Relationship and Solitude

Peter Munz

A Study of the Relationship between Ethics, Metaphysics and Mythology

THIS BOOK IS A STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ETHICS, METAPHYSICS AND MYTHOLOGY. It starts from the old problem of whether ethical values can be anything but subjective and goes on to show first that all ethics are grounded in metaphysics and then that metaphysical ideas are themselves derived from mythology, of which they provide an abstract formulation.

So far from discrediting metaphysics, this derivation, Professor Munz argues, shows both its importance and its true place in human experience. The 'positive' view of the world presented, for example, by the natural sciences, deliberately aims to exclude all subjective feelings and states of mind. In order to communicate such states we have to make use of a system of symbolism in which mythology holds a place of central importance. It is therefore an essential part of our knowledge of reality.

In the course of the argument the author attempts a classification of metaphysical ideas in terms of mythological themes and discusses a wealth of historical material to illustrate the actual transition from mythology to metaphysics in ancient Greece, in India and in Christian thought. He also provides a most interesting description of the way in which mythological pictures are made up from components in the positive picture and of the way in which they become richer and more highly specified as they become further removed from it.

He concludes that ethical values can neither be dismissed as a matter of subjective preference nor taken to be true *a priori*. Rather they are derived, by way of metaphysics and mythology, from certain states of mind which are real, common and (given the proper symbolism) communicable.

PRICE IN U.K.

30s net

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SOLITUDE

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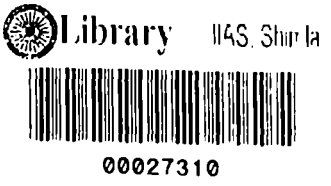
1964
EYRE & SPOTTISWOODE
LONDON

First published in 1964

Printed in Great Britain for
Eyre & Spottiswoode (Publishers) Ltd
by the Camelot Press, London and Southampton



To Anne

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PREFACE

> I am not myself satisfied with what I have read and said on the philosophical basis of ethics. I cannot see how to refute the arguments for the subjectivity of ethical values, but I find myself incapable of believing that all that is wrong with wanton cruelty is that I don't like it. . . . I should deeply rejoice, if I could find or be shown a way to resolve (this perplexity). . . .
>
> B. Russell.

> If the moral ought is objectively valid, this means nothing less than that a 'moral order' is somehow ingredient in the very nature of things. To develop the 'somehow' into a definite and intelligible concept is, of course, a task of the most formidable character, which only metaphysics is competent to discharge – even if it be competent. But in order to know that, as distinct from how, a moral order is rooted in the nature of reality, there is no need to wait for a metaphysical theory. If we are prepared to grant the objective validity of the moral ought, the fact of an objective moral order follows as a direct implication. We have need of a metaphysical theory only to know (if we can know) the manner in which 'the nature of things' incorporates that moral order.
>
> C. A. Campbell

In writing this book I have been guided by two considerations which, though distinct, turned out to support one another. The first consideration is that if one wants to make things clear, one must show how they are connected with one another. Clarity results from explanation; and explanation is achieved when one shows how things hang together – when one can explain one in terms of another. The degree of clarity that can be reached is exactly proportional to the number of things that can be explained by one hypothesis. I hope to have been able to explain a large variety of phenomena by showing how

they are connected with one another. My central theory concerns the subjective nature of states of consciousness. This theory is framed in such a way that it can be used to explain the nature of metaphysical thought, its bearing on ethical ideas, the genesis of mythology and its relation to a purely scientific world picture. The clarity thus achieved depends on the connection the central theory succeeds in establishing between these things.

