of the soul. It is a most evil usurpation, for instance, an usurpation of which the sinister history of dogmatic religion is full, when the conscience is allowed to



introduce the conception of a "duty," of an "ought," of a "categorical" imperative, into such a choice as this. There is no ought in philosophy. There is no ought in faith. And there can be, in no possible way, any ought of the usurping conscience, in regard to this choice of an appropriate symbol which shall represent a thing so entirely beyond the conception of any single attribute, as this eternal protagonist of the ultimate struggle. The risk of choosing for our symbol a mere arbitrary invention is that it should remain thin and cold and unappealing.

The risk of choosing for our symbol a form, a figure, a gesture, a name, offered us by history, is that it should carry with it too many of the false accretions of accident, chance, the passions of controversy and the hypocrisies of malice. But after all the anonymous creative spirit of the generations is so full of the wisdom of the earth and so involved with the rhythmic inspiration of innumerable souls, that it would seem better to risk the presence of certain sinister accretions, than to risk the loss of so much magical suggestiveness.

If we do select for our symbol such a form, such a shape, such a gesture and such a name, as history may offer, we shall at any rate be always free to keep it fluid and malleable and organic. We shall be free to plunge it, so to speak, again and again into the living reality which it has been selected to represent. We shall be free to extricate it completely from all its accretions of chance and circumstance and material events. We shall be free to extricate it from all premature metaphysical syntheses. We shall be free to draw it from the clutches of dogmatic religion. We shall be free to make it, as all such symbols should be made, poetical and mythological and, in the aesthetic sense, shamelessly anthropomorphic. Above all we shall be completely free, since it represents for us those sons of the universe who are the embodiment of the creative energy,

to associate it with every aspect of the life of the soul. We shall be free to associate it with those aspects of the soul which in the process of its slow invention by the generations have, it may be, been disassociated from it and separated from it. We shall be free to use it as a symbol for the fuller, complete life of the future, and for every kind of revolt, into which the spirit of creation may drive us, against the evil obscurantism and malicious inertness which resist the power of love.

The conclusion to which we are thus led, the choice which we are thus compelled to make, is one that has been anticipated from the beginning. No other name except the name of Christ, no other figure except the figure of Christ, can possibly serve, if we are to make any use of history at all, as our symbol for the sons of the universe.

The choice of Christ as our symbol for these invisible companions does not imply that we are forced to accept in their entirety the scriptural accounts of the life of Jesus, or even that we are forced to assume that the historic Jesus ever lived at all. The desire which the soul experiences for the incarnation of Christ does not prove that Christ has already been incarnated, or ever will be incarnated. And it does not prove this because, in the greater, nobler, and more spiritual moods of the soul, there is no need for the incarnation of Christ. In these rare and indescribable moments, when the past and future seem annihilated and we experience the sensation of eternity, Christ is felt to be so close to us that no material incarnation could make him any closer.

The association of Christ with the figure of Jesus is a sublime accident which has had more influence upon the human soul than any other historic event; and it must be confessed that the idea of Christ has been profoundly affected by this association. It has been so deepened and enlarged and clarified by it that the substitution of the

religion of Jesus for the religion of Christ has been an almost entirely fortunate event, since it has furnished the soul with a criterion of the true nature of love which otherwise it might never have gained.

Jesus undoubtedly came so much nearer than any other to the understanding of the nature of love, and consequently of the nature of "the immortals," that the idea of the incarnation—that beautiful concession to the weakness of the flesh—emanated with an almost inevitable naturalness from their association. Jesus himself felt in his own soul the presence of the invisible companions; although he was led, by reason of his peculiar religious bent, and by reason of the influences that surrounded him, to speak of these companions as a "heavenly father."

But the words of Jesus which carry with them the very magic of truth are not the words in which he speaks of his "father," but the words in which he speaks of himself as if he were the very incarnation of Love itself. There is no doubt that the sons of the universe found in Jesus a soul so uniquely harmonious with their own that there existed between them a sympathy and an understanding without parallel in the history of humanity.

It is this sympathy which is the origin of those unequalled words used by the son of Mary in which he speaks as if he were himself in very truth an incarnation of the vision of the immortals. The whole situation is one which need have little mystery for those who understand the nature of love. In moment after moment of supreme ecstasy Jesus felt himself so given up to the will of the invisible companions that this own identity became lost. In speaking for himself he spoke for them; in suffering for himself he suffered for them, and in the great hours of his tragic wayfaring he felt himself so close to them that, by reason of his love, he knew himself able to speak of the secret of life even as the immortals themselves would speak.

We are permitted indeed in reading the divine narrative to distinguish between two moods in the soul of Jesus. In one of these moods he refers to his "father" as if his father were distinct and separate from him and even very distant. In the other mood he speaks as if he himself were in very truth a god; and were able, without any appeal to any other authority, to heal the wounds of the world and to reveal to mankind the infinite pity of the love which is beyond analysis.

It is towards the words and gestures of the son of Mary, when he spoke of himself rather than of his "father" that we are inevitably drawn, in our search for an adequate symbol for the eternal vision. It is when he speaks with authority as if he himself were an immortal god, as if he himself were one of the invisible companions, that his words and gestures carry the very breath and fragrance of truth.

As the drama of his life unfolds itself before us we seem to grow more and more aware of these two aspects of his soul. It was his reason, brooding upon the traditions of his race, that led him into that confusion of the invisible witnesses with the jealous tribal God of his father David. It was the rhythmic harmony of his soul, rising up out of the depths of his struggle with himself, that led him, in his passionate submission to the will of his invisible friends, to feel as if he were identical with those friends, as if he were himself the "son of man" and the incarnation of man's supreme hope.

It is the emphasis laid by Jesus upon his identity with his "father" which has produced the tragic results we know. For although this was the personal conception of the noblest of all human souls, it remains a proof of how much even the soul of Jesus was limited and restricted by the malicious power which opposes itself to love.

The living companions of men are as we have seen a

necessary answer to the craving of the complex vision for some objective standard of beauty and reality, which shall give these things an eternal unity and purpose. Such a vision is an answer to our desire that the spirit of creative love, which is one side of the unfathomable duality, should be embodied in personality.

And we have a right to use the name of Christ in this sense; and to associate it with all that immortal anonymous company, so beautiful, so pitiful, so terrible, which the name of "*the gods*" has, in its turbulent and dramatic history, gathered about itself.

The idea of Christ is older than the life of Jesus; nor does the life of Jesus, as it has come down to us in ecclesiastical tradition, exhaust or fulfil all the potentialities latent in the idea of Christ. What the complex vision seems to demand is that the invisible companions of men should be regarded as immortal gods. If, therefore, we throw all hesitancy and scruple aside and risk the application of the name of Christ to this vision of the sons of the universe, then we shall be compelled to regard Christ as an immortal God.

The fact that there must be some objective standard which shall satisfy all the passionate demands of the complex vision is the path by which we reach this conception of Christ. But once having reached him he ceases to be a mere conception of the intellect, and becomes an objective reality which we can touch and appeal to with our emotion, our imagination, and our aesthetic sense. But although Christ as our symbolic image of the invisible companions, must be assumed to be the objective standard of all our ideas of truth, it is obvious that we cannot escape from subjectivity in our individual interpretation of his deeper and truer vision.

Thus there are two parallel streams of growth and change. There is growth and change in the soul of Christ

as he continually approximates nearer and nearer to his eternally receding ideal. And there is growth and change in the accumulated harmony of our individual ideas about his ideal, as each human soul and each generation of human souls restates this ideal in terms of its own limited vision.

Each new restatement of this accumulated interpretation of the ideal of the son of man brings necessarily with it an innate conviction of its truth because it finds an immediate response in every individual soul in so far as such individual souls are able to overcome their intrinsic evil or malice.

What Jesus did for the universe was to recognize in it the peculiar nature of that love which is its essential life. He would have done yet more for it had he been able to disassociate his vision from the conception of an imaginary father of the universe and from his traditional interest in the tribal god of his ancestors. But Jesus remains the one human soul who has revealed to us in his own subjective vision the essential secret of the vision of the immortals. And that he has done so is proved by the fact that all his words and actions have come to be inextricably associated with the Christ-idea.

In this way Jesus remains the profoundest of all human philosophers and the subtlest of all human psychologists; and although we have the right to disassociate the Christ-idea from the sublime illusion of Jesus which led him to confuse the invisible companions of humanity with the tribal God of the Hebrews, we are compelled to recognize that Jesus has done so much for humanity by the depth of his psychological insight that we do not experience any shock when in the ritual of the Church the name of the son of David becomes identical with the name of Christ.

The essential thing to establish is that there are greater depths in the Christ-idea than even Jesus was able to

fathom; and that compared with the soul of Jesus or with the soul of any other man or god or spiritual entity, the figure of Christ has come now at last to be for humanity the only god we need; for he is the only god whose love for all living things is beyond question and dispute, and whose existence is assumed and implied when any soul in the universe loves any other soul.

It is necessary then to do two things. To accept without reserve the vision which Jesus had as to the secret of love; because to nothing less than this does the love which we possess in our own souls respond. And in the second place to be merciless and drastic, even at the risk of pain to the weakness of our human flesh, in separating the personality of Christ, the immortal god, from the historic figure of the traditional Jesus. By doing these two things, and by this alone, we establish what the complex vision desires, upon a firm ground. For we retain what the vision of Jesus has revealed to us as to the inherent nature of the invisible companions and we are saved from all controversy as to the historic reality of the life of Jesus.

It does not matter to us whether Jesus "really lived"; or whether, like other great figures, his personality has been created by the anonymous instinct of humanity. What matters to us is that humanity itself, using the vision of Jesus as its organ of research or as the focus point of its own passionate clairvoyance has in some way or another recognized that the secret of the universe is to be found in the unfathomable duality of love and malice. From this point, now it has been once reached, the intrinsic nature of all human souls makes sure that humanity cannot go back. And it is because, either by his own sublime insight or by the accident and chance of history, the figure of Jesus has become associated with the reality of the immortal gods that we are justified in using for our symbol

of these sons of the universe no other name than the name of Christ.

We shall, however, be doing wrong to our conception of Christ, if, while recognizing that the kind of love, of which Jesus revealed the secret, is the essence of Christ's soul, we refuse to find in him also many aspects and attributes of life which occupy but little place or no place at all in the traditional figure of Jesus.

All that is most beautiful and profound, all that is most magical and subtle, in the gods of the ancient world, must be recognized as existent in the soul of Christ who is our true "Son of the Morning." The earth-magic of the ancient gods must be in him; and the Titanic spirit which revolted against such gods must be in him also. The mystery of the elements must be interwoven with the very stuff of his being and the unfathomable depths of Nature must be a path for his feet. In him all mythologies and all religions must meet and be transcended. He is Prometheus and Dionysus. He is Osiris and Balder. He is the great god Pan. "All that we have been, all that we are, and all that we hope to be, is centred in him alone." His spirit is the creative spirit which moves for ever upon the face of the waters. In him all living souls find the object of their love. Against him the unfathomable power of evil struggles with eternal demonic malice. In his own soul it struggles against him; and in the universe which confronts him it struggles against him. His inmost being is made up of the duality of this struggle even as is the inmost being of all that exists. If it were not for the presence of evil in him his passion of love would be as nothing. For without evil there can be no good, and without malice there cannot be love. His soul and our human souls remain the ultimate reality. These alone are concrete, definite, actual and personal. All except these is ambiguous,



half-real and unstable as water. These and the universe which they create are the true truth; and compared with these every other "truth" is dubious, shadowy and unsubstantial.

These are the true truth, because these are personal; and we know nothing in life, and can know nothing, with the interior completeness with which we know personality. And the essence of that interior knowledge with which we know personality is our recognition of the unfathomable duality within ourselves. We cannot imagine the good in us as existing without the evil in us; and we cannot imagine the evil in us as existing without the good in us.

And this ultimate essence of reality must apply to the soul of Christ. And this duality has no reconciliation except the reconciliation that it is a duality in ourselves and a duality in him. For both the good and the evil in us recede into unfathomable depths. So that the ultimate reality of the universe is to be found in the two eternal emotions which perpetually contradict and oppose one another; of which the only unity and reconciliation is to be found in the fact that they both belong to every separate soul; and are the motive power which brings the universe into existence; and in bringing the universe into existence find themselves under the domination of time and space.

Every individual soul in the world is composed of two unfathomable abysses. From the limitless depths of each of these emanates an emotion which is able to obsess and preoccupy the whole field of consciousness. Every individual soul has depths, therefore, which descend into unfathomable recesses; and we are forced into the conclusion that the unfathomable recesses in the soul of Christ are subject to the same eternal duality as the souls of men.

Every movement of thought implies an evocation of the opposing passion of these two emotions. For no movement of thought can take place without the activity of the com-

plex vision; and since one of the basic attributes of the complex vision is divided into these two primary emotions, we are compelled to conclude that it is impossible to think any thought at all without some evocation of the emotion of love and some evocation of the emotion of malice.

The emotion of love is the power that brings together and synthesizes those eternal ideas of truth and beauty and nobility which find their objective standard in the soul of Christ. The emotion of malice is the power that brings together and synthesizes and harmonizes those eternal ideas of unreality and hideousness and evil with which the love of Christ struggles desperately in the unfathomable depths of his soul. It matters to us little or nothing that we have no name to give to any among the gods except to this god; for in this god, in this companion of men, in this immortal helper, the complex vision of man finds all it needs, the embodiment of Love itself.

We arrive, therefore, at the very symbol we desire, at the symbol which in tangible and creative power satisfies the needs of the soul. We owe this symbol to nothing less than the free gift of the gods themselves; and to the anonymous strivings of the generations. And once having reached this symbol, this name of Christ, the same phenomenon occurs as occurs in the establishment of the real existence of the external universe. *That*, like this, was at first only a daring hypothesis, only a supreme act of faith, reached by the subjective effort of the innumerable individual souls. But once having been reached, it became, as this has become, a definite objective fact, whose reality turns out to have been implicit from the beginning.

Thus the name, the word, which we arrive at as the only possible symbol of our hope is found to be, as soon as we reach it, no longer merely a symbol but the outward sign of an invisible and eternal truth. And thus although it remains that we are forced to recognize that the world is

full of gods and that the Person we name Christ is only one of an innumerable company of invisible companions to whom in our loneliness we have a right to turn, yet just because the vision of humanity has found in Christ a completer, subtler, more beautiful, more revolutionary figure upon which to fix its hope than it has found in Buddha or Confucius or Mahomet, or any other name, the figure of Christ has become the supreme and solitary embodiment of the Ideal to which we look, and about this figure has come to gather itself and focus itself all the hopeless longing with which the soul of man turns to the souls of the immortals.

These divine people of the abyss, these sons of the universe, are for us henceforth and must be now for us for ever summed up and embodied in this one figure, the only one among them all whose nature and being has been drawn so near to us that we can appropriate it to ourselves.

It remains that the unity of time and space contains an immeasurable company of immortals; but of these immortals only one has been articulated and outlined, and so to speak "touched with the hand," by the troubled passion of humanity. Henceforth, therefore, while the necessity of the complex vision compels us to think of the invisible company of the sons of the universe as a vast hierarchy of supernatural beings, the necessity of the complex vision compels us also to recognize, that of this company, only one—only one until the end of time—can be the true symbol of what our heart desires.

It is better to think of the evocation of this figure as due to the pity of the gods themselves and to the anonymous craving of humanity than to think of him as dependent upon the historic evidence as to the personality of Jesus. The soul requires something more certain than historic evidence upon which to base its faith. It requires something closer and more certain even than the divine "logoi"

attributed to the historic Jesus. It requires a living and a personal soul for ever present to the depths of its own nature. It requires a living and a personal soul for ever ready to answer the cry of its love. The misery and unhappiness, the restlessness and pain of all our human "loves," is due to the fact that the only eternal response to Love as it beats its hands against the barriers set up against it, is the embodiment of Love itself as we feel it present with us in the figure of Christ.

The love which draws two human souls together can only become eternal and indestructible when it passes beyond the love of the two for one another into the love of both of them for the Lover who is immortal. This merging of the love of human lovers into the love of the immortal Lover does not imply the lessening or diminishing of the love which draws them together. The nature of this love cries out against their separation, cries out that they two shall become one. And yet if they actually and in very truth became one, that unity in difference which is the very essence of love would be destroyed. But though they know this well enough there still remains the desperate craving of the two that they should become one; and this is of the very nature of love itself. Thus it may be seen that the only path by which human lovers can be satisfied is by merging their love for one another into their love for Christ. In this way, in a sense profounder than mortal flesh can know, they actually do become one. They become so completely one that no power on earth or above the earth can ever separate them. For they are bound together by no mortal link but by the eternal love of a soul beyond the reach of death. Thus when one of them comes to die the love which was of the essence of that soul lives on in the soul of Christ; and when both of them are dead it can never be as though their love had not been, for in the eternal memory of Christ their love lives on, increas-

ing the love of Christ for others like themselves and continually drawing the transitory and the mortal nearer to the eternal and the immortal.

It therefore becomes evident why it is that the vision of the invisible companions which remains our standard of reality and of beauty is not broken up into innumerable subjective visions but is fixed and permanent and sure. All the unfathomable souls of the world, and all souls are unfathomable whether they are the souls of plants or animals or planets or gods or men, are found, the closer they approach one another, to be in possession of the same vision. For this immortal vision, in which what we name beauty, and what we name "reality," finds its synthesis, is found to be nothing less than the secret love. And while the great company of the immortal companions are only known to us by the figure of one among them, namely by the figure of Christ, this figure alone is sufficient to contain all that we require of life; for being the embodiment of love this figure is the embodiment of life, of which love is the creator and the sustainer.

Thus what the apex-thought of man's complex vision reveals is not only the existence of the gods but the fact that the vision of the gods is not broken up and divided but is one and the same; and is yet for ever growing and deepening. And the only measure of the vision of the gods which we possess is the figure of Christ; for it has come about by reason of the anonymous instinct of humanity, by reason of the compassion of the immortals, and by reason of the divine insight of Jesus, that the figure of Christ contains within it every one of those primordial ideas from which and towards which, in a perpetual advance which is also a perpetual return, the souls of all living things are for ever journeying.

Whether the souls of men and of beasts, of plants and of planetary spheres survive in any form after they are

dead we know not and can never know. But this at least  
/ the revelation of the complex vision makes clear, that  
the secret of the whole process is to be found in the mystery of love; and to the mystery of love we can, at the worst, constantly appeal; for the mystery of love has been at last embodied for us in a living figure over whom Death has no control.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE ILLUSION OF DEAD MATTER

The philosophy of the complex vision is based, as I have shown, upon nothing less than the whole personality of man become conscious of itself in the totality of its rhythmic functioning. This personality, although capable of being analysed in its constituent elements, is an integral and unfathomable reality. And just because it is such a reality it descends and expands on every side into immeasurable depths and immeasurable horizons.

We know nothing as intimately and vividly as we know personality and every knowledge that we have is either a spiritual or a material abstraction from this supreme knowledge. This knowledge of personality which is our ultimate truth, implies a belief in the integral and real existence of what we call the soul. And because personality implies the soul and because we have no ultimate conception of any other reality in the world except the reality of personality, therefore we are compelled to assume that every separate external object in Nature is possessed of a soul.

The peculiar psychological melancholy which sometimes seizes us in the presence of inanimate natural objects, such as earth and water and sand and dust and rain and vapour, objects whose existence may superficially appear to be entirely chemical or material, is accounted for by the fact that the soul in us is baffled and discouraged and repulsed by these things because by reason of their superficial appearance they convey the impression of complete soullessness. In the presence of plants and animals and all ani-

mate things we are also vaguely conscious of a strange psychological melancholy. But this latter melancholy is of a less poignant character than the former because what we seem superficially conscious of is not "soullessness" but a psychic life which is alien from our life, and therefore baffling and obscure.

In both of these cases, however, as soon as we are bold enough to apply the conclusions we have arrived at from the analysis of the knowledge which is most vivid and real to us, namely, the knowledge of our own soul, this peculiar psychological melancholy is driven away. It is a melancholy which descends upon us when in any disintegrated moment the creative energy in us, the energy of love in us, is overcome by the evil and inertness of the aboriginal malice. Under the influence of this inert malice, which takes advantage of some lapse or ebb of the creative energy in us, the rhythmic activity of our complex vision breaks down; and we visualize the world through the attributes of reason and sensation alone. And the world, visualized through reason and sensation alone, becomes a world of uniform and homogeneous monotony, made up either of one all-embracing material substance, or of one all-embracing spiritual substance. In either case that living plurality of real separate "souls" which correspond to our own soul vanishes away, and a dreary and devastating oneness, whether spiritual or chemical, fills the whole field. The world which is the emanation of this atrophied and distorted vision is a world of crushing dreariness; but it is an unreal world because the only vivid and unfathomable reality we know is the reality of innumerable souls. The curious thing about this world of superficial chemical or spiritual uniformity is that it seems the same *identical* world in the case of all separate souls whose complex vision is thus distorted by the prevalence of that which opposes itself to creation and by the consequent ebb and



weakening of the energy of love. It is impossible to be assured that this is the case; but all evidence of language points towards such an *identity of desolation* between the innumerable separate "universes" of the souls which fill the world, when such souls visualize existence through reason and sensation alone.

This also is a portion of the same "illusion of impersonality" into which the inert malice of the ultimate "resistance" betrays us with demonic cunning. What man is there among us who does not recall some moment of visionary disintegration, when, in the presence of both these mysteries, an unspeakable depression of this kind has overtaken him? He has stood, perhaps, on some wet autumn evening, watching the soulless reflection of a dead moon in a pond of dead water; while above him the motionless distorted trunk of some goblinish tree mocks him with its desolate remoteness from his own life.

At that moment, with his abortive and atrophied complex vision, all he sees is the eternal soullessness and deadness of matter; dead moonlight, dead water, dead mud and slime and refuse, dead mist and vapour, dead earth-mould and dead leaves. And while the desolate chemistry of nothingness grips him with its dead fingers and he turns hopelessly to the silent tree-trunk at his side, that also repels him with the chill breath of psychic remoteness; and it seems to him that that also is strange and impersonal and unconscious; that that also is only a blind pre-determined portion of some huge planetary life-process that has no place for a living soul, but only a place for automatic impersonal chemistry. Brooding in this way, with the eternal malice of the system of things conquering the creative impulse in the depths of his soul, he becomes obsessed with the idea that not only these isolated portions of Nature, but the whole of Nature, is thus alien and remote and thus given up to a desolate and soulless uniform-

ity. Unutterable loneliness takes possession of him and he feels himself to be an exile in a dark and hostile assemblage of elemental forces. If at such a moment by means of some passionate invocation of the immortal gods, or by means of some desperate sinking into his own soul and gathering together of the creative energy in him, he is able to resist this desolation, how strange and sudden a shifting of mood occurs! He then, by a bold movement of imagination, restores the balance of his complex vision; and in a moment the spectacle is transfigured.