The second consideration is that ethical values, to be effective, must have an objective validity. It is true that by itself ethical subjectivism, in any of its many forms, is difficult, perhaps impossible, to refute. But if one concerns oneself not with an attempt at such refutation but with a dispassionate contemplation of the nature of things, one might be fortunate enough to discover that at least a fragmentary moral order is somehow inherent in the nature of things. For this reason the first consideration is the natural ally of the second consideration. For the way in which one can discover whether a moral order is inherent in the nature of things is to connect as many things as possible with one another and to examine them all from the point of view from which they are linked together. If one seeks clarity one will trace connections; and if one finds connections, one might eventually find the connection between a picture of the world and ethical values. That is to say, one might discover an objective validity of ethical values.

This book has benefited more than I can hope to express in words by the kindly and constructive criticisms of Professor A. C. Campbell, Professor I. A. Ramsey and Miss Iris Murdoch. It also owes an indirect debt to my colleagues in the Department of History of the University of Wellington because of their friendly if bemused tolerance of pursuits which are, for a historian, so unorthodox. I also wish to acknowledge a great debt to my friend J. L. Mehta, of the University of Banaras, for a remark made many years ago and so random that he now claims he cannot even remember it. For it planted in my mind the seed which led to my theory about the connection between Relationship and Solitude and thus came to be of vital assistance in my understanding of the two basic types of mythology. Finally I wish to thank the directors of Eyre and Spottiswoode

for their personal interest, and the Publications Fund of the University of Wellington, without whose generosity the publication of this book might not have been possible; and Robert Calvert, for his help with the proofs.

P. M.

Wellington,
New Zealand.
February, 1963

THE PROBLEM OF ETHICS

This book is a book about ethics. By ethics I understand the science of good and evil, the knowledge of what we ought and what we ought not to do. To know what is good is to know what one ought to do, and the question 'why ought one to do what is good?' makes no sense, because 'the good' is precisely what one ought to do and therefore this question amounts to no more than to asking 'why one ought to do what one ought to do'. Ethics is, therefore, not concerned with the question why one ought to do the good; but merely with the question of how one can know what is good.

If the science of ethics manages to describe something as good, it designates it as something that ought to be done. But it is not part of the science of ethics to compel people to do what they ought to do, any more than it is part of physics to stop people, on account of our knowledge of the law of gravity, from jumping off the Eiffel Tower. If a person knows what is good but refuses to do it, if he knows what he ought to do but decides not to do it, we can have no quarrel with him – at least not from an ethical point of view. We cannot stop people from digging their own graves, and it is perhaps sad that one must add to this laconic reflection the corollary that we cannot even stop people from digging other people's graves.

But to admit this is not the same as admitting that we can have no quarrel with the man who says that he will do exactly as he likes because one action is no better and no worse than another action; or that to say it is, is no more than the expression of a subjective feeling or preference; that goodness is not a matter of knowledge and that therefore his judgement of what he ought to do is no better than anybody else's judgement to the contrary. A man who argues like that is very different from the first man who acknowledges that he knows what is

good and what he ought to do, but for some reason or other refuses or is unable to do it. Our second man does not accept the proposition that goodness is a matter of knowledge. He does not only believe like the first man that one is free to choose whether one does what one ought to do or not; but also believes that one is free to choose as the good anything one likes or anything which custom or superior force or self-interest, or anything at all, happens to prescribe. The second man, in short, denies that ethical judgements have any cognitive value. He holds the view that there can be no discussion about ultimate ethical principles and that ethical judgements are therefore a plain expression of stark irrationality.

One cannot but admit the power of the first man to refuse to do what he knows to be right. He can have no right to such a refusal – for it would be a self-contradiction to concede the right to do what one knows not to be right; but we all know that while lacking the right to do what we know to be wrong, we all have the physical ability to choose what we know not to be right. One may, however, challenge the reasonableness of the second man to choose as right anything that he happens to choose and to deny that ethical judgements have a cognitive value. But such a challenge places the burden of showing that ethical judgements have a cognitive value on us. If we challenge him, we must try to show that a judgement that a certain action is good is a factual judgement which admits only of the same kind of doubt as all other factual judgements. We must try to show whence we derive our knowledge of what is good.