The apparently dead pond takes to itself the lineaments of some indescribable living soul, of which that particular portion of elemental being is the outward expression. The apparently dead moonlight becomes the magical influence of some mysterious "lunar soul" of which the earth's silent companions is the external form. The apparently dead mud of the pond's edge becomes a living portion of that earth-body which is the visible manifestation of the soul of the earth. The motionless tree-trunk at his side seems no longer the desolate embodiment of some vague "psychic life" utterly alien from his own life but reveals to him the immediate magical presence of a real soul there, whose personality, though not conscious in the precise manner in which he is conscious, has yet its own measure of complex vision and is mutely struggling with the cruel inertness and resistance which blocks the path of the energy of life. When once, by the bold synthesis of reason and sensation with those other attributes of the complex vision which we name instinct, imagination, intuition, and the like, the soul itself comes to be regarded as the substratum of personal existence, that desolating separation between humanity and Nature ceases to baffle us. As long as the substratum of personal life is regarded as the physical body there must always be this desolating difference and this remoteness.

For in such a case the stress is inevitably laid upon the physiological and biological difference between the body of a man and the body of the earth or the moon or the sun or any plant or animal. But as soon as the substratum of personal life is regarded not as the body but as the soul it ceases to be necessary to lay so merciless a stress upon the difference between man's elaborate physiological constitution and the simpler chemical constitution of organic or inorganic objects.

If the complex vision is the vision of the soul, if the soul uses its bodily sensation as only one among its other instruments of contact with life, then it is obvious that between the soul of a man and the soul of a planet or a plant there need be no such appalling and desolating gulf as that which fills us with such profound melancholy when we refuse to let the complex vision have its complete rhythmic play and insist on sacrificing the revelations made by instinct and intuition to the falsifying conclusions of reason and sensation, energizing in arbitrary solitude.

The "mort-main" or "dead-hand" of that aboriginal malice which resists life is directly responsible for this illusion of "unconscious matter" through the midst of which we grope like outlawed exiles. Reason and the bodily senses, conspiring together, are perpetually tempting us to believe in the reality of this desolate phantom-world of blind material elements; but the unreality of this corpse-life becomes evident directly we consider the revelation of the complex vision.

For the complex vision reveals to us that what we call "the universe" is a thing which is for ever coming newly and freshly into life, for ever being re-born and re-constituted by the interplay between the individual soul and the "objective mystery." Of the objective mystery itself, apart from the individual soul, we are able to say nothing. But since the "universe" is the discovery and creation

of the individual soul, there must be as many different "universes" as there are living souls.

Our belief in "one universe," whose characteristics are relatively identical in the case of all the souls which contemplate it, is a belief which in part results from an original act of faith and in part results from an implicit appeal to those "invisible companions" whose concentrated will towards "reality" and "beauty" and "nobility" offers us our only objective standard of these ideas. From the ground, therefore, of this trinity of incomprehensible substances, namely the substance which is the substratum of the individual soul, the substance which is "the objective mystery" out of which the individual soul creates its universe, and the substance which is the "medium" or "link" which enables these individual souls to communicate with one another, emerge the only realities which we can know. And since this trinity of incomprehensible substances, thus divided one from another, must be thought of as dominated by the same unity of time and space, it is inconceivable that they should be anything else than three aspects of one and the same incomprehensible substance. From this it follows that from the ground of one incomprehensible substance which in its first aspect is the substratum of the soul, in its second aspect is the objective mystery confronting the soul, in its third aspect is the medium which holds all souls together, there must be evoked all the reality which we can conceive.

And this reality must, from the conclusions we have already reached, take two forms. It must take the form of a plurality of subjective "universes" answering to the plurality of living souls. And it must take the form of one objective "universe," answering to the objective standard of truth, beauty, and nobility, together with the opposites of these, which is implied in the tacit appeal of all individual souls to their "invisible companions."

In this double reality; the reality of one objective universe identical in its appearance to all souls but dependent for its identity upon an implicit reference to the "invisible companions," and the reality of as many subjective universes as there are living souls; in this double reality there is obviously no place at all for that phantom-world of unconscious "matter," which in the form of soulless elements, or soulless organic automata, fills the human mind with such devastating melancholy.

The dead pond with its dead moonlight, with its dead mud and its dead snow, is therefore no better than a ghastly illusion when considered in isolation from the soul or the souls which look forth from it. To the soul of which those elements are the "body" neither mud nor water nor rain nor earth-mould can appear desolate or dead. To the soul which contemplates these things there can be no other way of regarding them, as long as the rhythm of its vision is unimpeded, than as the outward manifestation of a personal life, or of many personal lives, similar in creative energy to its own.

Between the soul, or the souls, of the elements of the earth, and the soul of the human spectator there must be, if our conclusions are to be held good at all, a natural and profound reciprocity. The apparent "deadness," the apparent automatism of "matter," which projects itself between these two and resists with corpse-like opacity their reciprocal understanding, must be one of the ghastly illusions with which the sinister side of the eternal duality undermines the magic of life.

But although in its objective isolation, as an absolute entity, this "material deadness" of earth and water and rain and snow and of all disintegrated organic chemistry must be regarded as an "illusion," it would be a falsifying of the reality of things to deny that it is an "illusion" to which the visions of all souls are miserably subject. They are for

ever subject to it because it is precisely this "illusion" which the unfathomable power hostile to life for ever evokes.

Nor must we for a moment suppose that this material objectivity, this pond, these leaves, this mud, this snow, are altogether unreal. Their reality is demanded by the complex vision and to deny their reality would be the gesture of madness. They are only unreal, they are only an "illusion," when they are considered as existing independently of the "souls" of which they are the "body." As the expression and manifestation of such "souls" they are entirely real. They are indeed, in this sense, as real as our own human body.

The human soul, when it suffers from that malignant power which has its positive and external existence in the soul itself, feels itself to be absolutely alone in the midst of a dark chaotic welter of monstrous elemental forces. In a mood of this kind the thought of the huge volumes of soulless water which we call "oceans" and "seas" crushes us with a devastating melancholy. The thought of the interminable deserts of "dead" sand and the vast polar ice fields and the monstrous excrescences that we call "mountains" have the same effect. But the supreme example of the kind of material ghastliness which I am trying to indicate, is, as may easily be surmised, nothing less than the appalling thought of the unfathomable spatial gulfs through which our whole stellar system moves. Here also, in this supreme insistence of objective "deadness," the situation is relieved when we realize that this unthinkable space is nothing more than the material expression of that indefinable "medium" which holds all souls together.

Moreover we must remember that these stellar gulfs cannot be thought of except as the habitation of innumerable living souls, each one of which is using this very "space" as the ground of its creation of the many-coloured impas-

sioned "universe" which is its own dwelling. In all these instances of "objective deadness," whether great or small, we must not forget that the thing which desolates us and fills us with so intolerable a nostalgia is a thing only half real, a thing whose full reality depends upon the soul which contemplates it and upon the soul's implicit assumption that its truth is the truth of those "invisible companions" who supply us with our perpetually renewed and reconstituted standard of what is "good" and what is "evil."

There is an abominably vivid example of the kind of melancholy I have in my mind, which, although obviously less common to normal human experience than the forms of it I have so far attempted to suggest, is as a rule even more crushing in its cruelty. I refer to the sight of a dead human body; and in a less degree to the sight of a dead animal or a dead plant.

A human corpse laid out in its coffin, or nailed down in its coffin, how exactly does the particular attitude towards life, which for convenience' sake I name the philosophy of the complex vision, find itself regarding *that*? Such a body, deserted by its living soul, is obviously no longer the immediate and integral expression of a personal life. Is it therefore no more than a shred or shard or husk or remnant of inconceivably soulless matter? The gods forbid! Certainly and most assuredly it is more than that.

An isolated heterogeneous mass of dead chemistry is a monstrous illusion which only exists for us when the weakness of our creative energy and the power of the original malice in the soul destroys our vision. This dead body lying in its wooden coffin is certainly possessed of no more life than the inanimate boards of the coffin in which it lies. But the inanimate boards of the coffin, together with the inanimate furniture of the house or room that contains it, and the bricks and stones and mortar of such a house, are

themselves nothing less than inevitable portions of the vast earth-body of our planetary globe.

And this planetary globe, this earth upon which we live, cannot under any conceivable kind of reasoning to which imagination has contributed its share, be regarded as a dead or a soulless thing. In its isolated integrity, as a separate integral personality, the soul has deserted the body and left it "dead." But it is only "dead" when considered in isolation from the surrounding chemistry of planetary life. And to consider it in this way is to consider it falsely. For from the moment it ceases to be the expression of the life of an individual human soul, it becomes the expression—through every single phase of its chemical dissolution—of the life of the planet.

In so far as the human soul, which has deserted it, is concerned it is assuredly no better than a dead husk; but in so far as the soul of the planet is concerned it is an essential portion of that planet's living body and in this sense is not dead at all.

Its chemical elements, as they resolve themselves slowly back into their planetary accomplices, are part and parcel of that general "body of the earth" which is in a state of constant movement, and which has the "soul of the earth" as its animating principle of personality. And just as the human corpse, when the soul has deserted it, becomes a portion of those chemical elements which are the body of the planet's "personal soul," so do the dead bodies of animals and plants and trees become portions of the same terrestrial bodies.

Thus strictly speaking there is no single moment when any material form or body can be called "dead." Instantaneously with the departure of its own individual soul it is at once "possessed" by the soul of that planetary globe from whose chemistry it drew its elemental life and from whose chemistry, although the form of it has changed,



it still draws its life. For it is no fantastic speculation to affirm that every living thing whether human or otherwise plays, while it lives, a triple part upon the world stage.

It is in the first place the vehicle of the individual soul. It is in the second place the medium of the "spiritual vampirizing" of the invisible planetary spirits. And it is in the third place a living portion of that organic elemental chemistry which is the body of the terrestrial soul. Thus it becomes manifest that that "illusion of dead matter" which fills the human soul with so profound a melancholy is no more than an everlasting trick of the malice of the abyss.

And the despair which sometimes results from it is a despair which issues from no "dead matter" but from the terrible living depths of the soul itself. It is from a consideration of the especial kind of melancholy evoked in us by the illusion of "objective deadness" that we are enabled to analyse those peculiar imaginative feelings which sometime or another affect us all. I refer to the extraordinary tenacity with which we cling to our bodily form, however grotesque it may be, and the difficulty we experience in disassociating our living soul from its particular envelope or habitation; and the tendency which we have, in spite of this, to imagine ourselves transferred to an alien body. For the soul in us has the power of "thinking itself" into any other body it may please to select.

And there is no reason why we should be alarmed at such an imaginative power; or even associate its fantastic realization with any terror of madness. The invisible entity within us which says "I am I" can easily be conceived as suddenly awakening out of sleep and discovering, to its astonishment, that its visible body has suffered a bewildering transformation.

Such a transformation can be conceived as almost un-

limited in its humorous and disconcerting possibilities. But no such transformation of the external envelope of the soul, whether into the form of an animal or a plant or a god, need be conceived of as necessarily driving us into insanity. The "I am I" would remain the same in regard to its imagination, instinct, intuition, emotion, self-consciousness and the rest. It would be only "changed" in regard to sensation, which is a thing immediately dependent upon the particular and special senses of the human body.

This is a truth to the reality of which the wandering fancies of every human child bear ample witness; not to speak of the dreams of those childlike tribes of the race, who in our progressive insolence we are pleased to name "uncivilized." The deeper we dig into the tissue of convuluted impressions that make up our universe the more vividly do we become aware that our only redemption from sheer insanity lies in "knowing ourselves"; in other words, in keeping a drastic and desperate hold upon what, in the midst of ambiguity and treachery, we are definitely assured of.

And the only thing we are definitely assured of, the only thing which we really know "on the inner side," and with the kind of knowledge which is unassailable, is the reality of our soul. We know this with a vividness completely different from the vividness of any other knowledge because this is not what we feel or see or imagine or think but what we *are*. And all feeling, all seeing, all imagining and all thinking are only attributes of this mysterious "something" which is our integral self.

To the superficial judgment there is always something weird and arbitrary about this belief in our own soul. And this apparent weirdness arises from the fact that our superficial judgments are the work of reason and sensation arrogating to themselves the whole field of consciousness.

But directly we bring to bear upon this mass of impressions which is our "universe" the full rhythmic play of our complete identity this weirdness and arbitrariness disappear and we realize that we *are*, not this thought or this sensation or even this stream of thoughts and sensations, but the definite living "monad" which gives these things their only link of continuity and permanence. And it is better to accept experience, even though it refuses to resolve itself into any rational unity, rather than to leave experience in the distance and permit our reason to evolve its desired unity out of its own rules and limitations.

We must readily admit that to take all the attributes of personality and to make them adhere in the mysterious substratum of the soul rather than in the little cells of the brain, seems to the superficial judgment a weird and arbitrary act. But the more closely we think of what we are doing when we make this assumption the more inevitable does such an assumption appear.

We are driven by the necessity of the case to find some "point," or at least some "gap" in thought and the system of things, where mind and matter meet and are fused with one another. Absolute consciousness does not help us to explain the facts of experience; because "facing" absolute consciousness, directly it isolates itself, we are compelled to recognize the presence of "something else," which is the material or object of which absolute consciousness is conscious.

And what we do when we assume the little cells of the physical brain to be the point in space or "the gap in thought" where mind and matter meet and become one is simply to place these two worlds in close juxtaposition and then assert that they are one. But this placing them side by side and asserting that they are one does not make them one. They are just as far apart as ever. The cells of the brain remain material and the phenomenon of con-

sciousness remains immaterial and they are still as remote from one another and as "unfused" as if consciousness were outside of time and space altogether.

It is only when we come to regard the "fusion-point" of these two things as being itself a living and personal thing; it is only when we come to regard the substratum of the soul as a mysterious "something" which is, at one and the same time, both what we call "mind" and what we call "matter," that the difficulty I have described disappears. For in this case we are dealing with something which, unlike the little cells of the brain, is totally invisible and totally beyond all scientific analysis; and yet with something which, because it is affected by bodily sensations and because it is under the sway of time and space, cannot be regarded as utterly outside the realm of material substance. We are in fact, in this case, dealing with something which we feel to be the integral and ultimate reality of ourselves, as we certainly do not feel the little cells of the brain to be; and we are dealing with something that is no mere stream of impressions, but is the concrete permanent reality which gives to all impressions, whether material or immaterial, their unity and coherence.

When once we are put into possession of this, when once we come to recognize our invisible soul as the reality which is our true self, it is found to be no longer ridiculous and arbitrary to endow this soul with all those various attributes, which, after all, are only various aspects of that unique personality which is the personality of the soul. To say "the soul has imagination," or "the soul has instinct," or "the soul has an aesthetic sense," has only a ridiculous sound when under the pressure of the abysmal malice which opposes itself to life we fall into the habits of permitting those usurping accomplices, pure reason and pure sensation, to destroy the rhythmic harmony of the complex vision.

When once we are in full possession of our own soul it is no mere fanciful speculation but an inevitable act of faith which compels us to envisage the universe as a thing crowded with invisible souls, who in some degree or other resemble our own. If this is "anthropomorphism," though strictly speaking it ought to be called "panpsychism," then it is impossible for us to be too anthropomorphic. For in this way we are doing the only philosophical thing we have a right to do—namely, interpreting the less known in the terms of the more known.

When we seek to interpret the soul, which we vividly know, in terms of chemical or spiritual abstractions of which we have no direct knowledge but which are merely rationalized symbols, we are proceeding in an illegitimate and unphilosophical manner to interpret the more known in terms of the less known, which is in the true sense ridiculous.

The only escape from that profound melancholy so easily engulfed in sheer insanity, which is the result of submission to "the illusion of dead matter," lies in this tenacious hold upon the concrete identity of the soul. So closely are we linked, by reason of the chemistry of our mortal body, to every material-element; that it is only too easy for us to merge our personal life by a perverted use of the imagination in that phantom-world of supposedly "dead matter" which is the illusive projection of the abysmal malice.

Thus just as the soul is driven by extreme physical pain to relinquish its identity and to become "an incarnate sensation," so the soul is driven by the power of malice to relinquish its centrifugal force and to become the very mud and slime and excremental debris which it has endowed with an illusive soullessness.

The clue to the secret pathology of these moods, to whose brink reason and sensation have led us and into whose

abyss perverted imagination has plunged us, is therefore to be found in the unfathomable duality of good and evil. If it seems to the kind of mind that demands "rational unity" at all costs, even at the cost of truth to experience, that this duality cannot be left unreconciled, the answer which the philosophy of the complex vision must make, is that any reconciliation of such a sort, any reduction to monistic unity of the eternal adversaries out of whose struggle life itself springs, would bring life itself back to nothingness.

The argument that because, in the eternal process of destruction and creation, life or love or what we call "the good" depends for its activity upon death or malice or what we call "evil," these opposites are one and the same, is shown to be utterly false when one thinks of the analogy of the struggle between the sexes. Because the activity of the male depends upon the existence of the female, that is no reason for concluding that the male and the female are one and the same thing.

Because "good" becomes more "good" out of its conflict with "evil," that does not mean that "good" is responsible for the existence of "evil"; any more than because "evil" becomes more "evil" out of its conflict with "good" does it mean that "evil" is responsible for the existence of "good." Neither is responsible for the existence of the other. They are both positive and real and they are both eternal. They are both unfathomable elements in every personal individual soul, whether of man or plant or animal or god or demi-god that has ever existed or will ever come to exist.

The prevalent idea that because good "in the long run" and over vast spaces of time shows itself to be a little—just a little—more powerful than evil, evil must be regarded as only a form of good or a necessary negation of good is a fallacy derived from the illusion that life is the

creation of a "parent" of the universe whose nature is absolutely "good." Such a fallacy takes for granted that somewhere and somehow "Good" will finally triumph over "evil."

The revelation of the complex vision destroys this fallacy. Such a complete triumph of "good" over "evil" would mean the end of everything that exists because everything that exists depends upon this abysmal struggle. But for personalities who are able to recognize that the mere fact of their being alive is already a considerable victory of "good" over "evil," there is nothing overwhelming in the thought that "good" can never completely overcome "evil." It is enough that life has given them life; and that in the perpetually renewed struggle between love and malice they find at the rare moments when love overcomes malice a flood of happiness which brings with it "the sensation of eternity."

For such souls eternity is here and now; and no anticipated absolute triumph of the "good" in the world over the "evil" can compare for a moment with the indescribable happiness which this "sensation of eternity" brings. It is this happiness, evoked by the rhythmic play of the soul's apex-thought in its supreme hours, which alone, even in memory, can destroy "the illusion of dead matter."

The psychological situation brought about by the fact that this illusion is a perpetually recurrent one and a thing that is always liable to return whenever reason and sensation are driven to isolate themselves is a situation a good deal more complicated than I have so far indicated. It is complicated by the fact that although in certain moods the contemplation of "the illusion of dead matter" produces profound melancholy, in other moods it produces a kind of demonic joy.

It seems as though the melancholy mood, which carried

to an extreme limit borders on absolute despair, comes about when the creative energy in our soul, although under the momentary dominance of what resists creation, is still, so to speak, the master of our will.

Under such circumstances the will, still resolutely turned towards life, is confronted by what appears to be the very embodiment of death. Under these conditions the will is baffled, perplexed, defeated and outraged. It beats in vain against the "inert mass" which malice has projected; and feels itself powerless to overcome it. It then turns furiously round upon the very substratum of the soul and rends and tears at that, in a mad effort to reach the secret of a phantom-world which seems to hold no secret. If some sort of relief does not come, such relief for instance as physical sleep, the inert misery of the submission of the will, following upon such a desperate struggle, may easily drift into a deadly apathy, may easily approach the borders of insanity.

But there is another condition under which the soul may confront "the illusion of dead matter." This condition comes about when the will, instead of being turned towards creation, is definitely turned towards the opposite of creation. It is impossible for the will to remain in this condition for more than a limited time. Some outward or inward shock, some drastic swing of the psychic pendulum, must sooner or later restore the balance and bring the will back to that wavering and indecisive state—poised like the point of a compass between the two extremes—which seems to be its normal attitude.

Any human will unchangeably directed towards "the good" would be the will of a soul that in its inherent depths were already "absolutely good"; and this, as we have seen, is an impossible phenomenon. The utmost reach of "wickedness" that any soul, whether it be the soul of a man or of a god, can attain to, is a recurrent



concentration of the will upon evil and a recurrent overcoming, for relatively increasing spaces of time, of the power of love. This incomplete and constantly interrupted concentration upon evil is the nearest approach to "the worship of Satan" which any will is able to reach. The exquisite pleasure, therefore, culminating in a kind of insane ecstasy, which the soul can enjoy when, in the passion of its evil will, it leaps to welcome "the illusion of dead matter," is a pleasure that in the nature of things cannot last. And the condition of inert malignant apathy which follows such an "ecstasy of evil" is perhaps the nearest approach to a consciousness of "eternal death" which the soul can know.

And it is in this malignant apathy, rather than in the demonic exultation of the mood that preceded it, that the extreme opposite of love finds its culmination. For in its hour of demonic exultation, when the will to evil buries itself with insane joy in "the illusion of dead matter," it is drawing savagely upon the energy of life. It corrupts such energy as it draws upon it and distorts it from its natural functions; but the energy itself, although "possessed" by the abysmal malice, is living and intense; and therefore cannot be regarded as so entirely the opposite of love as that inert condition of malignant lifelessness which inevitably succeeds it.

The demonic ecstasy, full of invincible magnetism, which looks forth from the countenance of a soul obsessed with evil, has much more in common with the magnetic exultation of a soul possessed with love than has that ghastly inertness, with its insane malignant attraction to death. For out of the countenance of this latter looks forth everything that is hostile to life; and its expression has in it the obscene cunning, mixed with frozen despair, of a corpse which has become utterly dehumanized.

It is frequently a matter of surprise to minds whose

view of what is "good" has excluded the concept of energy that persons obviously under the obsession of "evil" are able to display such immense reserves of inexhaustible power. But this surprise disappears when it is realized that such "worshippers of Satan" are drawing upon the creative energy and corrupting it, in the process of drawing upon it, by the malignant power which resists creation.

The "illusion of dead matter" conceived as we have conceived it, as a thing made up of unconscious chemical elements, is after all only one aspect of the phantom-world of illusive soullessness which the abysmal malice delights to project. It is only to particular sensitive natures that this peculiar "despair of the inanimate" takes the form of mud or sand or refuse or water or dead planetary bodies or empty space.

To other natures it may take the form of those innumerable off-shoots of economic necessity, which are not themselves necessary either to human life or human welfare but which are the arbitrary creations of economic avarice divorced from necessity and indulged in out of an inert hatred of what is beautiful and real. Any labour, whether mental or physical, which directly satisfies the economic needs of humanity carries with it the unfathomable thrill of creative happiness. But when we come to consider those innumerable forms of financial and commercial enterprise which in no way satisfy human needs but exist only for the sake of exploitation we find ourselves confronted by a weight of unreal soulless hideousness which by reason of the fact that it is deliberately protected by organized society is a more devastating example of "the thing which is in the way" than any amount of mud and litter and refuse and excremental debris. For this unproductive commercialism, this "unreal reality" projected by the malignant power which resists creation, is not only an obscene outrage to the aesthetic sense; it is actually an assassination of

life. When, therefore, a philosopher who uses the complex vision of the soul as his organ of research is asked the question, "where are we to look for the type of human being most entirely evil?" the answer which he is compelled to give is not a little surprising to many minds.