For many centuries philosophers have tried to settle the question whether an action or a habit is good, by an observation of nature. 'Your obligation to obey this law', said Bishop Butler, 'is its being the law of your nature' (Sermon iii). In this way the question whether humility, magnanimity, egotism, self-denial, patriotism, etc., were good, was settled by an appeal to certain facts, i.e. to the facts of human nature. Ethical judgements that certain actions were good had a definite cognitive value. Certain actions were 'becoming' to human nature, and others were 'unfitting' and an observation of human nature would always reveal the appropriateness of any action.

A brief survey of the whole field of this kind of ethical

speculation, however, will reveal that people were by no means always agreed as to what was and what was not becoming. Thus Aristotle set great store on magnanimity, while later Christian philosophers thought that humility was much more becoming. Some pagan philosophers attributed great value to unconditional patriotism, while later Christian philosophers held that true humanism demands man's worship of God and the performance of those actions that are likely to result in the salvation of the human soul. But these differences of opinion as to the nature of what is good should not be attributed to the fact that the method of ethics was faulty and that ethical judgements are matters of opinion and have no cognitive value. It is a mistake to infer from such differences of opinion about ethical values that there are no ethical values, and that ethical judgements are simply matters of arbitrary preferences, at best controlled by fortuitous social or psychological circumstances. All one may infer from these differences of opinion is that the people who expressed them differed in their estimate of what was, and what was not, human nature. If one puts it in this way, the problem raised by these differences of opinion is reduced to a problem of knowledge, i.e. to the problem of how we study human nature and how we can observe it.

It is actually not very difficult to discover the real reasons for such differences in the knowledge of what is good. If our knowledge of human nature is made the basis of our knowledge of what is good, it must be conceded that our knowledge of what is good must vary with the various estimates of what human nature is. If one sees human nature as more completely fulfilled in membership of a Christian church than in membership of a Greek city-state, one must of necessity form a different opinion as to what is 'becoming' to human nature. But how one sees human nature, and what estimate one forms of where it is most completely itself, depends of necessity upon the methods one employs for its study. The results of our observation will depend on the methods of observation we employ. If one's study of human nature is not controlled wholly by empirical methods, one will arrive at conclusions as to what is fitting that differ profoundly from the conclusions that are arrived at when one is given, in one's study of human nature, entirely to statistical surveys of measurable attributes of men.

This is, of course, not to say that all non-empirical or partly non-empirical methods of observation yield identical results, and that the only discrepancies in the estimates of human nature are due to the employment of empirical or non-empirical methods of study. On the contrary: the use of non-empirical methods of study has led to a quite bewildering variety of presumptions of what human nature is and of what is becoming to it.

For many centuries the study of human nature was carried out, in fact, by methods which we could not call altogether empirical. Many philosophers employed self-evident truths; others, necessary principles; and others were only too ready to use as part of the evidence revealed propositions – either explicitly or implicitly. Whatever they did, they never simply counted heads or measured qualities. The use of such unempirical methods resulted in the drawing of a picture – or should we perhaps say of a variety of pictures? – in which certain actions and habits stood out as 'becoming'. When such pictures of human nature were obtained, it was possible to make ethical judgements as a matter of knowledge and to recognize clearly their cognitive value.

But with the progress of the purely empirical methods of observation during the eighteenth century, a severe crisis was brought about. When the method of observing human nature and of describing it became completely empirical, it was found that it was no longer possible to infer as a matter of knowledge from the pictures thus obtained what was and what was not becoming. The picture of human nature obtained by nothing but empirical observation was discovered to be ethically quite neutral. To begin with, an empirical survey, especially when it was carried beyond the limited confines of the well-known old world to the Americas, to Africa and into the Pacific Ocean, showed a completely bewildering variety of 'human natures' and, from an ethical point of view, the observer lost his bearings. The first reaction was that expressed by the Marquis de Sade. He remarked with seeming justification that all the arguments against certain sexual practices, which were based upon an appeal to human nature, were fallacious. For if one travelled far enough one could discover that what was frowned upon in some societies, and what had thus gained the superficial