For there are many minds whose physiological timidity corrupts their judgment, and who lack the clairvoyance to unmask with infallible certainty that look of sneering apathy which is the pure expression of malice. And to such minds some wretched devil of a criminal, driven to crime by an insane perversion of the creative instinct—for creation and destruction are not the true opposites—might easily seem the ultimate embodiment of evil.

Whereas the particular type of human being from whom the philosopher of the complex vision would draw his standard of evil would be a type very different from any perverted type even from those whose mania might take the form of erotic cruelty. It would be a type whose recurrent "evil" would take the form of a sneering and malignant inertness, the form of a cold and sarcastic disparagement of all intense feeling. It would be a type entirely obsessed by "the illusion of dead matter"; not so much the "illusion of dead matter" where Nature is concerned, but where the economic struggle has resulted in some unnecessary and purely commercial activity, altogether divorced from the basic necessities of human life. A person of this type would, in his evil moods, be more completely dominated by a malignant resistance to every movement of the creative spirit than any other type, unless it were perhaps one whom the heavy brutality of "officialdom" had blunted into inhuman callousness.

Compared with persons such as these, by whom no actual positive "wickedness" may have ever been perpetrated, the confessed criminal or the acknowledged pervert remains far less committed to the depths of evil. For in

persons who have habitually lent themselves to "the illusion of dead matter," whether in regard to Nature or in regard to commercial or financial exploitation, there occurs a kind of "death-in-life" which gives the sneering malignity of the abyss its supreme opportunity; whereas in the souls of those who have committed "crimes," or have been guilty of passionate cruelty, there may easily remain a vivid and sensitive response to some form of reality or beauty, or self-annihilating love.

For "the illusion of dead matter" is the most formidable expression of evil which we know; and it can only be destroyed by the magic of that creative spirit whose true "opposite" is not hatred or cruelty or violence or destruction, but the motiveless power of a deadly obscurantism.

## CHAPTER XII

### PAIN AND PLEASURE

Since neither pleasure nor pain can be experienced without consciousness; and since consciousness finds its substratum not in the body but in the soul; we are driven to the conclusion that what we call the capacity of the body for pleasure and pain is really the capacity of the soul for pleasure and pain. But the capacity of the soul for pleasure and pain is not confined to its functioning through the body. Sensation, that is to say, the use of the bodily senses, gives the soul one particular form of pain and one particular form of pleasure; but that the soul possesses other forms of pleasure and pain independently of the body is proved by the psychological fact that intense bodily pain is sometimes accompanied by intense spiritual pleasure and intense bodily pleasure is sometimes accompanied by intense spiritual pain.

What is called "the pursuit of pleasure," that rationalistic abstraction from our real psychological experience, that abstraction which has been made the basis of the false philosophy called "hedonism," cannot stand for a moment against the revelation of the complex vision. Under certain rare and morbid conditions, when reason and sensation, in their conspiracy of assassination, have usurped for a while the whole field of consciousness, such a "pursuit of pleasure" may become a dominant motive. But even under these conditions there often comes a shifting of the stage according to which the pleasure-seeker, sick to death of pleasure, deliberately "pursues" pain.

If it be said that this change is no real change because

what is then pursued is the pleasure of "contrast" or even "the pleasure of pain," the retort to such reasoning can only be that in this case the whole hedonistic theory has been given up; for what is really then "pursued" is neither pleasure nor pain but the sensation of novelty or the sensation of new experience.

Pleasure and pain are emotionalized sensations accompanying various physical and mental states. The psychological truth about their "pursuit" is simply that we "pursue" certain objects or conditions because of their immediate attractiveness or "attractive terribleness," and that the accompanying pleasure becomes first a kind of orchestral background to our pursuit; and then, later, becomes, by the action of the law of association, part and parcel of the thing's attractiveness or "attractive terribleness." Thus what really occurs is precisely opposite to the hedonist's contention. For the thing "pursued" swallows up and appropriates to itself the pleasure and pain of the pursuit; and, by the law of association, becomes more vividly, even than at the start the motive force which lures us.

The most ghastly, the most obscene, the most intolerable thing in the world is when the pain of pure sensation, the pain of the body, is accentuated to such a pitch of atrocious suffering that the other attributes of the soul are annihilated; and the humanity of the person thus suffering is temporarily destroyed; so that what "lives" at such a moment is not a person at all but an incarnate pain.

That this ultimate ghastliness, this dehumanization by pain, can only occur where the aboriginal malice of the soul has previously weakened the soul's independent life, is proved by the fact that the most atrocious tortures have been successfully endured, even unto the point of death, by such as have been martyrs for an idea. And the reason of this endurance, the reason why, in the case of such mar-

tyrizing, the victim has been able to resist dehumanization is found in the fact that the soul's creative energy or the power of love has been so great that it has been able to assert its independence of bodily torment, even to the last moment of human identity.

Since pain and pleasure, although so often the direct evocation of the soul's attribute of bodily sensation, are always composed of the primordial "stuff" of emotion; and since emotion is a projection of the soul independently of the body, it is natural that the soul should, in the reverse manner, colour its emotion with the memory of sensation. Thus it follows that although it is possible for the soul, when its emotional feeling is outraged or excited, to experience pain or pleasure apart from sensation, there is usually present in such an emotional pain or pleasure a residual element of sensation; for the soul is not a thing which simply "possesses" certain functions; but a thing which is present in some degree or other in all its various aspects of energy.

What we call "memory" is nothing more than the plastic consciousness of personal identity and continuity. And when once the pain or pleasure of a bodily sensation has been lodged in the soul, that pain or pleasure becomes an integral portion of the soul's life, to be worked upon and appropriated for good or evil by the soul's intrinsic duality.

Thus although the creative energy in the soul, emerging from fathomless abysses, can enable the soul to endure until death the most infernal torments, the fact remains that since the attribute of sensation, which depends entirely upon the existence of the bodily senses, is one of the soul's basic attributes and has its ground in the very substratum of the soul, the sensations of pain and pleasure whether coloured by emotion and imagination or left

"pure" in the clear element of consciousness, are sensations from which the soul cannot escape.

From this we are forced to conclude that to affirm that the soul can remain wholly untouched and unaffected by bodily pain or pleasure is ridiculous. Bodily pain and pleasure are the soul's pain and pleasure; because the attribute of sensation, through which the bodily senses feed the soul, is not the body's attribute of sensation but the soul's attribute of sensation.

To say, therefore, that the soul can "conquer" the body or be "indifferent" to the body is as ridiculous as to say that the body can "conquer" the soul or be "indifferent" to the soul. The fact that the attribute of sensation is a basic attribute of the soul and that the attribute of sensation is dependent upon the bodily senses must inevitably imply that the pressure or impact of the bodily senses descend to the profoundest depths of the soul.

The thing that "conquers" pain in the invincible martyr is love, or "the energy of creation," in the soul. The abysmal struggle is not between the soul and the body or between the flesh and the spirit, but between the power of life and love, in the body and the soul together, and the power of death or malice, in the body and the soul together.

What we are compelled to assume with regard to those "sons of the universe," whose existence affords a basis for the objectivity of the "ultimate ideas," is that, with them, what I have called "the eternal idea of the body" takes the place in their complex vision of our actual physical body. Their complex vision must be regarded, if our philosophy is to remain boldly and shamelessly anthropomorphic, as possessing, even as our own, the basic attribute of sensation.

But since their essential invisibility, and consequent upon



this their ubiquity under the dominant categories of time and place, precludes any possibility of their incarnation, we are compelled to postulate that their complex vision's attribute of sensation, in the absence of any bodily senses, finds its contact with "the objective mystery" and with the objective "universe" in some definite and permanent "intermediary" which serves in their case the same primal necessity as is served in our case by the human body.

If no such "intermediary" existed for them, we should be compelled to relinquish the idea that they possessed a complex vision at all, for not only the attribute of sensation, but the attribute of emotion also, demands for its activity something that shall represent the human body and occupy in their objective "universe" the place occupied by our physical bodies in our "universe."

As we have already shown, this primary demand for the "eternalizing of flesh and blood" is a demand which springs from the profoundest depths of the soul, for it is a demand which springs from the creative energy itself, the eternal protagonist in the world-drama. We must conclude, therefore, that although these super-human children of Nature cannot in the ordinary sense incarnate themselves in flesh and blood they can and do appropriate to themselves out of the surrounding body of the ether, and out of the body of any other living thing they approach, a certain attenuated essence of flesh and blood which, though invisible to us, supplies with them the place of our human body. This, therefore, is the "intermediary" which, in the "invisible companions" of our planetary struggle, occupies the place which is occupied by the physical element in our human life. And this is evoked by nothing less than that "eternal idea of the body," or "that eternal idea of flesh and blood," which the creative energy of love demands. A very curious and interesting possibility follows from this assumption; namely, that by a process which might be called

a process of "spiritual vampirizing" the same creative passion which demands satisfaction in the eternalizing of "the idea of the body" actually suffers, by means of its vivid sympathy with living bodies, the very pains and pleasures through which these bodies pass.

The possibility that "the invisible companions," or in more traditional language that the "immortal gods," should be driven by the passion of their creative love, to suffer vicarious pain and pleasure through the living bodies of all organic existences, is a possibility that derives a certain support from two considerations, both of which are drawn directly from human experiences. It is certainly a matter of common human experience to be conscious, for good and for evil, of a kind of obsession of one's body by some sort of spiritual power. We may regard these moments of obsession, with their consequent exhilaration or profound gloom, as due purely to the activity of our own soul; and doubtless very often this is the explanation of them. But it is conceivable also that such obsessions are actually due to the presence near us and around us of the "high immortal ones."

That when we experience this "spiritual vampirizing" of our mortal bodies by immortal companions, such an obsession is not necessarily "for good," is a thing inevitably implied in our primary conception of personality. For although a purely demonic personality is an impossibility, owing to the fact that personality is, in itself, an achieved triumph over evil, it must still remain true that the eternal duality of creation and "what resists creation" must find an arena in the soul of an "immortal" even as it finds an arena in the soul of a "mortal."

Therefore we are driven to regard it as no fantastic speculation but as only too reasonable a possibility, that when a physical depression takes possession of us it is due to this "spiritual vampirizing," in an evil sense, by the

power of some immortal whose "malice" at that particular moment has overcome "love." But just as the power of physical pain may be dominated and overcome by the energy of love arising from the depths of our own soul, so this vampirizing by the malice of an "invisible companion," may be dominated and overcome by the energy of love from the depths of our own soul.

It may indeed be regarded as certain that it is when the malice in our own soul is in the ascendant, rather than the love, that we fall victims to this kind of obsession. For evil eternally attracts evil; and it is no wild nor erratic fancy to maintain that the malice in the human soul naturally draws to itself by an inevitable and tragic reciprocity the malice in the souls of the "immortal companions."

The second consideration derived from human experience which supports this view of the vicarious pain and pleasure experienced by the gods through the bodies of all organic entities is the psychological fact of our own attitude towards plants and animals. Any sensitive person among us will not hesitate to admit that in watching animals suffer, he has suffered *with* such animals; or again, that in watching a branch torn from its trunk, leaving an open wound out of which the sap oozes, he has suffered *with* the suffering of the tree. And just as the phenomenon of bodily obsession by some immortal god may be either "for good" or "for evil" as our own soul dictates, so the sympathy which we feel for plants and animals may be either "for good" or "for evil."

And this also applies to the relation between these bodiless "immortals" and the bodies of all organic planetary life. According to the revelation of the complex vision, with its emphasis upon the ultimate duality as the supreme secret of life, both pain and pleasure are instruments, in

the hands of love, for rousing the soul out of that sleep of death or semi-death which is the abysmal enemy.

The philosophies which oppose pain to pleasure, and insist upon the "good" of pain and the "evil" of pleasure, are no less misleading than the philosophies which oppose flesh to spirit, or matter to mind, calling the one "good" and the other "evil." Such philosophies have permitted that basic attribute of the complex vision which we call conscience to usurp the place occupied, in the total rhythm, by imagination; with the result of a complete falsifying of the essential values.

In a question of such deadly import as this, we have, more than ever, to make our appeal to those rare moments of illumination which we have attained when the rhythmic intensity of the arrow-point of thought was most concentrated and piercing. And the testimony of these moments is given with no uncertain sound. In the great hours of our life, and I think all human experiences justify this statement, both pain and pleasure are transcended and flung into a subordinate and irrelevant place. Something which it is very difficult to describe, a kind of emotion which resembles happiness, flows through us; so that pain and pleasure seem to come and go almost unremarked, like dark and light shadows flung upon some tremendous water-fall.

What we are compelled to recognize, therefore, is that pain and pleasure are both instruments of the creative power of life. They only become evil or are used for purposes of evil, when, by reason of some fatal weakening in the other attributes of the soul, the purely sensational element in them dominates the emotional and they become something most horribly like living entities—entities with bodies composed of the vibrations of torment and souls composed of the substance of torment—and succeed in annihilating the very features of humanity.

Pain and pleasure are not identical with the unfathomable duality which descends into the abyss; for pain and pleasure are definitely and quite unmistakably fathomable; though, as the gods know well, few enough of the sons of mortals reach the limit of them. They are fathomable; for carried to a certain pitch of intensity they end in ecstasy or they end in death. They are fathomable; for even in the souls of "the immortals" they are only instruments of life warring against death. They are fathomable; because they have one identical root; and this root is the ecstasy of the rhythm of the complex vision which transcends and surpasses them both.

The hideous symbol of "hell" is the creation of the false philosophy which makes the eternal duality resolve itself into flesh and spirit or into soul and body. The power of love renders this symbol meaningless and abortive; for personality is the supreme victory of life over what resists life; and consequently where personality exists "hell" cannot exist; for personality is the scope and boundary of all we know. The symbol of "Satan" also is rendered meaningless by the philosophy of the complex vision; unless such a symbol is used to express those appalling moments when the evil in the soul attracts to itself and associates with itself the evil in the soul of some immortal god.

But just as no mortal can be more evil than good, so also no immortal can be more evil than good, that is to say intrinsically and over a vast space of time. Momentarily and for a limited space of time it is obvious that the human soul can be more evil than good; and by a reasonable analogy it is only too probable that the same thing applies to the invisible sons of the universe. But the philosophy of the complex vision has no place for devils or demons in its world; for the simple reason that at the very moment any soul did become intrinsically and unchangeably evil, at that same moment it would vanish into nothingness, since

existence is the product of the struggle between good and evil.

If any soul, whether mortal or immortal, became entirely and absolutely good, it would instantaneously vanish into nothingness. For the life of no kind of living soul is thinkable or conceivable apart from the unfathomable duality. The false philosophy which finds its ideal in an imaginary "parent" of the universe whose goodness is absolute is a philosophy conceived under the furtive influence of the power of evil. For the essence of the power of evil is opposition to the movement of life; and no false ideal has ever done so much injury to the free expansion of life as has been done by this conception of a "parent" of the universe who is a spirit of "absolute goodness."

It is entirely in accordance with the unfathomable cunning of the power of malice that the supreme historic obstacle to the power of love in the human soul should be this conception of a "parent" of the universe, possessed of absolute goodness. In the deepest and most subtle way does this conception oppose itself to the creative energy of love. The creative energy of love demands an indetermined and malleable future. It demands an enemy with which to struggle. It demands the freedom of the individual will. Directly that ancient and treacherous phantom, the "inscrutable mystery" *behind* the "universe," is allowed to become an object of thought; directly this mystery is allowed to take the shape of a "parent of things" who is to be regarded as "absolutely good," then, at that very moment, the eternal duality ceases to be "eternal" and ceases to be a "duality."

Good and evil become the manifestations of the same inscrutable power. Love and malice become interchangeable names of little meaning. Satan becomes as significant a figure as Christ. All distinctions are then blurred and blotted out. The aesthetic sense is made of no account; or

becomes a matter of accidental fancy. Imagination is left with nothing to work upon. The rhythm of the complex vision is broken to pieces. All is permitted. Nothing is forbidden. The universe is reduced to an indiscriminate and formless mass of excremental substance. Indiscriminately we have to swallow the "universe" or indiscriminately we have to let the "universe" alone. There is no longer a protagonist in the great drama, for there is no longer an antagonist. Indeed there is no longer any drama. Tragedy is at an end; and Comedy is at an end. All is equal. Nothing matters. Everything is at once good and evil, beautiful and hideous, true and false. Or rather nothing is beautiful, nothing is true. The "parent of the universe" has satisfied his absolute "goodness" by swallowing up the universe; and there is nothing left for the miserable company of mortal souls to do but to bow their resigned heads and cry "Om! Om!" out of the belly of that unutterable "universal," which by becoming "everything" has become nothing.

This conception of a universal being of "absolute goodness" looms like a colossal corpse in front of all living movement. If instead of "absolute goodness" we say "absolute love," the falseness and deadliness of this conception appears even more unmistakable. For love is the prerogative of personality alone. Apart from personality we cannot conceive of love. And we cannot conceive of personality without the struggle between love and malice. "Absolute love" is a contradiction in terms; for it is the nature of love to be perpetually overcoming malignant opposition; and, in this overcoming, to be perpetually approximating to a far-off ideal which can never be completely reached.

Devils and demons, or elemental entities of unredeemed evil, are unreal enough; and in their unreality dangerous enough to the creative spirit; but far more unreal and

far more dangerous than any devil, is this conception of an absolute being whose "goodness" is of so spurious a nature that it obliterates all distinction. This conception of "a parent of the universe" who is responsible for the "eternal duality," but in whom the "eternal duality" is reconciled, blots out all hope for mortal or immortal souls. Between the soul of a man and the soul of an immortal god, as for instance between the soul of a man and the soul of Christ, there may be passionate and enduring love. But between the soul of a man, in whom love is desperately struggling with malice, and this monstrous being in whom love and malice have arrived at some unthinkable reconciliation, there can be no love. There can be nothing but indignant unbelief alternating with profound aversion. Towards any being in whose nature love has been reconciled to malice, the true to the false, the beautiful to the hideous, the good to the evil, there can be no alternative to unbelief, except unmitigated hostility.

It is especially in connection with the atrocious cruelty of physical pain that our conscience and our tastes—unless perverted by some premature metaphysical synthesis or by some morbid religious emotion—reluct at the conception of a "parent" of the universe. Personal love, since it is continually being roused to activity by pain and is continually being expressed through pain and in spite of pain, has come to find in pain, perhaps even more than in pleasure, its natural accomplice. Through the radiant well-being which results from pleasure, love pours forth its influence with a sun-like sweetness and profusion. But from the profound depths of pain, love rises like silence out of a deep sea; and no path of moonlight upon any ocean reaches so far an horizon.

And it is because of this intimate association of love with pain that it is found to be impossible to love any living being who has not experienced pain. Pain can be entirely



sensational; and in this case it needs a very passion of love to prevent it becoming obscene and humiliating. But it also can be entirely emotional; in which case it results directly from the struggle of malice with love. When pain is a matter of sensation or of sensationalized emotion, it depends for its existence upon the body. But when pain is entirely emotional it is independent of the body and is a condition of the soul.

As a condition of the soul pain is inevitably associated with the struggle between love and malice. For in proportion as love overcomes malice, pain ceases, and in proportion as malice overcomes love, pain ceases. A human being entirely free from emotional pain is a human being in whom love has for the moment completely triumphed; or a human being in whom malice has for the moment completely triumphed. There is an exultation of love which fills the soul with irresistible magnetic power, so that it can redeem the universe. There is also an exultation of malice which fills the soul with irresistible magnetic power, so that it can corrupt the universe. In both these extreme cases—and they are cases of no unfrequent occurrence in all deep souls—emotional pain ceases to exist.

Emotional pain is the normal condition of the human soul; because the normal condition of the human soul is a wavering and uncertain struggle between love and malice; but although love may overcome malice, or malice may overcome love, with relative completeness, they neither of them can overcome the other with absolute completeness. There must always remain in the depths of the soul a living potentiality; which is the love or the malice which has been for the moment relatively overcome by its opposite. And just as pain can be both emotional and sensational so pleasure can be both emotional and sensational. Pleasure, like pain, can be a thing of bodily sensation alone; in which case it tends to become a thing of degrading and

humiliating reality. A human entity entirely obsessed by physical pleasure is a revolting and obscene spectacle. Even with animals it is only when their sensation of pleasure is in some degree emotionalized that we can endure to contemplate it with sympathy.

The soul of an animal is capable of being "de-animalized" in just as horrible a way by a pure sensation as the soul of a man is capable of being "de-humanized" by a pure sensation. The sexual sensation of pleasure carried to the extreme limit "de-animalizes" animals as it "de-humanizes" human beings; because it drowns the consciousness of personality. There is an ecstasy when personality loses itself and finds itself again in a deeper personality. There is also an ecstasy where personality loses itself in pure sensation. In the region of sexual sensation, just as in the region of sexual emotion, it is love alone which is able to hold fast to personality in the midst of ecstasy; or which is able to merge personality in a deeper personality.

It is because of love's intimate association with pain that we are unable, except under the morbid pressure of some metaphysical or religious illusion, to regard the imaginary "parent of the universe" with anything but hostility. Both pain and pleasure are associated with the unfathomable duality. And although the unfathomable duality descends into abysses beyond the reach of both of these, yet we cannot conceive of either of them existing apart from this struggle.

But there can be no duality, as there can be no struggle, in the soul of a being in whom love has absolutely overcome malice. Therefore in such a soul there can be no pain. And for a soul incapable of feeling pain we can feel no love. It is of course obvious that this whole problem is an imaginary one. We are not really confronted with the alternative of loving or hating the unruffled soul of this absolute one. And we are not confronted with this prob-

lem for the simple reason that such a soul does not exist. And it does not exist because every soul, together with the "universe" created by every soul, depends for its existence upon this ultimate struggle.

It is from a consideration of the nature of pain and pleasure that we attain the clue to the ultimate duality. Pain and pleasure are conditions of the soul; conditions which have a definite and quite fathomable limit. Malice and love are conditions of the soul; conditions which have no definite limit, but which descend into unfathomable depths. Extremity of malice sinks down to an abyss where pain and pleasure are lost and merged in one another. Extremity of love sinks down to an abyss where pain and pleasure are lost and merged in one another. But just as, apart from the individual soul which is their possessor, pain and pleasure have no existence at all; so, apart from the individual soul which is the arena of their struggle, malice and love have no existence at all. Because we speak of pain and pleasure as if they were "things in themselves" and of malice and love as if they were "things in themselves" this can never mean more than that they are eternal conditions of the soul which is their habitation.

Apart from a personal soul, "love" has no meaning and cannot be said to exist. Apart from a personal soul, "life" has no meaning and cannot be said to exist. There is no such thing as the "love-force" or the "life-force," any more than there is such a thing as the "malice-force" or the "death-force," apart from some personal soul. The "life-force" is a condition of the soul which carried to an extreme limit results in ecstasy. The "death force" is a condition of the soul which carried to an extreme limit results in ecstasy. Beyond these two ecstasies there is nothing but total annihilation; which would simply mean that the soul had become absolutely "good" or absolutely "evil."

What we call the "death force" in the soul does not imply real death, until it has reached a limit beyond ecstasy. It implies a malignant resistance to life which may be carried to a point of indescribable exultation. As I have already hinted there is a profound association between the duality of love and malice and the duality of pain and pleasure. But it would be false to our deepest experience to say that love implies pleasure and that malice implies pain. As a matter of fact, they both imply a thrilling and ecstatic pleasure, in proportion as the equilibrium between them, the balance of the wavering struggle between them, is interrupted by the relative victory of either the one or the other.

The relative victory of malice or of the "death-force" over love or over the "life-force" is attended by exquisite and poignant pleasure, a pleasure which culminates in unutterable ecstasy. The shallow ethical thinkers who regard "evil" as a negation are obviously thinkers whose consciousness has never penetrated into the depths of their own souls. Pain and pleasure for such thinkers must be entirely sensationalized. They cannot have experienced, to any profound depth, the kind of pain and pleasure which are purely emotional.

The condition of the soul which gives itself up to the "death force" or to the malignant power which resists creation may be sometimes a condition of thrilling and exultant pleasure. As we have already indicated, the normal condition of the soul, wavering and hesitating between good and evil, is liable to be changed into a profound melancholy, when it is confronted by the "illusion of dead matter." But, as we have also discovered, if, in the soul thus contemplating the "illusion of dead matter," evil is more potent than good, there may be a thrilling and exquisite pleasure.

The "death-force" in our own soul leaps in exultation

to welcome the "death illusion" in material objects. Upon this illusion, which it has itself projected, it rejoices to feed. There is a "sweet pain" in the melancholy it thus evokes; a "sweet pain" that is more delicate than any pleasure; and it is a mistake to assume that even the insanity which this aberration may result in is necessarily an insanity of distress. It may be an insanity of ecstasy. All this is profoundly associated with the aesthetic sense; and we may note that the diabolical exultation with which many great artists and writers fling themselves upon the obscene, the atrocious, the cruel and the abominable, and derive exquisite pleasure from representing these things is not an example of the love in them overcoming the malice but an example of the "death-force" in them leaping to respond to the death-force in the universe.

It is just here that we touch one of the profoundest secrets of the aesthetic sense. I refer to that condition of the soul when the creative energy which is life and love, suffers an insidious corruption by the power which resists creation and which is malice and death. This psychological secret, although assuming an aesthetic form, is closely associated with the sexual instinct.

The sexual instinct, which is primarily creative, may easily, by the insidious corruption of the power which resists creation, become a vampirizing force of destruction. It may indeed become something worse than destruction. It may become an abysmal and unutterable "death-in-life." That voluptuous "pleasure in cruelty" which is an intrinsic element of the sexual instinct may attach itself to "the pleasure in death" which is the intrinsic emotion of the aboriginal inert malice; or rather the "pleasure in death" of the adversary of creation may insidiously associate itself with the "pleasure in cruelty" of the sexual instinct and make of "this energy of cruelty" a new and terrible emotion which is at once cruel and inert.

All this were mere fantastic speculation if it lacked touch with direct experience. But direct experience, if we have any psycho-clairvoyance at all, bears unmistakable witness to what I have been saying. If one glances at the expression in the countenance of any human soul who is deriving pleasure from the spectacle of suffering and who, under the pressure of this queer fusion of the aesthetic sense with the abysmal malice, is engaged in vampirizing the victim of such suffering one will observe a very curious and very illuminating series of revelations.

One will observe, for instance, the presence of demonic energy and of magnetic dominance in such a countenance; but parallel with this and simultaneously with this, one will observe an expression of unutterable sadness, a sadness which is inert and death-like, a sadness which has the soulless rigidity and the frozen immobility of a corpse. We are thus justified, by an impression of direct experience, in our contention that the peculiar pleasure which many artists derive from the contemplation of suffering and from the contemplation of what is atrocious, obscene, monstrous and revolting, is the result of a corruption of both the sexual instinct and the aesthetic sense by the abysmal malice.

For the pleasure which such souls derive from the contemplation of suffering is identical with the pleasure they derive from contemplating the "illusion of dead matter." Philosophers who give themselves up to the profoundest pessimism do not do so, as a rule, under the influence of love. The only exceptions to this are rare cases when pre-occupation with suffering does not spring from a furtive enjoyment of the spectacle of suffering but from an incurable pity for the victims of suffering. Such exceptions are far more rare than is usually supposed, because the self-preservative hypocrisy of most pessimists enables them to conceal their voluptuousness under the mask of pity.

Nor must we hide from ourselves the fact that even pity, which in its pure form is the very incarnation of love, has a perverted form in which it lends itself to every kind of subterranean cruelty. Our psychological insight does not amount to very much if it does not recognize that there is a form of pity which enhances the pleasure of cruelty. There may indeed be discovered, when we dig deep enough into the abysses of the soul, an aspect of pity which thrills us with a most delicate sensation of tenderness and yet which remains an aspect of pity by no means incompatible with the fact that we continue the process of causing pain to the object of such tenderness.

Of all human emotions the emotion of pity is capable of the most divergent subtleties. The only kind of pity which is entirely free from the ambiguous element of "pleasure in cruelty" is the pity which is only another name for love, when love is confronted by suffering. There is such a thing as a suppressed envy of "the pleasure of cruelty" manifested in the form of moral indignation against the perpetrator of such cruelty.

Such moral indignation, with its secret impulse of suppressed unconscious jealousy, is a very frequent phenomenon when any sexual element enters into the cruelty in question. But the psychologist who has learnt his art from the profoundest of all psychologists—I mean the Christ of the gospels—is not deceived by this moral gesture. He is able to detect the infinite yearning of the satyr under the righteous fury of the moral avenger.

And he has an infallible test at hand by which to ascertain whether the emotion he feels is pure or impure pity; whether in other words it is merely a process of delicate vampirizing, or whether it is the creative sympathy of love. And the test which he has at his disposal is nothing less than his attitude towards the perpetrator of the particular cruelty under discussion. If his attitude is one

of implacable revenge he may be sure that his pity is something else than the emotion of love. If his attitude is one which implies pity not only for the victim but also for the victim's torturer—who without question has more need for pity—then he may be sure that his attitude is an attitude of genuine love.

The mood of implacable revenge need not necessarily imply a suppressed jealousy or envy; but it certainly implies the presence of an element which has its origin in the sinister side of the great duality. The pleasure which certain minds derive from a contemplation of the "deadness of matter" is closely associated with the voluptuousness of cruelty drawn from the recesses of the sexual instinct. Such cruelty finds one of its most insidious incentives in the phenomenon of humiliation; and when the philosopher contemplates the "deadness of matter" with exquisite satisfaction, the pleasure which he experiences, or the "sweet pain" which he experiences, is very closely connected with the cruel idea of humiliating the pride of the human soul.

The duality of pleasure and pain helps us to understand the nature of the duality of good and evil, for it helps us to realize that good and evil are not separate independent existences; but are—like pleasure and pain—emotional conditions of the soul. Thus when we say that the ultimate duality of good and evil, or of creation and what resists creation, is the thing upon which the whole universe depends, we must not for a moment be supposed to mean that the ultimate reality of the universe consists of two opposed "forces" who, like blind chemical energies, struggle with one another in unconscious darkness.

The ultimate reality of the universe is personality, or rather, let us say, is the existence of an innumerable company of personal souls, visible and invisible, each of whom half-creates and half-discovers his own universe; each of



whom finds, sooner or later, in the objective validity of the "eternal ideas," a universe which is common to them all. The unfathomable duality upon which this objective world, common to them all, depends for its existence is a duality which exists in every separate soul. Without such a duality it is impossible to conceive any soul existing. And directly such a duality were resolved into unity such a soul would cease to exist. But because, without the presence of evil, good would cease to exist, we have no right to say that evil is an aspect of good. We have no right to say this because, if good is dependent for its existence upon evil, it is equally true that evil is dependent for its existence upon good.

The whole question of ultimate issues is a purely speculative one and one that does not touch the real situation. The real situation, the real fact of our personal experience—which is the only experience worth anything—lies undoubtedly in this impression of unfathomable duality. It cannot be regarded as a reconciliation between love and malice merely to recognize that love and malice are not independent "forces," such as can be compared to chemical "forces," but are states of the soul.

It is true that they both exist within the soul, just as the soul exists within time and space; but since the soul is unfathomable these two conditions of the soul are also unfathomable. The struggle upon which the universe depends is a struggle which goes on within the circle of personality; but since personality is unthinkable without this struggle, it may truly be said that the existence of personality "depends" upon the existence of this struggle. When we speak of pain and pleasure as if they were independent entities we are forgetting that it is merely as "states of the soul" that pain and pleasure exist. When we speak of love and malice as independent entities we are forgetting that it is merely as "states of the soul" that

love and malice exist. Love and malice, the life-force and the death-force, these are merely abstractions when separated from the soul which is their arena.

It is certainly not in harmony with the revelation of the complex vision to seek to imagine some vague "beginning of things"; when some inscrutable chemical or spiritual "energy," called "life," rushed into objective existence and proceeded to create living personalities through which it might be able to function.

The revelation of the complex vision is a revelation of a world made up of unfathomable personalities. Of this world, of these unfathomable personalities, we are unable to postulate any "beginning." They have always existed. They seem likely to remain always in existence. Our knowledge stops at that point; because our knowledge is the knowledge of personality. The revelation of the complex vision is constantly warning us against any tendency to evade the whole question of the original mystery by the use of meaningless abstractions.

The word "energy" is such an abstraction. So also is the word "movement." So also are those logical formulae of the pure reason, such as the "a priori unity of apperception" and the "absolute spirit." Apart from personality, apart from the complex vision of the individual soul, there is no such thing as "energy" or "movement" or "transcendental unity" or "absolute spirit." In the same way we are compelled to recognize that apart from personality the unfathomable duality has no meaning. But in so far as it represents the eternal struggle between life and death which goes on all the while in every living soul, the unfathomable duality is the permanent condition of our deepest knowledge.

It is just here that the mystery of pain and pleasure helps us to understand the mystery of love and malice. For the same insensitiveness in certain souls that prevents

their feeling any vivid pain or any vivid pleasure, also prevents their feeling any intense malice. But this insensitiveness which prevents their feeling any intense malice is, more than anything else, the especial evocation of the power of malice. For intensity, even in malice, is a proof that malice has been appropriating to its use the energy of life. The real opposite of intense love is not intense malice but inert malice.

For malignant inertness is the true adversary of creation. From this it necessarily follows that the soul which is insensitive to pain and pleasure and to malice and love is a soul in whom the profound opposite of love has already won a relative victory. It is certainly possible, as we have seen, for the victory of malice over love to be accompanied by thrilling pleasure; but, when this happens malice has lost something of its "inertness" by drawing to itself and corrupting for its own use the dynamic energy of love. When malice displays itself in an intense and vivid activity of destruction it is less "evil" and less purely "malignant" than when it remains insensitive and inert. For this reason it is undeniably true that an insensitive person, although he may cause much less positive pain than a passionately cruel person, is in reality a more complete incarnation of the power of "evil" than the latter; for the latter, in the very violence of his passion, has appropriated to himself something of the creative energy. It is true that in appropriating this he has corrupted it, and it is true that by the use of it he can cause far more immediate pain; but it remains that in himself he is less purely "evil" than the person whose chief characteristic is a malignant insensitiveness.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE REALITY OF THE SOUL IN RELATION TO MODERN THOUGHT

It ought not to be forgotten, as at least an important historical fact, in regard to what we have asserted as the revelation of the complex vision concerning the reality of the soul, that the two most influential modern philosophers deny this reality altogether. I refer to Bergson and William James.

In the systems of thought of both these writers there is no place left for that concrete, real, actual "monad," with its semi-mental, semi-material substratum of unknown hyper-physical, hyper-psychic substance, which is what we mean, in philosophical as well as in popular language when we talk of the "soul."

According to the revelation of man's complex vision this hyper-physical, hyper-psychic "something," which is the concrete centre of will and consciousness and energy, is also the invisible core or base of what we term personality, and, without its real existence, personality can have no permanence. Without the assumption of its real existence personality cannot hold its own or remain integral and identical in the midst of the process of life.

This then being the nature and character of the soul, what weight is there in the arguments used against the soul's concrete existence by such thinkers as James and Bergson? The position of the American philosopher in regard to this matter seems less plausible and less consistent than that of his French master.

James is prepared to give his adherence to a belief in a

soul of the earth and in planetary souls and stellar souls. He quotes with approval on this point the writings of Gustav Theodor Fechner, the Leipzig chemist. He is also prepared to find a place in his pluralistic world for at least one quite personal and quite finite god.

If he is not merely exercising his philosophical fancy in all this, but is actually prepared to assume the real concrete existence of an earth-soul and of planetary souls and of at least one beneficent and quite personal god, why should he find himself unable to accept the same sort of real concrete soul in living human beings? Why should he find himself compelled to say—"the notion of the substantial soul, so freely used by common men and the more popular philosophers has fallen upon evil days and has no prestige in the eyes of critical thinkers . . . like the word 'cause' the word 'soul' is but a theoretic stop-gap . . . it marks a place and claims it for a future explanation to occupy . . . let us leave out the soul, then, and confront the original dilemma"?

This scepticism of the pragmatic philosophy in regard to the "substantial soul" is surely an unpardonable inconsistency. For in all other problems the fact of an idea being "freely used by common men" is, according to pragmatic principles, an enormous piece of evidence in its favour. The further fact that all the great "a priori" metaphysical systems have been driven by their pure logic to discredit the "substantiality" of the soul, just as they have been driven to discredit the personality of God, ought, one would think, where "radical empiricism" is concerned, to be a still stronger piece of evidence on the soul's side.

James has told us that he has found it necessary to throw away "pure reason" and to assume an inherent "irrationality" in the system of things. Why then, when it comes to this particular axiom of irrational common-sense, does he balk and sheer off?

One cannot resist the temptation of thinking that just here the great Pragmatist has been led astray by that very philosophical pride he condemns in the metaphysicians. One cannot help suspecting that it is nothing less than the fact of the soul's appeal to ordinary common-sense that has prejudiced this philosopher of common-sense so profoundly against it.

What James does not seem to see is that his pseudo-scientific reduction of the integral soul-monad into a wavering and fitful series of compounded vortex-consciousness is really a falling back from the empirical data of human reality into the thin abstracted air of conceptual truth. The concrete substantial soul, just because it is the permanent basis of personality and the only basis of personality which common sense can apprehend, is precisely one of those obstinate original particular "data" of consciousness which it is the proud rôle of conceptual and intellectual logic to explain away, and to explain away in favour of attenuated rationalistic theories which are themselves "abstracted" or, shall we say, pruned and shaved off from the very thing they are supposed to explain.

All these "flowing streams," and "pulses of consciousness" and multiple "compoundings of consciousness" and overlappings of sub-consciousness are in reality, for all their pseudo-scientific air, nothing more or less than the old-fashioned metaphysical conceptions, such as "being" and "becoming," under a new name.

Nor is the new "irrational reason" by which the pragmatist arrives at these plausible theories really in the least different from the imaginative personal vision which, as James himself clearly shows, was at the back of all that old-fashioned dialectic.

The human mind has not changed its inherent texture; nor can it change it. We may talk of substituting intuition for reason. But the "new intuition," with its arro-

gant claims of getting upon the "inner side" of reality, is after all only "the old reason" functioning with a franker admission of its reliance upon that immediate personal vision and with less regard for the logical rules.

It is not, in fact, because of any rule of "logical identity with itself" that the human mind clings so tenaciously to the notion of an integral soul-monad. It is because of its own inmost consciousness that such a monad, that such a substantial integral soul, is in the deepest sense its very self, and a denial of it a denial of its very self.

The attitude of Bergson in this matter is much more consistent than that of James. Bergson is frankly and confessedly not a pluralist at all, but a spiritual monist. As a spiritual monist he is compelled to regard what we call "matter," including in this term the mechanical or chemical resistance of body and brain, as something which is produced or evolved or "thrown off" by spirit and as something which, when once it has been evolved, spirit has to penetrate, permeate, and render porous and submissive.

The complexity of Bergson's speculations with regard to memory and the "élan vital," with regard above all to the "true time," has done much to distract popular attention away from his real attitude towards the soul. But Bergson's attitude towards the existence of a substantial soul-monad is consistently and inevitably hostile.

It could not be anything else as long as the original personal "fling" into life which gives each one of us his peculiar angle of vision remained with him a question of one unified *spirit*—"a continuum of eternal shooting-forth"—which functioned through the brain and through all personal life and perpetually created a new unforeseen universe.

In the flux of this one universal "spirit," whereof "duration," in the mysterious Bergsonian sense, is the

functional activity, there can obviously be no place for an actual substantial soul. "The consciousness we have of our own self in its continual flux introduces us to the interior of a reality on the model of which we must represent other realities. All reality, therefore, is a tendency, if we agree to mean by tendency an incipient change in any direction." And when we enquire as to the nature of this "continual flux" of which the positive and integral thing we have come to call the soul is but a ripple, or swirling whirlpool of centripetal ripples, the answer which Bergson gives is definite enough. "We approach a duration which *strains*, contracts, and intensifies itself more and more; at the limit would be eternity. No longer conceptual eternity, which is an eternity of death, but an eternity of life. A living, and therefore still moving eternity in which our own particular duration would be included, as the vibrations are in light; an eternity which would be the concentration of all duration, as materiality is its dispersion. Between these two extreme limits intuition moves, and this movement is the very essence of metaphysics."

Thus according to Bergson the essential secret of life is to be found in some peculiar movement of what he calls spirit; a movement which takes place in some unutterable medium, or upon some indescribable plane, the name of which is "pure time" or "duration."

And listening to all this we cannot resist a sigh of dismay. For here, in these vague de-humanized terms—"tendency," "flux," "eternity," "vibration," "duration," "dispersion"—we are once more, only with a different set of concepts, following the old metaphysical method, that very method which Bergson himself sets out to confine to its inferior place. "Tendency" or "flux" or "duration" is just as much a metaphysical concept as "being" or "not being" or "becoming."



The only way in which we can really escape from the rigid conceptualism of rational logic is to accept the judgment of the totality of man's nature. And the judgment of the totality of man's nature points unmistakably to the existence of a real substantial soul. Such a soul is the indispensable implication of personality. And the most interior and intimate knowledge that we are in possession of, or shall ever be in possession of, is the knowledge of personality.

Bergson is perfectly right when he asserts that "the consciousness which we have of our own self" introduces us "to the interior of a reality, on the model of which we must represent other realities." But Bergson is surely departing both from the normal facts of ordinary introspection and from the exceptional facts of abnormal illumination when he appends to the words "the consciousness which we have of our own self" the further words in its continual "flux." For in our normal moods of human introspection, as well as in our abnormal moods of superhuman illumination, what we are conscious of most of all is a sense of integral continuity in the midst of change, and of identical permanence in the midst of ebb and flow.

The flux of things does most assuredly rush swiftly by us; and we, in our inmost selves, are conscious of life's incessant flow. But how could we be conscious of any of this turbulent movement across the prow of our voyaging ship, if the ship itself—the substantial base of our living consciousness—were not an organized and integral reality, of psycho-chemical material, able to exert will and to make use of memory and reason in its difficult struggle with the waves and winds?

The revelation of man's complex vision with regard to the personality of the soul is a thing of far-reaching issues and implications.

One of these implications is that while we have the right to

the term "the eternal flux" in regard to the changing waves of sensations and ideas that pass across the horizon of the soul's vision we have no right to think of this "eternal flux" as anything else than the pressure upon us of the universe of our own vision and the pressure upon us of the universe of other visions, as they seem, for this or that passing moment, to be different from our own.

The kind of world to which we are thus committed is a world crowded with living personalities. Each of these personalities brings with it its own separate universe. But the fact that all these separate universes find their ideal synthesis or teleological orientation in "the vision of the immortals," justifies us in assuming that in a certain eternal sense all these apparently conflicting universes are in reality one. This unity of ideas, with its predominant aesthetic idea—the idea of beauty—and its predominant emotional idea—the idea of love—helps us towards a synthesis which is after all only a dynamic one, a thing of movement, growth and creation.

Such a teleological unity, forever advancing to a consummation never entirely to be attained, demands however some sort of static "milieu" as well as some sort of static "material" in the midst of which and out of which it moulds its premeditated future. It is precisely this static "milieu" or "medium," and this static "material" or formless "objective mystery," which Bergson's philosophy, of the "*élan vital*" of *pure spirit*, spreading out into a totally indetermined future, denies and eliminates.

In order to justify this double elimination—the elimination of an universal "medium" and the elimination of a formless "thing-in-itself"—Bergson is compelled to reduce *space* to a quite secondary and merely logical conception and to substitute for our ordinary stream of time, measurable in terms of space, an altogether new conception of time, measurable in terms of feeling.

When however we come to analyse this new Bergsonian time, or as he prefers to call it "intuitively-felt duration," we cannot avoid observing that it is merely a new "mysterious something" introduced into the midst of the system of things, in order to enable us to escape from those older traditional "mysterious somethings" which we have to recognize as the "immediate data" of human consciousness.

It might be argued that Bergson's monistic "spirit," functioning in a mysterious indefinable "time," demands neither more nor less of an irrational act of faith than our mysterious psycho-material "soul" surrounded by a mysterious hyper-chemical "medium" and creating its future out of an inexplicable "objective mystery."

Where however the philosophy of the complex vision has the advantage over the philosophy of the "élan vital" is in the fact that even on Bergson's own admission what the human consciousness most intensely *knows* is not "pure spirit," whether shaped like a fan or shaped like a sheaf, but simply its own integral identity. And this integral identity of consciousness can only be visualized or felt in the mind itself under the form of a living concrete monad.

It will be seen, however, when it comes to a "showing up" of what might be called the "trump cards" of axiomatic mystery, that the complex vision has in reality fewer of these ultimate irrational "data" than has the philosophy of the élan vital.

Space itself, whether we regard it as objective or subjective, is certainly not an irrational axiom but an entirely rational and indeed an entirely inevitable assumption. And what the complex vision reveals is that the trinity of "mysterious somethings" with which we are compelled to start our enquiry, namely the "something" which is the substratum of the soul, the "something" which is the "medium" binding all souls together, and the

"something" which is the "objective mystery" out of which all souls create their universe, is, in fact, a genuine trinity in the pure theological sense; in other words is a real "three-in-one." And it is a "three-in-one" not only because it is unthinkable that three "incomprehensible substances" should exist in touch with one another without being in organic relation, but also because all three of them are dominated, in so far as we can say anything about them at all, by the same universal space.

It is true that the unappropriated mass of "objective mystery" upon which no shadow of the creative energy of any soul has yet been thrown must be considered as utterly "formless and void" and thus in a sense beyond space and time, yet since immediately we try to *imagine* or *visualize* this mystery, as well as just logically "consider" it, we are compelled to extend over it our conception of time and space, it is in a practical sense, although not in a logical sense, under the real dominion of these.

When therefore the philosophy of the complex vision places its trump-cards of axiomatic mystery over against the similar cards of the philosophy of the "élan vital" it will be found that in actual number Bergson has one more "card" than we have. For Bergson has not only his "pure spirit" and his "intuitively-felt time," but has also—for he cannot really escape from that by just asserting that his "spirit" produces it—the opposing obstinate principle of "matter" or "solid bodies" or "mechanical brains" upon which his pure spirit has to work.