appearance of being incompatible with human nature, was in fact not frowned upon in other societies and must, therefore, be regarded as fully compatible with human nature. The Marquis de Sade refused to infer from this observation that ethics has no cognitive value, and that knowledge of what is good cannot be derived from an observation of human nature. He inferred, on the contrary, that a great many more things than had hitherto been believed to be good, were in fact good; and in the end he managed to persuade himself quite plausibly that almost anything was good. One may well question his wisdom; but one cannot deny that, short of giving up the habit of considering questions of ethics to be questions of knowledge of human nature, his argument had a certain cogency.

But before long it became customary to draw more ethically cautious inferences from the startling observation that human nature (provided one travelled far enough and refused to be hide-bound in one's observation by revealed or allegedly self-evident truths) was not as uniform as one had supposed. One began to resign oneself instead to the simple conclusion that human nature could not be made the basis for ethical arguments. It came to be believed that all judgements of what was good depended on local circumstances, on the conventions obtaining in a certain tribe or a certain society, and that it was in fact impossible to establish by an appeal to human nature a generally valid principle of what was good and what was bad. All societies and all periods of history, it came to be said, are 'equidistant from God' and our knowledge of ethics is entirely relative.

This insight led eventually to a purely negative conclusion. It made people think that ethical judgements had no cognitive value at all. But in the first instance it led to a more positive conclusion. It encouraged some people to convince themselves that since ethical knowledge could no longer be derived from a study of human nature, it must be obtained in a democratic manner. This positive conclusion was derived from a firm adherence to the belief that human nature must be the basis of ethical judgements. But if one employs only empirical methods in the study of human nature, then one need do no more than employ strictly empirical methods in the attempt to find out what is becoming to human nature. This gave rise to the belief

that questions of what is good can be decided by a mere counting of heads, by a purely quantitative assessment of what people in fact do and favour. The most sophisticated form of this kind of ethical knowledge is to be found in utilitarianism, i.e. in the belief that what ought to be done can be decided by a simple, or perhaps not so simple, calculation of what will promote the greatest happiness of the greatest number of people. At the same time, especially in the United States, this way of discovering what is good has also found a very unsophisticated expression in the form of popularity polls. For the sake of these polls, people put themselves out to do all those things and to behave in those ways that are likely to find the approval of the greatest number of their fellow men. In both utilitarianism and in the popularity poll, ethical knowledge is still derived from an observation of human nature. Ethical judgements, therefore, still retain their cognitive value, for knowledge of human nature will help one to decide what is good and what ought to be done. There is, however, an important difference. As long as human nature was studied with the help of some non-empirical criteria, it was possible to infer from it what was good and evil, what was and what was not becoming. But when a purely empirical observation revealed that human beings were in fact doing a very bewildering variety of things, one ceased to feel entitled to condemn all but one group as offending against human nature. One reached instead the conclusion that the good can no longer be known by observing a standard human nature, but that it can only be inferred from a majority vote, itself a purely empirical and scientifically unimpugnable procedure. The great question which this procedure raised, however, was whether anything thus labelled 'good' is really entitled to be so labelled.

We find, therefore, that the triumph of pure empiricism in the study of human nature led to two different results. There were firstly those people who adhered to certain traditional ethical beliefs. They found that these beliefs could obviously not be derived from a genuine observation of human nature, and that such genuinely empirical observation yielded nothing but ethical relativism, i.e. the belief that ethical judgements have no cognitive value. And secondly there were the people to whom a genuinely empirical observation of human nature