It is indeed out of its difficulties with "matter," that is to say with bodies and brains, that Bergson's "spirit" is forced to forego its natural element of "intuitive duration" and project itself into the rigid rationalistic conceptualism of ordinary science and metaphysic.

The point of our argument in this place is that since the whole purpose of philosophy is articulation or clarification

and since in this process of clarification the fewer "axiomatic incomprehensibles" we start with the better; it is decidedly to the advantage of any philosophy that it should require at the start nothing more than the mystery of the individual soul confronting the mystery of the world around it. And it is to the disadvantage of Bergson's philosophy that it should require at the start, in addition to "pure spirit" with its assumption of memory and will, and "pure matter" with its assumption of ordinary space and ordinary time, a still further axiomatic trump-card, in the theory of intuitive "durational" time, in which the real process of the life-flow transcends all reason and logic.

Putting aside however the cosmological aspect of our controversy with the "radical empirical" school of thought, we still have left unconsidered our most serious divergence from their position. This consists in the fact that both Bergson and James have entirely omitted from their original instrument of research that inalienable aspect of the human soul which we call the aesthetic sense.

With only a few exceptions—notably that of Spinoza—all the great European philosophers from Plato to Nietzsche have begun their philosophizing from a starting-point which implied, as an essential part of their "organum" of enquiry, the possession by the human soul of some sort of aesthetic vision.

To these thinkers, whether rationalistic or mystic, no interpretation of the world seemed possible that did not start with the aesthetic sense, both as an instrument of research and as a test of what research discovered.

The complete absence of any discussion of the aesthetic sense in Bergson and James is probably an historic confession of the tyranny of commercialism and physical science over the present generation. It may also be a spiritual reflection, in the sphere of philosophy, of the rise to political and social power of that bourgeois class which,

of all classes, is the least interested in aesthetic speculation.

The philosophy of the complex vision may have to wait for its hour of influence until the proletariat comes into its own. And it does indeed seem as if between the triumph of the proletariat and the triumph of the aesthetic sense there were an intimate association. It is precisely because these two philosophers have so completely neglected the aesthetic sense that their speculations seem to have so little hold upon the imagination. When once it is allowed that the true instrument of research into the secret of the universe is the rhythmic activity of man's complete nature, and not merely the activity of his reason or the activity of his intuition working in isolation, it then becomes obvious that the universal revelations of the aesthetic sense, if they can be genuinely disentangled from mere subjective caprices, are an essential part of what we have to work with if we are to approach the truth.

The philosophy of the complex vision bases its entire system upon its faith in the validity of these revelations; and, as we have already shown, it secures an objective weight and force for this ideal vision by its faith in certain unseen companions of humanity, whom it claims the right to name "the immortals."

This is really the place where we part company with Bergson and James. We agree with the former in his distrust of the old metaphysic. We agree with the latter in many of his pluralistic speculations. But we feel that any philosophy which refuses to take account, at the very beginning, of those regions of human consciousness which are summed up by the words "beauty" and "art," is a philosophy that in undertaking to explain life has begun by eliminating from life one of its most characteristic products.

In Bergson's interpretation of life the stress is laid upon "spirit" and "intuition." In James' interpretation of

life the stress is laid upon those practical changes in the world and in human nature which any new idea must produce if it is to prove itself true.

In the view of life we are now trying to make clear, philosophy is so closely dependent upon the activity of the aesthetic sense that it might itself be called an art, the most difficult and the most comprehensive of all the arts, the art of retaining the rhythmic balance of all man's contradictory energies. What this rhythmic balance of man's concentrated energies seems to make clear is the primary importance of the process of discrimination and valuation.

From the profoundest depths of the soul rises the consciousness of the power of choice; and this power of choice to which we give, by common consent, the name of "will," finds itself confronted at the start by the eternal duality of the impulse to create and the impulse to resist creation. The impulse to create we find, by experience, to be identical with the emotion of love. And the impulse to resist creation we find, by experience, to be identical with the emotion of malice.

But experience carries us further than this. The impulse to create, or the emotion of love, is found, as soon as it begins a function, to be itself a living synthesis of three primordial reactions to life, which, in philosophic language, we name "ideas." These three primordial ideas may be summed up as follows: The idea of beauty, which is the revelation of the aesthetic sense. The idea of goodness or nobility, which is the revelation of conscience. The idea of truth, or the mind's apprehension of reality, which is the revelation of reason, intuition, instinct, and imagination, functioning in sympathetic harmony. Now it is true that by laying so much stress upon the "élan vital" or flowing tide of creative energy, Bergson has indicated his acceptance of one side of the ultimate duality. But

for Bergson this creative impulse is not confronted by evil or by malice as its opposite, but simply by the natural inertness of mechanical "matter."

And once having assumed his "continuum" of pure spirit, he deals no further with the problem of good and evil or with the problem of the aesthetic sense.

From our point of view he is axiomatically unable to deal with these problems for the simple reason that his *élan vital* or flux of pure spirit, being itself a mere metaphysical abstraction from living personality, can never, however hard you squeeze it, produce either the human conscience or the human aesthetic sense.

These things can only be produced from the concrete activity of a real living individual soul. In the same way it is true that William James, by his emphasis upon conduct and action and practical efficiency as the tests of truth, is bound to lay enormous stress at the very start upon the ethical problem.

What a person believes about the universe becomes itself an ethical problem by the introduction on the one hand of the efficiency of the will to believe and on the other of the assumption that a person "ought" to believe that which it is "useful" to him to believe, as long as it does not conflict with other desirable truths. But this ethical element in the pragmatic doctrine, though it is so dominant as almost to reduce philosophy itself to a sub-division of ethics, is not, when one examines it, at all the same thing as what the philosophy of the complex vision means by the revelation of conscience.

Ethics with William James swallows up philosophy and in swallowing up philosophy the nature of Ethics is changed and becomes something different from the clear unqualified mandate of the human conscience. With the philosophy of the complex vision the revelations of conscience are intimately associated with the revelations of the aesthetic



sense; and these again, in the rhythmic totality of man's nature, with the revelations of emotion, instinct, intuition, imagination.

Thus when it comes to conduct and the question of choice the kind of "imperative" issued by conscience has been already profoundly changed. It is still the mandate of conscience. But it is the mandate of a conscience whose search-light has been taken possession of by the aesthetic sense and has been fed by imagination, instinct and intuition.

It must be understood when we speak of these various "aspects" or "attributes" of the human soul we do not imply that they exist as separable faculties independently of the unity of the soul which possesses them.

The soul is an integral and indivisible monad and throws its whole strength along each of these lines of contact with the world. As will, the soul flings itself upon the world in the form of choice between opposite valuations. As conscience, it flings itself upon the world in the form of motive force of opposite valuations. As the aesthetic sense, it flings itself upon the world in the form of yet another motive-force of opposite valuations. As imagination, it half-creates and half-discovers the atmospheric climate, so to speak, of this valuation. As intuition, it feels itself to be in possession of a super-terrestrial, super-human authority which gives objective definiteness and security to this valuation. As instinct, it feels its way by an innate clairvoyance into the organic or biological vibrations of this valuation.

Thus we return to the point from which we started, namely that the whole problem of philosophy is the problem of valuation. And this is the same thing as saying that philosophy, considered in its essential nature, is nothing less than art—the art of flinging itself upon the

world with all the potentialities of the soul functioning in rhythmic harmony.

When Bergson talks of the "élan vital" and suggests that the acts of choice of the human personality are made as naturally and inevitably, under the pressure of the "shooting out" of the spirit, as leaves grow upon the tree, he is falling into the old traditional blunder of all pantheistic and monistic thinkers, the blunder namely of attributing to a universal "God" or "life-force" or "stream of tendency" the actual personal achievements of individual souls.

Bergson's "apologia" for free-will is therefore rendered ineffective by reason of the fact that it does not really leave the individual free. The only "free" thing is the aboriginal "spirit," pouring forth in its "durational" stream, and moulding bodies and brains as it goes along.

The philosophy of the complex vision does not believe in "spirit" or "life-force" or "durational streams of tendency." Starting with personality it is not incumbent upon it to show how personality has been evolved. It is no more incumbent upon it to show how personality has been evolved than it is incumbent upon pantheistic idealism to show how God or how the Absolute has been evolved. Personality with its implication of separate concrete psychomaterial soul-monads is indeed our Absolute or at any rate is as much of an Absolute as we can ever get while we continue to recognize the independent existence of one universal space, of one universal ethereal medium, and of one universal objective mystery.

Perhaps the correct metaphysical statement of our philosophic position would be that our Absolute is a duality from the very start—a duality made up on one side of innumerable soul-monads and on the other side of an incomprehensible formless mass of plastic material,

itself subdivided into the two aspects of a medium binding the soul-monads together, and an objective mystery into which they pierce their way.

When the evolutionists tell us that personality is a thing of late appearance in the system of things and a thing of which we are able to note the historic or prehistoric development, out of the "lower" forms of life, our answer is that we have no right to assume that the life of the earth and of the other planetary and stellar bodies is a "lower" form of life.

If to this the astronomer answer that he is able to carry the history of evolution further back than any planet or star, as far back as a vast floating mass of homogeneous fiery vapour, even then we should still maintain that this original nebular mass of fire was the material "body" of an integral soul-monad; and that in surrounding immensities of space there were other similar masses of nebular fire—possibly innumerable others—who in their turn were the bodily manifestations of integral soul-monads.

When evolutionists argue that personality is a late and accidental appearance on the world scene, they are only thinking of human personalities; and our contention is that while man has a right to interpret the universe in terms of his soul, he has no right to interpret the universe in terms of his body; and that it is therefore quite possible to maintain that the "body" of the earth has been from the beginning animated by a soul-monad whose life can in no sense be called "lower" than the life of the soul-monad which at present animates the human body. And in support of our contention just here we are able to quote not only the authority of Fechner but the authority of Professor James himself approving of Fechner.

What the philosophy of the complex vision really does is to take life just as it is—the ordinary multifarious

spectacle presented to our senses and interpreted by our imagination—and regard this, and nothing more recon-dite than this, as the ultimate Absolute, or as near an Absolute as we are ever likely to get.

From our point of view it seems quite uncalled for to summon up vague and remote entities, like streams of consciousness and shootings forth of spirit, in order to interpret this immediate spectacle. Such streams of consciousness and shootings forth of spirit seem to us just as much abstractions and just as much conceptual substitutions for reality as do the old-fashioned metaphysical entities of "being" and "becoming."

No one has ever *seen* a life-stream or a life-force. No one has ever *seen* a compounded congeries of conscious states. But every one of us has seen a living human soul looking out of a living human body; and most of us have seen a living soul looking out of the mysterious countenance of earth, water, air and fire.

The philosophy of the soul-monad has at any rate this advantage over every other: namely, that it definitely represents human experience and can always be verified by human experience. Any human being can try the experiment of sinking into the depths of his own identity. Let the reader of this passage try such an experiment here and now; and let him, in the light of what he finds, decide this question. Does he find himself flowing mysteriously forth, along some indescribable "durational" stream, and, as he flows, feeling himself to be that stream? Or does he feel himself to be a definite concrete actual "I am I," "the guest and companion of his body" and, as far as the mortal weakness of flesh allows, the motive-principle of that body?

If the philosophy of the complex vision is able to make an appeal of this kind with a certain degree of assurance as to the answer, it is able to make a yet more convincing

appeal, when—the soul's existence once admitted—it becomes a question as to that soul's inherent quality. No human being, unless in the grasp of some megalomania of virtue, can deny the existence, in the depths of his nature, of a struggle between the emotion of love and the emotion of malice.

Out of this ultimate duality under the pressure of the forms and shapes of life and the reaction against these of the imagination and the aesthetic sense, spring into existence those primordial ideas of truth and beauty and goodness which are the very stuff and texture of our fate. But these ideas, primordial though they are, are so confused and distorted by their contact with circumstances and accident, that it may well be that no clear image of them is found in the recesses of the soul when the soul turns its glance inward.

No soul, however, can turn its glance inward without recognizing in its deepest being this ultimate struggle between love and malice. How then can any philosophy be regarded as a transcript and reflection of reality when at the very start it refuses to take cognizance of this fact? If the only knowledge, which is in any sense certain, is our knowledge of ourselves, and if our knowledge of ourselves implies our knowledge of a definite "soul-monad" for ever divided against itself in this abysmal struggle, how then may a philosophy be regarded as covering the facts of experience, when in place of this personal contradiction it predicates, as its explanation of the system of things, some remote, thin, abstract tendency, such as the "shooting forth of spirit" or the compounding of states of consciousness"?

The whole matter may be thus summed up. The modern tendencies of thought which we have been considering, get rid of the old metaphysical notion of the logical Absolute only to substitute vague psychological "states of con-

sciousness" in its place. But what philosophy requires, if the facts of introspective experience are to be trusted, is neither an Absolute in whose identity all difference is lost, nor a stream of "states of consciousness" which is suspended, as it were, in a vacuum.

What philosophy requires is the recognition of real actual persons whose original revelation of the secret of life implies that abysmal duality of good and evil beyond the margin of which no living soul has ever passed. Whether or not this concrete "monad" or living substratum of personality survives the death of the body is quite a different question; is in fact a question to which the philosophy of the complex vision can make no definite response. In this matter all we can say is that those supreme moments of rhythmic ecstasy, whose musical equilibrium I have indicated in the expression "apex-thought," establish for us a conclusive certainty as to the eternal continuance, beyond the scope of all deaths, of that indestructible aspect of personality we have come to name the struggle between love and malice.

With the conclusive consciousness of this there necessarily arises a certain attitude of mind which is singularly difficult to describe but which I can hint at in the following manner. In the very act of recognition, in the act by which we apprehend the secret of the universe to consist in this abysmal struggle of the emotion of love with the emotion of malice, there is an implication of a complete acceptance of whatever the emotion of love or the principle of love is found to demand, as the terms of its relative victory over its antagonist. Whether this demand of love, or to put it more exactly this demand of "all souls" in whom love is dominant, actually issues in a personal survival after death we are not permitted to feel with any certainty. But what we feel with certainty, when the apex-thought of the complex vision reaches its

consummation, is that we find our full personal self-realization and happiness in a complete acceptance of whatever the demand of love may be. And this is the case because the ultimate happiness and fulfilment of personality does not depend upon what may have happened to personality in the past or upon what may happen to personality in the future but solely and exclusively upon what personality demands here and now in the apprehension of the unassailable moment.

This suspension of judgment therefore in regard to the question of the immortality of the soul is a suspension of judgment implicit in the very nature of love itself. For if there were anything in the world nearer the secret of the world than is this duality of love and malice, then that alien thing, however we thought of it, would be the true object of the soul's desire and the victory of love over malice would fall into the second place.

If instead of the soul's desire being simply the victory of love over malice it were, so to speak, the "material fruit" of such a victory—namely, the survival of personality after death—then, in place of the struggle between love and malice, we should be compelled to regard *personality in itself*, apart from the nature of that personality, as the secret of the universe. But as we have repeatedly shown, it is impossible to think of any living personality apart from this abysmal dualism; the ebb and flow of which, with the relative victory of love over malice, is our ultimate definition of what living personality is. The emotion of love abstracted from personality is not the secret of the universe, because personality in its concrete living activity is the secret of the universe. It is this very abstraction of love, isolated from any person who loves, and projected as an abstract into the void, that has done so much to undermine religious thought, just as that other

absolute of "pure being" has done so much to undermine philosophic thought.

Love and malice are unthinkable apart from personality; but personality divorced from the struggle between love and malice is something worse than unthinkable. It is something most tragically thinkable. It is in fact the plain reality of death. A dead body is a body in which the struggle between love and malice has completely ceased. A dead planet would be a planet in which the struggle between love and malice had ceased. We cannot speak of a "dead soul" because the soul is, according to our original definition, the very fusion-point and vortex-point where not only consciousness and energy meet but where love and malice meet and wage their eternal struggle.

Strictly speaking it is not true to say that the ultimate secret of the universe is the emotion of love. The emotion of love, just because it is an *emotion*, is the emotion of a personality. It is personality, not the emotion of love, which is the secret of the universe, which is, in fact, the very universe itself. But it is personality considered in its true concrete life, not as a mere abstraction devoid of all characteristics, which is this basic thing. And personality thus considered is, as we have seen, a living battleground of two ultimate emotions. The complete triumph of love over malice would mean the extinction of personality and following from this the extinction of the universe.

Thus what the soul's desire really amounts to, in those rhythmic moments when its diverse aspects are reduced to harmonious energy, is not the complete victory of love over malice but only a relative victory. What it really desires is that malice should still exist, but that it should exist in subordination to love.

The ideal of the soul therefore in its creative moments



is the *process of the overcoming of malice*, not the completion of this process. In order to be perpetually overcome by love, malice must remain existent, must remain "still there." If it ceased to be there, there would be nothing left for love to overcome; and the ebb and flow of the universe, its eternal contradictions, would be at an end. The soul's desire, according to this view, is not a life after death where malice, shall we say, is completely overcome and "good" completely triumphant. The soul's desire is that malice, or evil, should continue to exist; but should continue to exist under the triumphant hand of love. The desire of the soul, in such ultimate moments, has nothing to do with the survival of the soul after death. It has to do with an acceptance of the demand of love. And what love demands is not that malice should disappear; but that it should for ever exist, in order that love should for ever be overcoming it. And the ecstasy of this process, of this "overcoming," is a thing of single moments, moments which, as they pass, not only reduce both past and future to an eternal "now" but annihilate everything else but this eternal "now." This annihilation of the past does not mean the extinction of memory or the extinction of hope. It only means that the profoundest of our memories are "brought over" as it were from the past into the present. It only means that a formless horizon of immense hope, indefinite and vague, hovers above the present, to give it spaciousness and freedom.

The revelation of the complex vision does not therefore answer the question of the immortality of the soul. What it does is to indicate the degree of importance of any answer to this question. And this degree of importance is much smaller than in our less harmonious moments we are inclined to suppose. At certain complacent moments the soul finds itself praying for some final assurance of personal survival. At certain other moments the soul is

tempted to pray for complete annihilation. But at the moments when it is most entirely itself it neither prays for annihilation nor for immortality. It does not pray for itself at all. It prays that the will of the gods may be done. It prays that the power of love in every soul in the universe may hold the power of malice in subjection.

The soul therefore, revealed as a real substantial living thing by the complex vision, is not revealed as a thing necessarily exempt from death, but as a thing whose deep-est activity renders it free from the fear of death.

In considering the nature of the contrast between the philosophy of the complex vision and the most dominant philosophic tendencies of the present time it is important to make clear what our attitude is towards that hypothetical assumption usually known as the Theory of Evolution.

If what is called Evolution means simply *change*, then we have not the least objection to the word. The universe obviously changes. It is undergoing a perpetual series of violent and revolutionary changes. But it does not necessarily improve or progress. On the contrary during enormous periods of time it deteriorates. Both progress and deterioration are of course purely human valuations. But according to our valuation of good and evil it may be said that during those epochs when the malicious, the predatory, the centripetal tendency in life predominates over the creative and centrifugal tendency, there is deterioration and degeneracy; and during the epochs when the latter overcomes the former there is growth and improvement.

It is quite obvious that from our point of view, there is no such thing as inanimate chemical substance, no such isolated evolutionary *phases* of "matter," such as the movements from "solids" to "liquids," from "liquids" to "gases," from "gases" to "ether," from "ether" to

"electro-magnetism." All these apparent changes must be regarded as nothing less than the living organic changes taking place in the living bodies of actual personal souls.

According to our view the real and important variations in the multiform spectacle of the universe are the variations brought about by the perpetual struggle between life and death, in other words between the personal energy of creation and the personal resistance of malice.

For us the universe of bodies and souls is perpetually re-creating itself by the mysterious process of birth, perpetually destroying itself by the mysterious process of death.

It is this eternal struggle between the impulse to create new life and the impulse to resist the creation of life, and to destroy or to petrify life, which actually causes all movement in things and all change; movement sometimes forward and sometimes backward as the great pendulum and rhythm of existence swings one way or the other.

And even this generalization does not really cover what we regard as the facts of the case, because this backward or forward movement, though capable of being weighed and estimated "en masse" in the erratic and violent changes of history, is in reality a thing of particular and individual instances, a thing that ultimately affects nothing but individuals and personalities, in as much as it is the weighing and balancing of a struggle which takes place nowhere else except in the arena of concrete separate and personal souls.

What is usually called Evolution then, and what may just as reasonably be called Deterioration, is as far as we are concerned just a matter of perpetual movement and change.

The living personalities that fill the circle of space are perpetually reproducing themselves in a series of organic

births, and perpetually passing away in the process of death.

We have also to remember that every living organism, whether such an organism resemble that of a planet or a human being, is itself the dwelling-place of innumerable other living organisms dependent on it and drawing their life from it, precisely as their parent organism depends on, and draws its life from, the omnipresent universal ether.

What the philosophy of the complex vision denies and refutes is the modern tendency to escape from the real mystery of existence by the use of such vague hypothetical metaphors, all of them really profoundly anthropomorphic, such as "life-force" or "hyper-space" or "magnetic energy" or "streams of sub-consciousness."

The philosophy of the complex vision drives these pseudo-philosophers to the wall and compels them to confess that ultimately all they are aware of is the inner personal activity of their own individual souls; compels them to confess that when it comes to the final analysis their "life-force" and "pure thought" and "hyper-space" and "radio-magnetic activity" are all nothing but one-sided hypothetical abstractions taken from the concrete movements of concrete individual bodies and souls which by an inevitable act of the imagination we assume to reproduce in their interior reactions what we ourselves experience in ours.

To introduce such a conception as that of those mysterious super human beings, whom I have named "the gods," into a serious philosophic system, may well appear to many modern scientific minds the very height of absurdity.

But the whole method of the philosophy of the complex vision is based upon direct human experience; and from my point of view the obscure and problematic existence of some such beings has behind it the whole formidable weight

of universal human feeling—a weight which is not made less valid by the arrogant use of mere phrases of rationalistic contempt such as that which is implied in the word “superstition.”

From our point of view a philosophy which does not include and subsume and embody that universal human experience covered by the term “superstition” is a philosophy that has eliminated from its consideration one great slice of actual living fact. And it is in this aspect of the problem more than in any other that the philosophy of the Complex Vision represents a return to certain revelations of human truth—call them mythological if you please—which modern philosophy seems to have deliberately suppressed. In the final result it may well be that we have to choose, as our clue to the mystery of life, either “mathematica” or “mythology.”

The philosophy of the complex vision is compelled by the very nature of its organ of research to choose, in this dilemma, the latter rather than the former. And the universe which it thus dares to predicate is at least a universe that lends itself, as so many “scientific” universes do not, to that synthetic activity of the *imaginative reason* which in the long run alone satisfies the soul. And such a universe satisfies the soul, as these others cannot, because it reflects, in its objective spectacle of things, the profoundest interior consciousness of the actual living self which the soul in its deepest moments of introspection is able to grasp.

Modern science, under the rhetorical spell of this talismanic word “evolution,” seems to imply that it can explain the multiform shapes and appearances of organic life by deducing them, in all their vivid heterogeneity, from some hypothetical monistic substance which it boldly endows with the mysterious energy called the “life-force” and which it then permits to project out of itself, by some sort

of automatic volition, the whole long historic procession of living organisms.

This purely imaginative assumption gives it, in the popular mind, a sort of vague right to make the astounding claim that it has "explained" the origin of things. Little further arrogance is needed to give it, in the popular mind, the still more astounding right to claim that it has indicated not only the nature of the "beginning" of things but the nature of their "end" also; this "end" being nothing less than some purely hypothetical "equilibrium" when the movement of "advance," coming full circle, rounds itself off into the movement of "reversion."

The philosophy of the complex vision makes no claim to deal either with the beginning of things or with the end of things. It recognizes that "beginnings" and "ends" are not things with which we can intelligibly deal; are, on the contrary, things which are completely unthinkable.

What we actually see, feel, divine, imagine, love, hate, detest, desire, dream, create and destroy,—these living, dying, struggling, relaxing, advancing and retreating things—this space, this ether, these stars and suns, these animals, fishes, birds, plants, this earth and moon, these men and these trees and flowers, these high and unchanging eternal ideas of the beautiful and the good, these transitory perishing mortal lives and these dimly discerned immortal figures that we name "gods," all these, as far as we are concerned, have for ever existed, all these, as far as we are concerned, must for ever exist.

In the immense procession of deaths and births, it is indeed certain that the soul and body of the Earth have given birth to all the souls and bodies which struggle for existence upon her living flesh and draw so much of their love and their malice from the unfathomable depths of her spirit. But when once we accept as our basic axiom

that where the "soul-monad" exists, whether such a "monad" be human, sub-human, or super-human, it exists in actual concrete organic personal integrity, we are saved from the necessity of explaining how, and by what particular series of births and deaths and change and variation, the living spectacle of things, as we visualize it today, has "evolved" or has "deteriorated" out of the remote past.

It is in fact by their constant preoccupation with the immediate and material causes of such organic changes, that men of science have been distracted from the real mystery. This real mystery does not limit itself to the comparatively unimportant "How," but is constantly calling upon us to deal with the terrible and essential questions, the two grim interrogations of the old Sphinx, the "What" and the "Wherefore."

It is by its power to deal with these more essential riddles that any philosophy must be weighed and judged; and it is just because what we name Science stops helplessly at this unimportant "How," that it can never be said to have answered Life's uttermost challenge.

Materialistic and Evolutionary Hypotheses must always, however far they may go in reducing so-called "matter" to so-called "spirit," remain outside the real problem. No attenuation of "matter" into movement or energy or magnetic radio-activity can reach the impregnable citadel of life. For the citadel of life is to be found in nothing less than the complex of personality—whether such personality be that of a planet or a plant or an animal or a man or a god—must always be recognized as inherent in an actual living soul-monad, divided against itself in the everlasting duality.

Although the most formidable support to our theory of an "eternal vision," wherein all the living entities that fill space under the vibration of an unspeakable cosmic rhythm and brought into focus by one supreme act of contempla-

tive "love," is drawn from the rare creative moments of what I have called the "apex-thought," it still remains that for the normal man in his most normal hours the purely scientific view is completely unsatisfying.

I do not mean that it is unsatisfying because, with its mechanical determinism, it does not satisfy his desires. I mean that it does not satisfy his imagination, his instinct, his intuition, his emotion, his aesthetic sense; and in being unable to satisfy these, it proves itself, "ipso-facto," false and equivocal.

It is equally true that, except for certain rare and privileged natures, the orthodox systems of religion are equally unsatisfying.

What is required is some philosophic system which is bold enough to include the element of so-called "superstition" and at the same time contradicts neither reason nor the aesthetic sense.

Such a system, we contend, is supplied by the philosophy of the complex vision; a philosophy which, while remaining frankly anthropomorphic and mythological, does not, in any narrow or impudent or complacent manner, slur over the bitter ironies of this cruel world, or lose the clear outlines of all drastic issues in a vague, unintelligible, un-aesthetic idealism.

What our philosophy insists upon is that the modern tendency to reduce everything to some single monistic "substance," which, by the blind process of "evolution," becomes all this passionate drama that we see, is a tendency utterly false and misleading. For us the universe is a much larger, freer, stranger, deeper, more complicated affair than that.

For us the universe contains possibilities of real ghastly, incredible *evil*, descending into spiritual depths, before which the normal mind may well shudder and turn dismayed away.



For us the universe contains possibilities of divine, magical, miraculous *good*, ascending into spiritual heights and associating itself with immortal super-human beings, before which the mind of the merely logical intelligence may well pause, baffled, puzzled, and obscurely indignant.

The "fulcrum" upon which the whole issue depends, the "pivot" upon which it turns, is the existence of actual living souls filling the immense spaces of nature.

If there is no "soul" in any living thing, then our whole system crumbles to pieces. If there are living "souls" in every living thing, then the universe, as revealed by the complex vision, is more real than the universe as revealed by the chief exponents of modern thought.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE IDEA OF COMMUNISM

The philosophy of the complex vision inevitably issues, when it is applied to political and economic conditions, in the idea of communism. The idea of communism is inherent in it from the beginning; and in communism, and in communism alone, does it find its objective and external expression.

The philosophy of the complex vision reveals, as we have seen, a certain kind of ultimate duality as the secret of life. This ultimate duality remains eternally unreconciled; for it is a duality within the circle of every personal soul; and the fact that every personal soul is surrounded by an incomprehensible substance under the dominion of time and space, does not reconcile these eternal antagonists; because these eternal antagonists are for ever unfathomable, even as the personal soul, of which they are the conflicting conditions, is itself for ever unfathomable.

It is therefore a perpetual witness to the truth that the idea of communism is the inevitable expression of the complex vision that this idea should, more than other idea in the world, divide the souls of men into opposite camps. If the idea of communism were not the inevitable expression of the philosophy of the complex vision as applied to human life it would be an idea with regard to which all human souls would hold infinitely various opinions.

But this is not the case. In regard to the idea of communism we do not find this infinite variety of opinion. We find, on the contrary, a definite and irreconcilable du-

ality of thought. Human souls are divided on this matter not, as they are on other matters, into a motley variety of convictions but into two opposite and irreconcilable convictions, unfathomably hostile to one another.

There is no other question, no other issue, about which the souls of men are divided so clearly and definitely into two opposite camps. The question of the existence of a "parent of the universe" does not divide them so clearly; because it always remains possible for any unbeliever in a spiritual unity of this absolute kind to use the term "parent," if he pleases, for that incomprehensible "substance" under the dominion of space and time which takes the triple form of the "substance" out of which the substratum of the soul is made, the "substance" out of which the "objective mystery" is made, and the substance out of which is made the surrounding "medium" which holds all personal souls together.

The question of the mortality or the immortality of the soul does not divide them so clearly; because such a question is entirely insoluble; and a vivid consciousness of its insolubility accompanies all argument. The question of race does not divide them so clearly; because both with regard to race and with regard to class the division is very largely a superficial thing, dependent upon public opinion and upon group-consciousness and leaving many individuals on each side entirely unaffected.

The question of sex does not divide them so clearly; because there are always innumerable examples of noble and ignoble treachery to the sex-instinct; not to speak of a certain intellectual neutrality which refuses to be biased. The idea of communism is on the contrary so profoundly associated with the original revelation of the complex vision that it must be regarded as the inevitable expression of all the attributes of this vision when such attributes are reduced to a rhythmic harmony.

That this is no speculative hypothesis but a real fact of experience can be proved by any sincere act of personal introspection.

The philosophy of the complex vision is based upon those rare and supreme moments when the soul's "apex-thought" quivers like an arrow in the very heart of the surrounding darkness. By any honest act of introspection we can recall to memory the world-deep revelations which are thus obtained. And among these revelations the one most vivid and irrefutable, as far as human association is concerned, is the revelation of the idea of communism.

So vivid and so dominant is this idea, that it may be said that no motive which drives or obsesses the will in the sphere of external relations can approach or rival it in importance. And that this is so can be proved by the fact that the opposite of this idea, namely the idea of private property, is found when we analyse the content of our profoundest instincts to be in perpetual conflict with the idea of communism.

And the inevitableness of the world-deep struggle between these two ideas is proved by the fact that in no other way, as soon as the objective world is introduced at all, can we conceive of love and malice as expressing themselves. Love must naturally express itself in the desire to "have all things in common"; and malice must naturally express itself in the desire to have as little as possible in common and as much as possible for ourselves alone.

The "possessive instinct," although it may often be found accompanying like an evil shadow some of the purest movements of love, must be recognized as eternally arising out of the depths of the power opposed to love. If we have any psychological clairvoyance we can disentangle this base element from some of the most passionate forms of the sexual instinct and from some of the most passion-

ate forms of the maternal instinct. It is undeniable that the possessive instinct does accompany both these emotions and we are compelled to recognize that, whenever or wherever it appears, it is the expression of the direct opposite of love.

So inevitably does the complex vision manifest itself in the idea of communism that it would be legitimate to say that the main object of human life as we know it at present is the realization of the ideas of truth and beauty and nobility in a world-wide communistic state.

As far as the human soul in our present knowledge of it is concerned there is no other synthesis possible except this synthesis. And there is no other synthesis possible except this, because this and this alone realizes the ideal which the abysmal power of love implies. And the power of love implies this ideal because the power of love is the only unity which fuses together the ideas of reality and beauty and nobility; and because it is impossible to conceive the power of love as embodying itself in these ideas except in a world-wide communistic state.

We are able to prove that this is no speculative hypothesis but a fact based upon experience, by a consideration of the opposite ideal. For evil, as we have hinted in many places, *has* its ideal. The ideal of evil, or of what I call "malice," is the annihilation of the will to creation. This ideal of malice is in fact an obstinate and continuous resistance to the power of creation; a resistance carried so far as to reduce everything that exists to eternal non-existence. The profoundest experience of the human soul is to be found in the unfathomable struggle that goes on in the depths between "the ideal of evil" which is universal death and "the ideal of love" which is universal life.

Reason and sensation are used in turn by this abysmal malice of the soul, to establish and make objective "the idea of nothingness." Thus reason, driven on by the

power of malice, derives exquisite satisfaction from the theory of the automatism of the will.

The theory of the automatism of the will, the theory that the will is only an illusive name for a pre-determined congeries of irresistible motives, is a theory that lends itself to the ideal of universal death. It is a theory that diminishes, and reduces to a minimum, the identity of the personal soul. And therefore it is a theory which the isolated reason, divorced from imagination and instinct, fastens upon and exults in.

The isolated reason, in league with pure sensation and divorced from instinct, becomes very quickly a slave of the abysmal power of malice; and the pleasure which it derives from the contemplation of a mechanical universe predestined and pre-determined, a universe out of which the personal soul has been completely expurgated, is a pleasure derived directly from the power of malice, exulting in the idea of eternal death.

Philosophers are very crafty in these things; and it is necessary to discriminate between that genuine passion for reality which derived from the power of love and that exultant pleasure in a "frightful" reality which is derived from intellectual sadism and from the unfathomable malice of the soul.

Between a philosophic pessimism which springs from a genuine passion for reality and from a pure "pity" for tortured sentient things, and a philosophic pessimism which springs from a cruel pleasure in atrocious situations and an ambiguous "pity" for tortured sentient things there is an eternity of difference.

It needs however something almost like a clairvoyance to recognize this difference; and such a clairvoyance can only be obtained when, as in the case of Christ, the soul becomes aware of its own unfathomable possibilities of good and evil.

A careful and implacable analysis of the two camps of opinion into which the idea of communism divides the world reveals to us the fact that the philosophical advocates of private property draw a certain malignant pleasure from insisting that the possessive instinct is the strongest instinct in humanity.

This is tantamount to saying that the power of malice is the strongest instinct in humanity; whereas, if the power of malice had not already been relatively overcome by the power of love there would be no "humanity" at all. But the philosophical advocates of private property do not confine themselves to this malign insistence upon the basic greediness of human nature. They are in the habit of twisting their arguments completely around and speaking of the "rights" of property and of the "wholesome" value of the "natural instinct" to possess property.

This "natural instinct to possess property" becomes, when they so defend it, something which we assume to be "good" and "noble," and not something which we are compelled to recognize as "evil" and "base."

It is necessary to keep these two arguments quite separate in our minds and not to allow the philosophical advocates of private property to confuse them. If the assumption is that the instinct to possess property is a "good" instinct, an instinct springing from the power of love in the human soul, then what we have to do is to subject this "good instinct" to an inflexible analysis; under the process of which such "goodness" will be found to transform itself into the extreme opposite of goodness.

If the assumption is that the instinct to possess property is an evil instinct, but an instinct which is the strongest of all human instincts and therefore one which it is insane to attempt to resist, then what we have to do is to prove that the instinct or the emotion of love is stronger than the instinct or the emotion of malice and so essential to the

life of the soul that if it had not already relatively overcome the emotion of malice, the personal soul would never have become what it has become; in fact would never have existed at all, since its mere existence depends upon the relative victory of love over malice,

In dealing with the former of these two arguments, namely that the instinct to possess property is a "good" instinct, it is advisable to search for some test of "goodness" which shall carry a stronger conviction to the mind of such biassed philosophers than any appeal to the conscience or even to the aesthetic sense. The conscience and the aesthetic sense speak with uncompromising finality upon this subject and condemn the possessive instinct or the instinct to possess property with an unwavering voice. As eternal aspects of the complex vision, both conscience and the aesthetic sense, when their power is exercised in harmony with all the other aspects of the soul, indicate with an oracular clearness that the possessive instinct is not good but evil.

The person obsessed by the idea of "nobility" and the person obsessed by the idea of "beauty" are both of them found to be extraordinarily suspicious of the possessive instinct and fiercely anxious to destroy its power. But the test more likely to appeal to the type of philosopher whose business it is to defend the institution of private property is the simple test of reality. Reality or "truth," much more than nobility or beauty, is the idea in the soul which is outraged by the illusion of the value of private property.

For the illusion of the value of private property is like the "illusion of dead matter." It is a half-truth projected by the power of malice. The inherent unreality of the illusion of the value of private property can be proved by the simplest examination of the facts. The illusion draws its strength from a false appeal to the genuine and basic necessities of the human mind and the human body.



These necessities demand adequate food, adequate clothing, adequate shelter and adequate leisure. They also demand freedom, beauty, happiness, a considerable degree of solitude, and final relief from the intolerable fear of poverty. But the economic and intellectual resources of the human race are perfectly capable of providing all these things for all human beings within the limits of a communistic society. These things and the legitimate demand for these things must not be confused with the illusion of the value of private property. Nor must the illusion of the value of private property be permitted to fortify its insecure position by a false appeal to these real values.

The astounding achievements of modern science have brought to light two things. They have brought to light the fact that no human or social unit short of the international unit of the whole race can adequately deal with the resources of the planet. And they have brought to light the fact that this inevitable internationalizing of economic production must be accompanied by a co-operative internationalizing of economic distribution, if murderous chaotic conflict is to be avoided.

The real values of sufficient food, clothing, shelter, leisure, and solitude can be secured for every human being inhabiting this planet, under a *far from perfect* organization of world-production and world-distribution. The astounding achievements of modern science have made this possible. It only requires a reasonable and not by any means an ideal co-operation to make it actual.

The achievements of modern science, especially in the sphere of industrial machinery, have made it possible for every human being to have sufficient food, clothing, shelter, leisure and solitude. Man, in this sense, has already conquered Nature; and has secured for his progeny however indefinitely increased, and for the frail and incompe-

tent ones of his race, however indefinitely increased, a more than sufficient supply of these primal necessities.

The extraordinary power of international co-operation has been recently displayed during the years of the war in the production of engines of destruction. Far less co-operation applied to the problems of production could secure for an indefinitely multiplied population, including all derelicts and all incompetents, such primal necessities of life as normal persons demand. The resources of this planet, as long as scientific distribution follows close upon scientific production, are sufficient to maintain in food, in shelter, in clothing, in leisure, in reasonable comfort, any human progeny.

What then is the principal cause why, as things are now, such lamentable poverty and such huge fear of lamentable poverty dominate the human situation? The cause is not far to seek. It lies in the very root and ground of our existing commercial and industrial system. It lies in the fact that economic production by reason of the illusive value of private enterprise, is directed not towards the satisfaction of such universal and primary necessities as food, shelter, clothing, leisure and reasonable comfort, but towards the creation of unnecessary luxury and artificial frippery, towards the piling up, by means of advertisement, monopoly, exploitation and every kind of chicanery of unproductive accumulation of private property.

Our present commercial and industrial system is based upon what is called "free competition." In other words it is based upon the right of private individuals to make use of the resources of nature and the energy of labour to produce unnecessary wealth, wealth which does little or nothing to increase the food, shelter, clothing, leisure and comfort of the masses of mankind, wealth which is artificially maintained by artificial values and by the fantastic process of advertisement.

In order to make clear and irrefutable the statement that the illusive value of private property is, like "the illusion of dead matter," a thing conceived, projected and maintained by the aboriginal power of evil, it is necessary to prove two things. It is necessary to prove in the first place that the idea of private property is neither beautiful nor noble nor real. And it is necessary to prove in the second place that the defence of the idea of private property arouses the most evil and most malignant passions which it is possible for the human soul to feel.

That private property is neither beautiful nor noble can be deduced from the fact that in proportion as human souls become attuned to finer, more distinguished, and more intellectual levels they become more and more indifferent to the "sensation of ownership." That private property is an unreal thing can be deduced from the fact that no human being can actually "possess," in a definite, positive, and exhaustive manner, more than he can eat or drink or wear or otherwise personally enjoy.

His "sensation of ownership," over lands, houses, gardens, pictures, statues, books, animals and human beings, is really and actually restricted to the immediate and direct enjoyment which he is able in person to derive from such things. Beyond this immediate and personal enjoyment the extension of his "sensation of ownership" can do no more than increase his general sense of conventional power and importance. His real "possession" of his land is actually restricted to his capacity for appreciating its beauty. His real "possession" of his books is actually restricted to his personal capacity for entering into the living secrets of these things. Without such capacity, though he may call himself the "possessor" or "owner," he is really no better than an official "care-taker," whose province it is to preserve certain objects for other people to enjoy, or, shall we say, for the permanent prevention of

any people ever enjoying them. And just as the "sensation of ownership" or "the idea of private property" is unreal and illusive with regard to land, houses, pictures, books, and the like so it is unreal and illusive with regard to human beings. No one, however maliciously he may hug to himself his possessive instinct, can ever actually and truly "possess" another living person.

One's wife, one's paramour, one's child, one's slave, are only apparently and by a conventional illusion of language one's real and actual "possession." That this is the case can be proved by the fact that any of these "human possessions" has only to commit suicide, to escape for ever from such bondage.

The illusion of private property derives its vigour and its obstinate vividness from two things; from the apparent increase of power and importance which accompanies it, and from its association with that necessary minimum of food, shelter, clothing, leisure, comfort, freedom, solitude, and happiness, which is certainly real, essential and indispensable.

The universal wisdom of the ages bears witness to the fact that a "moderate poverty" or a "moderate competence" is the ideal outward state for a man to find himself in. And this "moderate enjoyment" of food, shelter, clothing, comfort, leisure and emotional happiness, is a thing which, in a scientifically organized communistic society, would be within the reach of even the least efficient.

The gloomy and melancholy argument brought forward by the enemies of "communism" that under such a condition "the incentive of private initiative would disappear" and that no other motive could take its place, is an argument based upon the assumption that human nature derives more inspiration from the idea of dishonourable greed than it derives from the idea of honourable and useful labour; which is an assumption so wholly opposed to true

psychology that it has only to be nakedly stated to be seen in its complete absurdity.

What the psychologist, interested in this abysmal struggle between the idea of communism and the idea of private property, has to note is the nature and character of the particular individual who brings forward this argument of the "incentive of greed" or the "initiative" produced by greed. Such an individual will never be found to be a great man of science, or a great artist or scholar or craftsman, or a first-rate engineer, or a highly trained artisan or farmer or builder.

The individual bringing forward this argument of the "initiative of greed" will invariably be found to be a member of what might be called the "parasitic class." He will either be an intellectually second-rate minister or politician or lawyer or professor, or he will be a commercial and financial "middleman," whose activities are entirely absorbed in the art of exploitation and who has never experienced the sensation of creative work.

If he does not himself belong to the unproductive and parasitic class it will be easy to detect in him the unmistakable presence of the emotion of malice. Nowhere is the emotion of malice more entirely in harmony with itself than when it is engaged in attributing base and sordid motives to the energy of human nature.

This monstrous doctrine that human beings *require* "the incentive of greed" and that without that incentive or "initiative" no one would engage in any kind of creative work, is a doctrine springing directly from the aboriginal malice of the soul; and a doctrine which is refuted every day by every honest, healthy and honourable man and woman.

But all these are, after all, only negative proofs of the inevitable rise, out of the very necessity of love's nature, of the idea of communism. Of all mortal instincts, the

possessive instinct is the most insidious and most evil. Love is for ever being perverted and polluted by this thing, and turned from its true essence into something other than itself. This is equally true of love whether such love is directed towards persons or towards ideas or things.

The possessive instinct springing directly from the aboriginal malice is perpetually deceiving itself. Apparently and superficially what it aims at is the eternally "static." In other words what it aims at is the retention in everlasting immobility of the person or the idea or the thing into which it has dug its claws.

Thus the maternal instinct, in its evil mood, aims at petrifying and rendering immobile that helpless youthfulness in its offspring which the possessive passion finds so provocative and exciting. Thus the lover in his evil mood, desires that the object of his love should remain in everlasting immobility, an odalisque of eternal reciprocity. That this evil desire takes the form of a longing that the object of his love should eternally escape and eternally be recaptured makes no difference in the basic feeling.

Thus the collector of "works of art"—a being divided from the real lover of art by an impassable gulf—derives no pleasure from the beauty of anything until it has become *his*, until he has hidden it away from all the rest of the world. Thus the lover of "nature," in his evil mood, derives no pleasure from the fitful magic of grass and bowers and trees, until he feels happy in the mad illusion that the very body of the earth, even to the centre of the planet, where these things grow, is his "private" property and is something fixed, permanent, static, unchanging. But all this desire for the eternally "static" is superficial and self-deceiving.

Analysed down to its very depth, what this evil possessive instinct desires is what all malice desires, namely

the annihilation of life. Pretending to itself that it desires to hug to itself, in eternal immobility, the thing it loves, what in its secret essence it really desires is that thing's absolute annihilation. It wants to hug that thing so tightly to itself that the independence of the thing completely vanishes. It wants to destroy all separation between itself and the thing, and all liberty and freedom for the thing. It wants "to eat the thing up" and draw the thing into its own being.

Its evil desire can never find complete satisfaction until it has "killed the thing it loves" and buried it within its own identity. It is this evil possessive element in sexual love, whether of a man for a woman or a woman for a man, which is the real evil in the sexual passion. It is this possessive instinct in maternal love which is the evil element in the love of a mother for a child. Both these evil emotions tend to make war upon life.

The mother, in her secret sub-conscious passion, desires to draw back her infant into her womb, and restore it to its pre-natal physiological unity with herself. The lover in his secret evil sub-consciousness, desires to draw his beloved into ever-increasing unity with himself, until the separation between them is at an end and her identity is lost in his identity.