suggested that the ethical opinions of the past had little truth because they were derived from a faulty method of observing human nature. They were therefore prepared to overthrow all those ethical judgements that could not be justified by a genuinely empirical study of human nature and were thus led to the belief that the good could only be assessed (still always as a matter of knowledge) in terms of what people in fact wanted or approved of. In this way it turned out that the only possible argument against, e.g., torture was that most people did in fact not approve of it, and that, if it so happened that they approved of it, then, as a matter of ethical knowledge derived from the empirical observation of human nature, torture had to be accepted as good. In this reaction to the situation brought about by the introduction of genuinely empirical studies of human nature, good came to be defined ultimately in terms of what people want or approve of. And this, like the first negative reaction to the same situation, can only lead to ethical relativism. But this time it is ethical relativism with a vengeance. For in the first negative reaction it was at least granted that relativism results only if one insists that ethical judgements are to be derived from an observation of human nature. If one admits, however, that ethical judgements have *no* cognitive value, the door is still left open to a possibility of finding a different non-cognitive basis for them. One could, for instance, maintain certain ethical standards as the will of God. Considering, however, how notoriously difficult it is for people to agree what they hold to be the will of God, it is not surprising that this possibility has remained no more than a possibility. For if ethical judgements are not based on a knowledge of human nature, they can be no more than the expressions of whims, of preferences and odd circumstances, and remain therefore purely relative judgements about which one cannot profitably argue.

But in the second, positive reaction, relativism emerges in the guise of an appeal to human nature. The cognitive value of ethical judgements is saved, but the resulting definition of good in terms of what most people do or want done leads of necessity to a relativism which is all the more insidious because it appears to be grounded in knowledge of human nature.

The most militant aspect of this positive relativism in the

history of ethics is the development of functionalism in sociology and anthropology. Functionalism regards a society as a complete whole and sees every habit or belief as a function which is to be judged by its relation to other functions in that society. The only value-judgements that are thus possible are judgements about the adjustment of an individual to the group. Goodness has therefore no further meaning than integration or adjustment, and the goodness of any function can be assessed only in terms of its degree of integration with the other functions. In this way mental health, personal development, friendliness, aggressiveness, etc., are all subject to a purely empirical judgement, and 'ethical' judgements retain their purely cognitive value. But the empirical observation of how functions are related to and integrated with other functions allows really no other judgements than that of good or bad integration. In the functionalist approach to man and society, the good is defined in terms of the working of the society and in terms of the degree of the social harmony that persists in it. If a society, for instance, manages to integrate torture, or is organized in such a way that a certain amount of aggressiveness either against foreigners or against members of the same group is a functional necessity (in view of its relation to the food supply or certain religious practices, etc.), then one can only express approval of it, and any criticism would be no more than the expression of an arbitrary and ill-informed judgement. We can see, therefore, that this kind of preservation of the cognitive value of ethical judgements is completely stultifying: it obliges one to regard failure at conformity and integration as the only crime and sets a premium not upon what has traditionally been regarded as good or on what we feel we would like to regard as good, but upon success at integration.

From such a point of view, given a certain type of society in which the torture of prisoners or enemies is an integral function, torture cannot be condemned in that society. If one of its members objects to it, one can only shrug one's shoulders at his lack of integration and hope that he will soon be sufficiently well integrated into his society to learn to watch it with equanimity. The ethical judgement that torture is bad says, in this particular society, nothing about torture: it merely proves that the author of the judgement was not well adjusted

to the society of which he is a member. Rousseau's paradox of the criminal who must wish to be punished lest he be out of step with the General Will, has always been condoned because Rousseau wisely chose a criminal as an example. But the utter paradoxicality of the case is much more patently revealed when we look at it the other way round and say that in this kind of functionalism, given a society of gangsters or concentration-camp guards, the 'good' man must wish to be tortured.