The final issue, therefore, of this evil instinct of possession, this evil instinct of private property, can never be anything else than death. Death is what the ultimate emotion of malice desires; and death is an actual result of the instinct of possession carried to an extreme limit.

The static immobility and complete "unchangeableness" which the possessive instinct pretends to itself is all it desires is really therefore nothing but a mask for its desire to destroy. The possessive instinct is, in its profoundest abyss, an amorist of death. What it secretly loves is the dead; for the dead alone can never defraud it of its

satisfaction. Wherever love exercises its creative energy, the possessive instinct relaxes its hold. Love expands and diffuses itself. Love projects itself and merges itself. The creative impulse is always centrifugal. The indrawing movement, the centripetal movement, is a sign of the presence of that inert malice which would reduce all life to nothingness.

The creative energy of love issues inevitably in the idea of communism. The idea of communism implies the complete abolition of private property; because private property, whether it be property in persons or in things, is essentially evil, is indeed the natural expression of the primordial inert malice, in its hostility to life. Under any realization, in actual existence, of the idea of communism the creative energy finds itself free to expand and dilate. All that heavy clogging burden of "the personally possessed" being shaken off, the natural fresh shoots of living beauty rise to the surface like the new green growths of spring when the winter's rubble has been washed away by the rain.

The accursed system of private property, rooted in the abysmal malice of the human heart, lies like a dead weight upon every creative impulse. Everything is weighed and judged, everything is valued and measured, in relation to this.

Modern Law is the system of restriction by which we protect private property.

Modern religion is the system of compensation by which we soften the difference between inequalities in private property. Modern politics is the system of compromise by which public opinion registers its devotion to private property. Modern morality is the system of artificial inhibitions by which the human conscience is perverted into regarding private property as the supreme good.

Modern science is the system by which private property



is increased and the uses of it made more complicated. Modern "truth" is the system of traditional opinion by which the illusion of private property is established as "responsible" thinking, and "serious" thinking, and "ethical" thinking.

Modern art is the system by which what is most gross and vulgar in the popular taste is pandered to in the interests of private property.

The creative energy in modern life is therefore restricted and opposed at almost every point by the evil instinct to possess. Of every new idea the question is asked, "does it conflict with private property?"

Of every new aesthetic judgment the question is asked, "does it conflict with private property?"

Of every new moral valuation the question is asked, "does it conflict with private property?" And the instinct which puts these questions to every new movement of the creative energy is the instinct of inert malice. The object of life can be regarded as nothing less than the realization of the vision of the Immortals; and it is only under a communistic state that the vision of the Immortals can be realized; because only in such a state is that petrified illusion of inert malice which we name "private property" thoroughly got rid of and destroyed.

## CONCLUSION

No attempted articulation of the mystery, life, can be worthy of being named a "philosophy" unless it has a definite bearing upon what, in the midst of that confused "manifold" through which we move, we call the problem of conduct.

The mass of complicated impression, which from our first dawn of consciousness presses upon us, falls into two main divisions—the portion of it which comes under the power of our will and the portion of it which is supplied by destiny or circumstance, and over which our will is impotent.

Superficially speaking what we call conduct only applies to action; but in a deeper sense it applies to that whole division of our sensations, emotions, ideas, and energies, whether it take the form of action or not, which comes in any measure under the power of the will. Such acts of the mind therefore, as are purely intellectual or emotional—as for instance what we call "acts of faith"—are as much to be considered forms of conduct as those outer visible material gestures which manifest themselves in action.

This is no fantastic or extravagant fancy. It is the old classical and catholic doctrine, to which not only such thinkers as Plato and Spinoza have affixed their seal, but which is at the root of the deepest instincts of Buddhists, Christians, Epicureans, Stoics, and the mystics of all ages. It may be summed up by the statement that life is an art towards which the will must be directed; and that the larger portion of life manifests itself in interior contemplation and only the smaller part of it in overt action.

In both these spheres, in the sphere of contemplation as much as in the sphere of action, there exists that "given element" of destiny or circumstance, in the presence of which the will is powerless. But in regard to this given element it must be remembered that no individual soul can ever, to the end of time, be absolutely certain that in any particular case, whether his own or another's, he has finally arrived at this irreducible fatality.

The extraordinary phenomenon of what religious people call "conversion," a phenomenon which implies a change of heart so unexpected and startling as to seem miraculous, is a proof of how unwise it is to be in any particular case rigidly dogmatic as to where the sunken rock of destiny really begins. So many appearances have taken the shape of this finality, so many mirages of "false fate" have paralysed our will, that it is wisest to believe to the very end of our days that our attitude to destiny can change and modify destiny.

Assuming then that the articulation of the mystery of life which has been outlined in this book, under the name of "the philosophy of the complex vision," must remain the barest of intellectual hypotheses until it has manifested itself in "conduct"; and assuming further that this "conduct" includes the whole of that portion of life, whether contemplative or active, which can be reduced to a fine art by the effort of the will; the question emerges—what kind of effort must the will make, both interiorally and exteriorally, if it desire to respond, by a rhythmic reciprocity, to the vision which the intellect has accepted?

It must be remembered that the vision upon which this philosophy depends and from which it derives its primordial assumptions is not the normal vision of the human soul. The philosophy of the complex vision rejects the normal vision of the human soul on behalf of the abnormal vision of the human soul. Its point of view, in this mat-

ter, is that the human soul only arrives at the secret of the universe in those exalted, heightened, exceptional and rare moments, when all the multiform activities of the soul's life achieve a musical consummation. Its point of view is that since philosophy, at its deepest and highest, necessarily becomes art; and since art is a rare and difficult thing requiring infinite adjustments and reconciliations; what philosophy has really to use, in formulating any sort of adequate system, is the memory of such rare moments after they have passed away. The point of view from which we have made all our basic assumptions is the point of view that the secret of the universe is only revealed to man in rare moments of ecstasy; and that what man's reason has to do is to gather together in memory the broken and scattered fragments of these moments and out of this residuum build up and round off, as best it may, some coherent interpretation of life.

From all this it follows that the first rhythmic reply of the human will to the vision to serve is a passionate act of what might be called "contemplative tension," in the direction of the reviving of such memories, and in the direction of preparing the ground for the return of another "moment of vision" similar in nature to those that have gone before.

The secret of this act of inward contemplative tension we have already analysed. We have found it to consist in a "complex" of all the primordial energies of the soul, focussed and concentrated into what we have compared to a pyramidal apex-point by the power of a certain synthetic movement of the soul itself which we have named the apex-thought.

The reply of the will, therefore, to the vision it desires to serve consists of a gathering together of all the energies of the soul into a rhythmic harmony. It may well be that this premeditated and deliberately constructed harmony

will have to wait for many days and years without experiencing the magic touch of the soul's apex-thought. For though we may passionately desire the touch of this—aye, and pray for it with a most desperate prayer!—it is of the very nature of this mysterious thing to require for the moment of its activity something else than the contemplative tension which has prepared the ground for its appearance. For this synthetic apex-thought, which is the soul's highest power, is only in a very limited sense within the power of the will.

The whole matter is obscure and perhaps inexplicable; but it seems as if a place were required here for some philosophic equivalent of that free gift of the Gods which, in theological language, goes by the name of "grace." Long and long may the soul wait—with the hardly won rhythm of its multiform "complex" poised in vibrant expectation—before the moment arrives in which the apex-thought can strike its note of ecstasy.

In the time and place of such a moment, in the accumulation of conditions which render such a moment eternal, chance and circumstance may play a prominent part. There is, however, an inveterate instinct in humanity—not perhaps to be altogether disregarded—according to the voice of which this unaccountable element of chance and circumstance, or, shall we say, of destiny, is itself the result of the interposed influence of the invisible companions. But whether this be so or not, the fact remains that some alien element of indeterminable chance or circumstance or destiny does frequently enter into that accumulation of obscure conditions which seem to be necessary before the magic of the apex-thought is roused.

This preparing of the ground, this deliberate concentration of the soul's energies, is the first movement of the will in answer to the attraction of the eternal vision discerned so far only as a remote ideal. The second movement of

the will has been already implied in the first, and is only a lifting into clear consciousness of what led the soul to make its initial effort. I speak of the part played by the will in the abysmal struggle between love and malice. This struggle was really implicit, in the beginning, in the effort the will made to focus the multiform energies of the complex vision. But directly some measure of insight into the secret of life has followed upon this effort, or directly, if the soul's good fortune has been exceptional, its great illuminative moment has been reached, the will finds itself irresistibly plunged into this struggle, finds itself inevitably ranged, on one side or the other, of the ultimate duality.

That the first effort of the will was largely what might be called an intellectual one, though its purpose was to make use of all the soul's attributes together, is proved by the fact that it is possible for human souls to be possessed of formidable insight into the secret of life and yet to use that insight for evil rather than for good.

But the second movement of the will, of which I am now speaking, reveals without a shadow of ambiguity on which side of the eternal contest the personality in question has resolved to throw its weight. If, in this second movement, the will answers, with a reciprocal gathering of itself together, the now far clearer attraction of the vision attained by its original effort, it will be found to range itself on the side of love against the power of malice.

If, on the contrary, having made use of its original vision to understand the secret of this struggle, it allies itself with the power of malice against love, it will be found to produce the spectacle of a soul of illuminated intellectual insight deliberately concentrated on evil rather than good.

But once irrevocably committed to the power of that creative energy which we call love, the will, though it may have innumerable lapses and moments of troubled darkness, never ceases from its abysmal struggle. For this is

the conclusion of the whole matter. When we speak of the eternal duality as consisting in a struggle between love and malice, what we really mean is that the human soul, concentrated into the magnet-point of a passionately conscious will, is found varying and quivering between the pole of love and the pole of malice.

The whole drama is contained within the circle of personality; and it would be of a similar nature if the personality in question were confronted by no other thing in the universe except the objective mystery. I mean that the soul would be committed to a struggle between its creative energy and its inert malice even if there were no other living persons in the world towards whom this love and this malice could be directed.

I have compared the substance of the soul to an arrow-head of concentrated flames, the shaft of which is wrapped in impenetrable darkness while the point of it pierces the objective mystery. From within the impenetrable darkness of this invisible arrow-shaft the very substance of the soul is projected; and in its projection it assumes the form of these flames; and the name I have given to this mysterious outpouring of the soul is *emotion*, whereof the opposing poles of contending force are respectively love and malice.

The psycho-material substance of the invisible soul-monad is itself divided into this eternally alternating duality, of which the projected "flames," or manifested "energies" are the constant expression. Each of these energies has as its concrete "material," so to speak, the one projected substance of the soul; and is thus composed of the very stuff of emotion.

The eternal duality of this emotion takes various forms in these various manifestations of its one substance. Thus the energy or flame of the aesthetic sense resolves itself into the opposed vibrations of the beautiful and the hideous. Thus the energy, or flame, of the pure reason resolves itself

into the opposed vibrations of the true and the false. Thus the energy, or flame, of conscience resolves itself into the opposed vibrations of the good and the evil.

Although the remaining energies of the soul, beyond those I have just named—such as instinct, intuition, imagination, and the like—are less definitely divided up among those three “primordial ideas” which we discern as “truth,” “beauty,” and “goodness,” they are subject, nevertheless, since their substance is the stuff of emotion, to the same duality of love and malice.

It is not difficult to see how this duality turns upon itself in human instinct, in human imagination, and in human intuition for the creative impulse in all these energies finds itself opposed by the impulse to resist creation. It is when the will is in question that we are compelled to notice a difference. For the will, although itself a primal energy or projection of the soul, is in its inherent nature set apart from the other activities of the soul.

The will is that particular aspect of the soul-monad by means of which it consciously intensifies or relaxes the outward pressure of emotion. From the point of view of the complex vision, the will, although easily differentiated from both consciousness and emotion, cannot be imagined as existing apart from these.

Every living organism possesses consciousness in some degree, emotion in some degree, and will in some degree; and the part played by the will in the complicated “nexus” of the soul’s life may be compared to that of a mechanical spring in some kind of a machine. In this case, however, the spring of the machine is fed by the oil of consciousness and releases its force upon the cogs and wheels of contradictory emotion.

No theory of psychology which attempts to eliminate the will by the substitution of pure “motive” playing upon pure “action” is acceptable to us. And such an elimina-



tion is unacceptable, because, in the ultimate insight of the complex vision turned round upon itself, the soul is aware of a definite recognizable phenomenon which although present to consciousness is different from consciousness, and although intensifying and lessening emotion is different from emotion.

In regard to this "problem of conduct," which I refuse to interpret as anything short of the whole art of life, contemplative as well as active, the will, being, so to say, the main-spring of the soul, naturally plays the most important part. The prominence given, in moral tradition, to the struggle of the will with sexual desire is one of the melancholy evidences as to how seldom the complex vision of the soul has been allowed full play.

What is called "asceticism" or "puritanism" is the result of an over-balanced concentration of the will upon the phenomena of sensation alone. Whereas in the rhythmic balance of the soul's complete faculties, what the ideal vision calls upon the will to do, is not to concentrate upon repressing sensation but to concentrate upon repressing malice and intensifying love.

Sensation is only, after all, one of the energies, or projected flames, of the soul, in its reaction to the objective mystery. But emotion is, as we have seen, the very soul itself, poured forth in its profoundest essence, and eternally divided against itself in the ultimate duality. Emotion is the psychic element which is the real substratum of sensation, just as it is the real substratum of reason and taste. So that when the will concentrates itself, as it has so often done and so often been commended for doing, upon sensation alone, it is neglecting and betraying its main function, which is the repressing of malice and the liberation of love.

The deliberate repression of sensation does, it is true, sometimes destroy our response to sensation; but it more

often intensifies the soul's sensational life. It is only when the will is concentrated upon the intensifying of love and the suppression of malice that sensation falls into its right place in the resultant rhythm. There is then no question of either suppressing it or of indulging it. It comes and goes as naturally, as easily, as inevitably, as the rain or the snow.

When the will is concentrated upon the suppression of malice and the intensifying of love all those cults of sensation which we call vice naturally relinquish their hold upon us. The fact that women so rarely indulge in the worst excesses of these cults is due to the fact that in their closeness to nature they follow more easily the rhythmic flow of life and are less easily tempted to isolate and detach from the rest any particular feeling. But women pay the penalty for this advantage when it comes to the question of the illuminative moments of the apex-thought. For in these high, rare and abnormal moments, the ordinary ebb and flow of life is interrupted; and something emerges which resembles the final effluence of a work of art that has touched eternity. The rhythmic movement of the apex-thought, when under such exceptional conditions it evokes this effluence, rises for a moment out of the flux of nature and gathers itself into a monumental vision, calm and quiet and immortal. It is more difficult for women to attain this vision than for men; because, while under normal conditions the play of their energies is better balanced and more harmonious than man's, it is harder for them to detach themselves from the ebb and flow of nature's chemistry, harder for them to attain the personal isolation which lends itself to the supreme creative act. But while such exceptional moments seem to come more frequently to men than to women, and while a greater number of the supreme artists and prophets of the world are of the male sex, it cannot be denied that the average woman, in every generation,

leads a more human and a more dignified life than the average man. And she does this because the special labours which occupy her, such as the matter of food, of cleanliness, of the making and mending of clothes, of the care of children and animals and flowers, of the handling of animate and inanimate things with a view to the increase of life and beauty upon the earth, are labours which have gathered about them, during their long descent of the centuries, a certain symbolic and poetic distinction which nothing but immemorial association with mankind's primal necessities is able to give.

The same dignity of immemorial association hangs, it is true, about such masculine labours as are connected with the tilling of the earth and the sailing of the sea. Certain ancient and eternally necessary handicrafts, such as cannot be superseded by machinery, take their place with these. But since man's particular power of separating himself from Nature and dominating Nature by means of logical reason, physical science and mechanical devices, puts him in the position of continually breaking up those usages of the ages upon which the ritualistic element in life depends, he has come, by inevitable evolution, to be much more the child of the new and the arbitrary than woman is; and in his divorce from immemorial necessity has lost much of that symbolic distinction which the life of woman retains.

It may thus be said that while the determining will in the soul of the average woman ought to be directed towards that exceptional creative energy which lifts the soul out of the flux of Nature and gives it a glimpse of the vision of the immortals, the determining will in the soul of the average man ought to be directed towards the heightening of his ordinary consciousness so as to bring this up to the level of the flux of nature and to penetrate it with the memory of the creative moments which he has had.

In both cases the material with which the will has to

work is the emotions of love and of malice; but in the case of man this malice tends to destroy the poetry of common life, while in the case of woman it tends to obstruct and embarrass her soul when the magic of the apex-thought stirs within her and an opportunity arises for that creative act which puts the complex vision in touch with the vision of the Gods.

The philosophy of the complex vision does not discover in its examination of the psycho-material organism of the soul any differentiated "faculties" which can be paralleled by the differentiated "members" of the human body. The organic unity of the soul is retained, in undissipated concentration, throughout whatever movement or action or stress of energy it is led to make. The totality of the soul becomes will, or the totality of the soul becomes reason, or the totality of the soul becomes intuition, in the same way as a falling body of water, or the projected stream of a fountain *becomes* whatever dominant colour of sky or air or atmosphere penetrates it and transforms it. What we have called emotion, made up of the duality of love and malice, is something much more integral than this. For the totality of the soul, which *becomes* reason, consciousness, intuition, conscience, and the like, is always composed of the very stuff and matter of emotion. When we say "the totality of the soul becomes imagination or intuition" it is the same thing as though we said "the emotion of the soul becomes imagination or intuition."

Emotion is our name, in fact, for the psycho-material "stuff" out of which the organic substratum of the soul is made. And since this "stuff" is eternally divided against itself into a positive and a negative "pole" we are compelled to assert that our ultimate analysis of the system of things is dualistic, in spite of the fact that the whole drama takes place under the one comprehensive unity of space.

When we say that the totality of the soul becomes will,

reason, imagination, conscience, intuition and so forth, we do not mean that by becoming any one of these single things it is prevented from becoming others. We are confronted here by a phenomenon of organic life which, however inexplicable, is of frequent occurrence in human experience. The ecclesiastical dogma of the Trinity is no fantastic invention of this or the other theologian. It is an inevitable definition of a certain body of human experience to which it affords a plausible explanation.

What the philosophy of the complex vision attempts to do is to analyse into its component parts that confused mass of contradictory impressions to which the soul awakens as soon as it becomes conscious of itself at all. The older philosophers begin their adventurous journey by the discovery and proclamation of some particular clue, or catchword, or general principle, out of the rational necessity of whose content they seek to evoke that living and breathing universe which impinges upon us all. Modern philosophy tends to reject these absolute "clues," these simplifying "secrets" of the system of things; but in rejecting these it either substitutes its own hypothetical generalizations, such as "spirit," "life-force," or "cosmic energy," or it contents itself with noting, as William James does, the more objective grouping of states of consciousness, as they weave their pattern on the face of the swirling waters, without regard to any "substantial soul" whose background of organic life gives these "states" their concrete unity.

The philosophy of the complex vision differs from the older philosophies in that it frankly and confessedly starts with that general situation which is also its goal. Its movement is therefore a perpetual setting-forth and a perpetual return; a setting forth towards a newly created vision of the world, and a return to that ideal of such a vision which has been implicit from the beginning. And this general situation from which it starts and to which it returns is

nothing less than the huge spectacle of the visible universe confronting the individual soul and implying the kindred existence of innumerable other souls. The fact that what the complex vision reveals is the primary importance of personality does not detract in the least degree from the unfathomable mysteriousness of the objective universe. And it does not detract from this because the unfathomableness of the universe is not a rational deduction drawn from the logical idea of what an objective universe would be like if it existed, but is a direct human experience verified at every movement of the soul. The universe revealed to us by the complex vision is a universe compounded of the concentrated visions of all the souls that compose it, a universe which in its eternal beauty and hideousness has received the "imprimatur of the immortal Gods."

The fact that such a universe is in part a creation of the mind, and in part a discovery made by the mind when it flings itself upon the unknown, does not lessen or diminish the strangeness or unfathomableness of life. The fact that the ultimate reality of such a universe is to be found in the psycho-material substratum—where mind and matter become one—of the individual soul, does not lessen or diminish the magical beauty or cruel terribleness of life.

What we name by the name of "matter" is not less a permanent human experience, because apart from the creative energy of some personal soul we are not able to conceive of its existence.

The philosophy of the complex vision reduces everything that exists to an eternal action and re-action between the individual soul and the objective mystery. This action and reaction is itself reproduced in the eternal duality, or ebb and flow, which constitutes the living soul itself. And because the psycho-material substance of the soul must be considered as identical, on its psychic side, with the "spiritual substance" of the universe "medium" through which

all souls come into contact with one another, and identical on its material side with the objective mystery which is expressed in all bodies, it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that the individual personality is surrounded by an elemental and universal "something" similar to itself, dominated as itself is dominated by the omnipresent circle of Space.

This universal "something" must be regarded, in spite of its double nature, as one and the same, since it is dominated by one and the same space. The fact that the material aspect of this psycho-material element is constantly plastic to the creative energy of the soul does not reduce it to the level of an "illusion." The mind recreates everything it touches; but the mind cannot work in a vacuum. There must be something for the mind to "touch." What the soul touches, therefore, as soon as it becomes conscious of itself is, in the first place, the "material element" of its own inmost nature; in the second place the "material element" which makes it possible for all bodies to come in contact with one another; and in the third place the "material element" which is the original potentiality of all universes and which has been named "the objective mystery."

To call this universal material element, thus manifested in a three-fold form, an illusion of the human mind is to destroy the integrity of language. Nothing can justly be called an illusion which is a permanent and universal human experience. The name we select for this experience is of no importance. We can name it *matter*, or we can name it *energy*, or *movement*, or *force*. The experience remains the same, by whatever name we indicate it to one another.

The philosophy of the complex vision opposes itself to all materialistic systems by its recognition of personality as the ultimate basis of life; and it opposes itself to all ideal-

istic systems by its recognition of an irreducible "material element" which is the object of all thought but which is also, in the substratum of the soul-monad, fused and blended with thought itself.

We now arrive at the conclusion of our philosophical journey; and we find it to be the identical point or situation from which we originally started. Once and for all we are compelled to ask ourselves the question, whether, since personality is the ultimate secret of life and since all individual personalities, whether human, sub-human, or super-human, are confronted by one "material element" dominated by one universal material space, it is not probable that this "material element" should itself be, as it were, the "outward body" of one "elemental soul"? Such an elemental soul would have no connexion with the "Absolute Being" of the great metaphysical systems. For in those systems the Absolute Being is essentially impersonal, and can in no sense be regarded as having anything corresponding to a body.

But this hypothetical soul of the ethereal element would be just as definitely expressed in a bodily form as are the personalities of men, beasts, plants and stars. It is impossible to avoid, now we are at the end of our philosophic journey, one swift glance backward over the travelled road; and it is impossible to avoid asking ourselves the question whether this universal material element which confronts every individual soul and surrounds every individual body may not itself be the body of an universal living personality? Is such a question, so presented to us for the last time, as we look back over our long journey, a kind of faint and despairing gesture made by the phantom of "the idea of God," or is it the obscure stirring of such an idea, from beneath the weight of all our argument, as it refuses to remain buried? It seems to me much more than this.