Considering that both the negative and the positive reaction have resulted from the introduction of purely empirical methods into the study of human nature, it cannot come as a surprise to find that the great popular work, written from the standpoint of the negative reaction, Spengler's *Decline of the West*, should have proved a source of inspiration to the great popular work, written from the standpoint of functionalism, Ruth Benedict's *Patterns of Culture*. Whatever one may say against Spengler's method of writing history, one cannot deny that he, like very few other historians, had fully understood the significance of the fact that an empirical study of human nature cannot be made the basis of ethical judgements, and that the values obtaining in certain cultures and at certain periods can neither find a justification outside those cultures and periods, nor be made the subject of intelligent criticism in terms of standards derived from other cultures or periods. Ruth Benedict, though an anthropologist whose sources of information are very much more reliable and adequate than those of Spengler, has nevertheless explicitly acknowledged her debt to the latter: her functionalism, like Spengler's historicism, is also firmly based upon the insight that one cannot pass judgement upon the values obtaining in a certain society by using standards other than the ones that are enshrined in the concepts of cultural function or pattern. To Spengler, the good is defined in terms of what people happen to approve of; and to Ruth Benedict, the good is defined in terms of functional integration.

In view of the development of these various forms of ethical relativism, it is little wonder that at the beginning of this century, well before either Spengler or Ruth Benedict, G. E. Moore should have drawn attention to the fact that this kind of ethical relativism was based upon the 'naturalistic fallacy'. He concluded from an observation of utilitarian arguments – but

what he said might have been applied to the other forms of relativism we have discussed – that people had formed the habit of inferring what ought to be done from what is being done. Formally speaking his argument insisted that it is a fallacy to deduce values from facts or to infer that things are good because most people want them or are actually doing them. But the material substance of his argument amounted to no less than the observation that people had got into the habit of defining the good in terms of things that had no connection with ethical values and which, in fact, had no greater recommendation than that they were being done or desired by lots of people.

Unfortunately, whether through Moore's own fault or through the zeal of his followers, the argument was interpreted too closely in the purely formal sense and therefore applied not only to the various ways in which people had reacted to the discovery that a genuinely empirical study of human nature does not yield the same clear insight into what is and what is not becoming to men as had been yielded by earlier less purely empirical studies of human nature, but also to all other forms of deriving ethical judgements from a knowledge of human nature. This extended application of the argument that an inference from facts to values is a fallacy seems to me to be itself a fallacy.

Before the study of human nature came to be carried out in a purely empirical sense, our knowledge of human nature was derived not exclusively from the observation of how men behave, but also from certain self-evident principles, from certain definitions and possibly from certain revealed truths. In other words, the picture of human nature which thus emerged was not really a purely naturalistic picture, but one that was shot through with non-naturalistic features; and it is not difficult to see that the values which this picture exhibited and which became, of course, the basis for all judgements of value inferred from this picture, stood in a very intimate relation to these non-naturalistic features of the picture of human nature. With the growth of the purely empirical method of describing human nature, these non-naturalistic features came gradually to be excluded, and the ethical relativism, which we saw resulted from the employment of purely empirical methods

in the study of human nature, stood therefore in a precise relation to the employment of empirical methods. The more empirical the study of human nature became, the more urgent became the conclusion that ethical values are relative to a certain society and that it is not possible to define them in terms other than what most people in a certain society are either actually doing or actually desiring. Ethical relativism, or, what is the same thing, ethical naturalism (i.e. the habit of deriving values from facts) is thus dependent on the employment of pure empiricism in the study of human nature, and there is a precise relationship between the two.

Once this is realized, it is easy to see that the naturalistic fallacy is committed when the good is defined in terms of what people can be observed to be actually doing or desiring; because in such a case there is an inference from facts to values. But one cannot maintain that the same fallacy is committed when the picture of human nature, from which values are inferred, is not due to purely empirical observation. When Aristotle argued, from certain definitions and from certain metaphysical insights, that the contemplative life was the highest good, he did ground his statement upon human nature. His ethical prescription had a cognitive value – for it was either a true or a false statement, given the picture of human nature he had in mind. But since he had not derived this picture entirely from empirical observation, one could not argue that he was inferring values from facts. He did not put forward his statement because he had actually observed that a large number of people are leading or are desiring to lead the contemplative life and he had therefore not defined the good in terms of what people are actually doing. His ethical judgement did have a different cognitive basis: it was grounded on a conception of human nature which depended by no means exclusively on a pure observation of what people were doing. His inference was therefore not one from facts to values; but from facts-and-values to values. Whether his inference was formally completely valid may well be questionable; but there can be no doubt that he did not really commit the naturalistic fallacy – at least not in the obvious and stark way in which it was committed, for example, by the utilitarians.