The complex vision seems to indicate in this matter that we have a right to make the hypothetical outlines of this thing as clear and emphatic as we can; as clear and emphatic, and also, by a rigid method of limitation, as little overstressed and as little overpowering as we can.

The question that presses upon us, therefore, as we glance backward over our travelled road, is whether or not, by the logic of our doctrine of personality, we are bound to predicate some sort of "elemental soul" as the indwelling personal monad belonging to the universal material element even as any other soul belongs to its body.

Does it not, we might ask, seem unthinkable that any portion of this universal element should remain suspended in a vacuum without the indwelling presence of a definite personality of which it is the expression? Are we not led to the conclusion that the whole mass and volume of this material element, namely the material element in every living soul, the material element which binds all bodies together, and the material element which composes the objective mystery, must make up in its total weight and pressure the *body*, so to speak, of some sort of universal elemental soul?

And because no personality, whether universal or individual, can be regarded as absolute, since perpetual creation is the essence of life, must it not follow that this elemental personality must itself eternally confront and be confronted by an unfathomable depth of objective mystery which it perpetually invades with its creative energy but which it can never exhaust, or touch the limit of? The body of this being would be in fact its own "objective mystery," while our "objective mystery" would be recognized as disappearing in the same reality. Does this hypothesis reduce the tragedy of life to a negligible quantity, or afford a basis upon which any easy optimism could be reared? It does not appear so. Wherever personality existed, there the

ultimate duality would inevitably reign. And just as with "the invisible companions" what is evil and malicious in us attracts towards us what is evil and malicious in them, so with the elemental personality, whatever were evil and malicious in us would attract towards us whatever were evil and malicious in it. The elemental personality would not necessarily be better, or nobler, or wiser than we are. There would be no particular reason why we should worship it, or give it praise. For if it really existed it could no more help being what it is than we can help being what we are, or the immortal gods can help being what they are.

That such an elemental personality would have to be regarded as a kind of demi-god can hardly be denied; but there would be no reason for asserting that our highest moments of inspiration were due to its love for us. As with the rest of the "immortals" it would be sometimes possessed by love and sometimes possessed by malice, and we should have not the least authority for saying that our supreme moments of insight were due to its inspiration. Sometimes they would be so. On the other hand sometimes our most baffled, clouded, inert, moribund, and wretched moments would be due to its influence. Such an elemental personality would have no advantage over any other personality, except in the fact of being elemental; and this would give it no absolute advantage, since its universality would be eternally challenged by the unfathomable element in its own being. The "body" of such an elemental personality would have to be regarded as the actual objective mystery which confronts both men and gods. It would have to be regarded as possessing a complex vision even as every other personality possesses it; and its soul-monad would have to be as concrete, actual, and real, as every other soul monad. An ethereal Being of this kind, whose body were composed of the whole mass of the material element which binds all bodies together, would have no closer con-

nexion with the soul of man than any other invisible companion. The soul of man could be drawn to it in love or could be repelled from it by malice, just as it can be drawn to any other living thing or repelled by any other living thing.

That the human race should have sometimes made the attempt to associate such an universal personality with the ideal figure of Christ is natural enough. But such an association wins no sanction or authority from the revelation of the complex vision. In one sense the figure of Christ, as the life of Jesus reveals it, is a pure symbol. In another sense, as we become aware of his love in the depths of our own soul, he is the most real and actual of all living beings. But neither as a symbol of the immortal vision, nor as himself an immortal God, have we any right to regard Christ as identical with this elemental personality. Christ is far more important to us and precious to us than such a being could possibly be.

And just as this hypothetical personality, whose body is the material element which binds all bodies together, must not be confused with the figure of Christ, so also it is not to be confused with either of those primordial projections of pure reason, working in isolation, which we have noted as the "synthetic unity of apperception" and the "universal self." The elemental personality, if it existed, would be something quite different from the universal self of the logical reason. For the universal self of the logical reason includes and transcends all the other selves, whereas the elemental personality which has the whole weight of the world's material element as its body could not transcend, or in any way "subsume" the least of individual things except in so far as the material element which is its body would surround all living things and bring them into contact with one another.

The elemental personality could in no sense be called an

over-soul, because, so far from being an universal self made up of particular individual selves, it would be a completely detached soul, only related to other souls in the sense that all other souls come into contact with one another through the medium of its spiritual substance.

According to the revelation of the complex vision the question of the existence or non-existence of an elemental soul of this kind has no relation to the problem of human conduct. For the material element in the individual soul is fused in individual consciousness; and therefore the spiritual medium which surrounds the individual soul cannot impinge upon or penetrate the soul which it surrounds. And this conclusion is borne witness to in all manner of common human experience. For although we all feel dimly aware of vast gulfs of spiritual evil and vast gulfs of spiritual beauty in the world about us, this knowledge only becomes definite and concrete when we think of such gifts as being entirely made up of personal moods, the moods of mortal men, of immortal gods, and the moods, it may be, of this elemental personality.

But the problem of conduct is not the problem of getting into harmony with any particular individual soul. It is the problem of getting into harmony with the creative vision in our own soul, which when attained turns out to be identical with the creative vision of every other soul in the universe. The conception of the elemental personality does not depend, as does the existence of the immortals, upon our consciousness of something objective and eternal in our primordial ideas. It depends upon our suspicion that no extended mass of what we call matter, however attenuated and ethereal, can exist suspended in soulless space.

Some attenuated form of matter our universe demands, as the universal medium by means of which all separate bodies come into touch with each other; but it is hard to imagine an universal medium hung, as it were, in an enor-

mous vacuum. Such a medium would seem to demand, as a reason for its existence, some living centre of energy such as that which a personal soul can alone supply. It is in this way we arrive at the hypothetical conception of the elemental soul.

And our hypothesis is borne out by one very curious human experience. I mean the experience which certain natures have of a demonic or magnetic force in life which can be drawn upon either for good or for evil, and which seems in some strange sense to be diffused round us in the universal air. Goethe frequently refers to this demonic element; and others, besides Goethe, have had experience of it. If our hypothetical, elemental personality is to be regarded as a sort of demi-god, lower than the immortals and perhaps lower than man, we may associate it with those vague intimations of a sub-human life around us which seems in some weird sense distinct from the life of any particular thing we know.

The elemental personality, in this case, would be the cause of those various "psychic manifestations" which have sometimes been fantastically accounted for as the work of so-called "elementals."

But the supreme moments of human consciousness, when the apex-thought of the complex vision is shooting its arrows of flame into the darkness, are but slightly concerned with the demonic sub-human life of hypothetical elemental personalities. They are concerned with the large, deep, magical spectacle of the great cosmic drama as it unrolls itself in infinite perspective. They are concerned with the unfathomable struggle, more terrible, more beautiful, more real, than anything else in life, between the resistant power of malice and the creative power of love. Nor do they see, these moments, the end of this long drama. The soul creates and is baffled in its creations. The soul loves and is baffled in its loving. Good and evil grow strangely mingled

as they wrestle in the bottomless abyss. And ever, above us and beneath us, the same immense space spreads out its encircling arms. And ever, out of the invisible, the beckoning of immortal beauty leads us forward. Pain turns into pleasure; and pleasure turns into pain. Misery, deep as the world, troubles the roots of our being. Happiness, deep as the world, floods us with a flood like the waves of the ocean. All our philosophy is like the holding up of a little candle against a great wind. Soon, soon the candle is blown out: and the immense Perhaps rolls its waters above our heads.

The aboriginal malice against which the Gods struggle is never overcome. But who can resist asking the question — supposing that drama once ended, that eternal duality once reconciled, would annihilation be the last word or would something else, something undreamed of, something unguessed at, something “impossible,” irrational, contrary to every philosophy that has ever sprung from the human brain, take the place of what we call life and substitute some new organ of research for the vision which we have called complex?

Who can say? The world is still young and the immortal Gods are still young; and our business at present is with life rather than beyond-life. Confused and difficult are the ways of our mortality; and after much philosophizing we seem to be only more conscious than ever that the secret of the world is in something else than wisdom.

The secret of the world is not in something that one can hold in one's hand, or about which one can say “Lo, here!” or “Lo, there!” The secret of the world is in the whole spectacle of the world, seen under the emotion of one single moment. But the memory of such a moment may be diffused over all the chances and accidents of our life and may be restored to us in a thousand faint and shadowy intimations. It may be restored to us in broken glimpses, in little

stirrings and ripples on the face of the water, in rumours and whispers among the margin-reeds, in sighings of the wind across the sea-bank. It may be restored to us in sudden flickerings of unearthly light thrown upon common and familiar things. It may be restored to us when the shadow of death falls upon the path we have to follow. It may be restored to us when the common ritual and the ordinary usages of life gather to themselves a sudden dignity from the presence of great joy or of tragic grief. For the stream of life flows deeper than any among us realize or know; deeper, and with more tragic import; deeper, and with more secret hope. We are all born, even the most lucky among us, under a disastrous eclipse. We all contain something of that perilous ingredient which belongs to the unplumbed depths. Deep calls unto deep within us; and in the circle of our mortal personality an immortal drama unrolls itself. Waves of unredeemed chaos roll upward from the abysses of our souls, and like a brackish tide contend with the water-springs of life.

Over the landscape of our vision lies a shadow, a rarely lifted shadow, the shadow of our own malice. But the human race has not been destined to carry on the unending struggle alone. Its subjective human vision has touched in the darkness a subjective super-human vision; and the symbol of the encounter of these two is the lonely figure of Christ.

Looking backward, as we thus reach our conclusion, we see how such a conclusion was implicit all the while in the first movement with which we started. For since the truth we seek is not a thing we just put out our hand and take, but is a mood, an attitude, a gesture of our whole being, it follows that whenever, and by whatever means, we reach it, this "truth" will always be the same, and will not be affected, when once it is reached, by the slowness or the speed of the method with which we approach it. Nor will it be

changed or transformed by the vision that finally grasps it, as it would necessarily be if it were an objective fact which we could each of us take into our hands. Such an objective fact or series of facts would, of necessity, "look differently" to every individual vision that seized upon it. But by making our truth, down to the very depths, a gesture, an attitude, a mood, we have already anticipated and discounted that fatal relativity which inserts itself like a wedge of distorting vapour, between any objective fact and any subjective mind.

"Truth" cannot get blurred and distorted by the subjective mind when truth is regarded as that subjective mind's own creation. According to the conclusion we have reached, every subjective mind in the universe, when it is rhythmically energizing, attains the same truth. For when subjectivity is carried to the furthest possible limit of rhythm and harmony, it transforms itself, of necessity, into objectivity. The subjective vision of all mortal minds, thus rendered objective by the intensity of the creative energy, is nothing less than the eternal vision. For as soon as the rhythmic harmony of the creative act has thus projected such a truth, such a truth receives the "imprimatur of the Gods" and turns out to be the truth which was implicit in us from the beginning.

Thus, the reality which we apprehend is found to be identical with the pursuit of the ideal which we seek; for what we name beauty and truth and goodness are of the essence of the mystery of life, and it is of *their* essence that they should ever advance and grow.

The eternal vision includes in its own inmost rhythm the idea and spectacle of inexhaustible growth; for, although it beholds all things "under the form of eternity," its own nature is the nature of a creative gesture, of a supreme "work of art," whereby it approximates to the ideal even in the midst of the real. The "form of eternity" under



which it visualizes the world is not a dead or static eternity but an eternity of living growth. The peace and quiet which it attains is not the peace and quiet of the equilibrium which means "nothingness" but the peace and quiet of the equilibrium which means the rhythmic movement of life. The truth which it creates is a truth which lends itself to infinite development upon lines already laid down from the beginning. The beauty which it creates is a beauty which lends itself to infinite development upon lines laid down from the beginning.

And this truth, this beauty, this goodness, are all of them nothing less than the projection of the soul itself — of all the souls which constitute the system of things — in the mysterious outflowing of the ultimate duality. And when we make use of the expression "from the beginning" we are using a mere metaphorical sign-post. There is no beginning of the system of things and there is no end. "From the beginning" means nothing except "from eternity"; and in the immortal figure of Christ the beginning and the end are one.

In my analysis of the ultimate duality which is the secret of the soul I have said little about sex. The modern tendency is to over-emphasize the importance of this thing and to seek its influence in regions it can never enter. Many attributes of the soul are sexless; and since only one attribute of the soul, namely sensation, is entirely devoted to the body and unable to function except through the body, it is ridiculous and unphilosophical to make sex the profoundest aspect of truth which we know. The tendency to lay stress upon sex, at the expense of all sexless aspects of the soul, is a tendency which springs directly from the inert malice of the abyss. What the instinct of sex secretly desires is that the very fountains of life should be invaded by sex and penetrated by sex. But the fountains of life can never be invaded by sex; because the fountains of life

sink into that eternal vision which transcends all sex and reduces sex to its proper place as one single element in the rhythm of the universe.

It is only by associating itself with love and malice; it is only by getting itself transformed into love and malice that the sexual instinct is able to lift itself up, or to sink itself down, into the subtler levels of the soul's vision. The secret of life lies far deeper than the obvious bodily phenomena of sex. The fountains from which life springs *may flow through that channel* but they flow from a depth far below these physical or magnetic agitations. And it is only the abysmal cunning of the inert malice, which opposes itself to creation that tempts philosophers and artists to lay such a disproportionate stress upon this thing. The great artists are always known by their power to transcend sex and to reduce sex to its relative insignificance. In the greatest of all sculpture, in the greatest of all music, in the greatest of all poetry, the difference between the sexes disappears.

The inert malice delights to emphasize this thing, because its normal functioning implies the most desperate exertion of the possessive instinct known to humanity. The sexual instinct unless transfigured by love, tends towards death; because the sexual instinct desires to petrify into everlasting immobility what the creative instinct would change and transform. What the sexual instinct secretly desires is the eternal death of the object of its passion. It would strike its victim if it could into everlasting immobility so that it could satiate its lust of possession upon it without limit and without end. Any object of sexual desire, untransformed by love, is, for the purposes of such desire, already turned into a living corpse.

But although, according to the method we have been following, the difference between men and women is but of small account in the real life of the soul, it remains that hu-

manity has absurdly and outrageously neglected the especial vision of the woman, as, in her bodily senses and her magnetic instincts, she differs from man. We may well hope that with the economic independence of women, which is so great and desirable a revolution in our age, individual women of genius will arise, able to present, in philosophy and art, the peculiar and especial reaction to the universe which women possess as women. We may well desire such a consummation in view of the fact that all except the very greatest of men have permitted their vision of the world to be perverted and distorted by their sex-instinct.

Could women of genius arise in sufficient numbers to counteract this tendency, such sex-obsessed masculine artists would be shamed into recognizing the narrowness of their perverted outlook. As it is, what normal women of talent do is simply to copy and imitate, in a diluted form, the sex-distortions of man's narrower vision. Sex-obsessed male artists have seduced the natural intelligence of the most talented women to their own narrow and limited view of life.

But it still remains that what the true artists of the world for ever seek—whether they be male or female—is not the partial and distorted vision of man *as a man*, or of woman *as a woman*, but the rhythmic and harmonious vision of the human soul as it allies itself with the vision of the immortals. Women in private life, and in private conversation, disentangle themselves from the prejudices of men, but, as soon as they touch philosophy and art, they tend to deny their natural instincts and imitate the sex-obsessed instincts of man. But this tendency is already beginning to collapse under the freer atmosphere of economic independence; and in the future we may expect such a fierce conflict between the sex-vision of woman and the sex-vision of man, that the human soul will revolt against both such partialities and seek the “ampler ether and diviner air” of

a vision that has altogether transcended the difference of sex.

As we look back over the travelled road of our attempt to articulate the ultimate secret, there arises one last stupendous question, not to meet which would be to shirk the heaviest weight of the problem. We have reached the conclusion that the secret of Nature is to be found in personality. We have reached the further conclusion that personality demands, for the integrity of its inmost self, an actual "soul-monad." We are faced with a "universe," then, made up entirely of living souls, manifested in so-called animate, or so-called inanimate bodies. Everything that our individual mind apprehends is therefore the body of a soul, or a portion of the body of a soul, or the presence of a soul that needs no incarnation. The soul itself is composed of a mysterious substance wherein what we call mind and what we call matter are fused and merged. What I have named throughout this book by the name of the *objective mystery* is therefore, when we come to realize the uttermost implications of our method, nothing more than the appearance of all the bodies of all the souls in the world *before* the creative act of our own particular soul has visualized such a spectacle. We can never see the objective mystery *as it is*, because directly we have seen it, that is to say, the appearance of all the adjacent bodies of all the souls within our reach, it ceases to be the objective mystery and becomes the universe we know.

The objective mystery is therefore no real thing at all, but only the potentiality of all real things, before the "real thing" which is our individual soul comes upon the scene to create the universe. It is only the potentiality of the "universe" which we have thus named, only the idea of the general spectacle of such an universe, *before* any universe has actually appeared.

And since the final conclusion of our attempt at articula-

tion should rigorously eliminate from our picture everything that is relatively unreal, in favour of what is relatively real, it becomes necessary, now at the end, to eliminate from our vision of reality any substantial basis for this, "potentiality of all universes," and to see how our actual universe appears when this thing has been withdrawn as nothing but an unreal thing. The substantial basis for what we actually see becomes therefore no mere potential universe, or objective mystery, but something much more definite than either of these. The spectacle of Nature, as we behold it, becomes nothing else than the spectacle of all the living bodies that compose the universe, each one of them with its corresponding invisible soul-monad.

The movement of thought to which I have throughout this book given the name of "the struggle with the objective mystery" remains the same. In these cases, *names* are of small account. But since it is a movement of thought which itself culminates in the elimination of the "object-mystery," it becomes necessary to "think through" the stage of thought which this term covered, and articulate the actual cause of this movement of the mind.

The cause of the spectacle of the universe, as it presents itself to us in its manifold variety, is the presence of innumerable visible bodies which are themselves the manifestation of innumerable invisible souls. Everything that we see and touch and taste and smell and hear is a portion of some material body, which is the expression of some spiritual soul.

The universe is an immense congeries of bodies, moved and sustained by an immense congeries of souls. But it remains that these souls, inhabiting these bodies, are linked together by some mysterious medium which makes it possible for them to communicate with one another. What is this mysterious medium? What we have already indicated,

here and there in this book, leads us at this point to our natural conclusion. Such a medium may well be nothing less than that elemental soul, with the universal ether as its bodily expression, the existence of which we have already suggested as a more than probable hypothesis. If the omnipresent body of this elemental soul is the material atmosphere or medium which unites all material bodies, surely we are justified in assuming that the invisible primordial medium which binds all souls together, which hypothetically binds them together even *before* they have, by the interaction of their different visions, created the universe, is this universal "soul of the elements." Only a spiritual substance is able to unite spiritual substances. And only a material substance is able to unite material substances. Thus we are justified in assuming that while the medium which unites all bodies is the universal body of the elemental soul, the medium which unites all souls is the omnipresent soul-monad of this elemental being. It must however be remembered that this uniting does not imply any sort of spiritual *including* or subsuming of the souls thus united. They communicate with one another by means of this medium; but the integrity of the medium which unites them does not impinge at any point upon their integrity.

Thus, at the end of our journey, we are able, by this final process of drastic elimination, to reduce the world in which we live to a congeries of living souls. Some of these souls possess what we name animate bodies, others possess what we name inanimate bodies. For us, these words, animate and inanimate, convey but slight difference in meaning. Between a stone, which is part of the body of the earth, and a leaf which is part of the body of a plant, and a lock of hair which is part of the body of a man, there may be certain unimportant chemical differences, justifying us in using the terms animate and inanimate. But the essential

fact remains that all we see and taste and touch and smell and hear, all, in fact, that makes up the objective universe which surrounds us, is a portion of some sort of living body, corresponding to some sort of living soul.

Our individual soul-monad, then, able to communicate with other soul-monads, whether mortal or immortal, through the medium of omnipresent soul-monads of the universal ether finds itself dominated, as all the rest are dominated, by one inescapable circle of unfathomable space. Under the curve of this space we all of us live, and under the curve of this space those that are mortal among us, die. When we die, if it be our destiny not to survive death, our souls vanish into nothingness; and our bodies become a portion of the body of the earth. But if we have entered into the eternal vision we have lost all fear of death; for we have come to see that the thing which is most precious to us, the fact that love remains undying in the heart of the universe, does not vanish with our vanishing. Once having attained, by means of the creative vision of humanity and by means of the grace of the immortals, even a faint glimpse into this mystery, we are no longer inclined to lay the credit of our philosophizing upon the creative spirit in our individual soul. The apex-thought of the complex vision has given us our illuminated moments. But the eternal vision to which those moments led us has filled us with an immense humility.

And in the last resort, when we turn round upon the amazing spectacle of life it is of the free gift of the gods, or of the magical love hidden in the mystery of nature, that we are led to think, rather than of any creative activity in ourselves. The word "creative" like the word "objective mystery," has served our purpose well in the preceding pages. But now, as we seek to simplify our conclusion to the uttermost, it becomes necessary to reject much of the manifold connotation which hangs about this word; al-

though in this case also, the stage of thought which it covers is a real movement of the mind.

But the creative activity in the apex-thought of our complex vision is, after all, only a means, a method, a gesture, which puts us into possession of the eternal vision. When once the eternal vision has been ours, the memory of it does not associate itself with any energy of our own. The memory of these eternal moments associates itself with a mood in which the creative energy rests upon its own equipoise, upon its own rhythm; a mood in which the spectacle of the universe, the magic of Nature, the love in all living souls, the contact of mortality with immortality, become things which blend themselves together; a mood in which what is most self-assertive in our personality seems to lose itself in what is least self-assertive, and yet in thus losing itself is not rendered utterly void.

For all action, even the ultimate act of faith, must issue in contemplation; and this is the law of life, that what we contemplate, *that* we become. He who contemplates malice becomes malicious. He who contemplates hideousness becomes hideous. He who contemplates unreality becomes unreal.

If the universe is nothing but a congeries of souls and bodies, united by the soul and the body which fill universal space, then it follows that "the art of philosophy" consists in the attempt to attain the sort of "contemplation" which can by the power of its love enter into the joy and the suffering of all these living things.

Thus in reaching a conclusion which tallies with our rarest moments of super-normal insight we discover that we have reached a conclusion which tallies with our moments of profoundest self-abasement. In these recurrent moods of humiliation it seems ridiculous to speak of the creative or the destructive energy of the mind. What presents itself to us in such moods is a world of forms and shapes



that we can neither modify nor obliterate. All we can do is to reflect their impact upon us and to note the pleasure of it or the pain. But when even in the depths of our weakness we come to recognize that these forms and shapes are, all of them, the bodily expressions of souls resembling our own, the nostalgia of the great darkness is perceptibly lifted and a strange hope is born, full of a significance which cannot be put into words. The world-stuff, or the objective mystery, out of which the eternal vision has been created is now seen to be the very flesh and blood of a vast company of living organisms; and it has become impossible to contemplate anything in the world without the emotion of malice or the emotion of love. If ever the universe, as we know it now, is dissolved into nothingness, such an end of things will be brought about either by the complete victory of malice or by the complete victory of love.

THE END







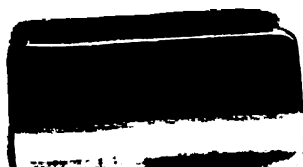




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