It follows, therefore, that it is a mistake to see the naturalistic

fallacy in operation in arguments other than those which define the good in terms of what is being done or desired by a large number of people. An inference from human nature to ethical value is by no means illicit – provided the picture of human nature is obtained by other than purely empirical methods.

Before proceeding with the argument, it is profitable to survey the development of ethical arguments that followed upon the discovery of the naturalistic fallacy.

Moore himself attempted to establish ethics on completely new grounds. He was very much concerned, of course, with the belief that ethical judgements are not relative values and are more than arbitrary decisions. In this he showed himself firmly wedded to the whole tradition of ethical thought from Aristotle to the utilitarians. He put forward the celebrated argument that the good is *sui generis*; and that one notices goodness in an action just as one observes yellowness in an object. With this argument he certainly managed to avoid any naturalistic fallacy. But no matter how logically impressive it is, it proves to be pragmatically completely useless. The utilitarians, no matter how fallacious their inference from facts to values, had at least the one advantage of being pragmatically useful: a utilitarian can always prescribe some way in which, for practical purposes, an ethical judgement can be made, and indicate a method by which one can carry on a debate about the ethical value of institutions, habits, customs or individual behaviour. His insistence on the cognitive value of ethical judgements has a very practical significance, and even though he is committing the naturalistic fallacy every time he opens his mouth, and even though he is getting hopelessly bogged down in ethical relativism, he always provides a ground for a genuine ethical argument. The same cannot be said for Moore: the observation that an action is good, like the observation that an object is yellow, cannot lead to a sensible argument. One can well say that one sees that an action is good; but one can say no more. Moore's belief that his theory salvages the cognitive value of ethical judgements is therefore deceptive. The argument has the outward appearance of doing so. But since there are no facts to which it can appeal in case of a difference in ethical valuation, the view that the good is seen as a property of certain actions is really indistinguishable for practical purposes

from the view that an ethical judgement is simply an expression of an arbitrary decision or a whim or a certain feeling or desire.

It is, therefore, no cause for surprise when we find that Moore's rigid objectivism (his attempt to preserve the cognitive value of ethical judgements) made way finally for an extreme form of ethical subjectivism which believes that an ethical judgement has no basis in facts and that there can be no argument about ultimate ethical judgements. This view, reinforced by the theory of Logical Positivism that the meaning of a statement is its method of verification, was propounded, for instance, by Ayer and has since then been upheld in one form or another by countless other writers. Judgements of value, they argue, are not like judgements of facts. The meaning of the latter can be ascertained by some verification procedure. The only meaning that can be attributed to the former is that they are an expression of preferences, of feelings, etc., about which one cannot argue. One ethical judgement is therefore as good as any other. With this theory of ethics we have finally come to the view of the man who says that he will do always exactly as he likes because there is no objective way of establishing the good and that therefore one action is as good or as bad as any other. We are now a far cry from the man who might have said that he knew very well what the good was and knew that he ought to do it; but that he chose in fact not to do it.

It is perhaps strange that it should be such a short step from Moore's objectivism to Ayer's subjectivism. But if one takes the naturalistic fallacy seriously and believes that it applies to *all* arguments from human nature to ethical value, even when the picture of human nature involved is based upon methods of observation other than empirical ones, it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that ethical judgements have no cognitive value at all. Moore's theory had the appearance of avoiding this conclusion, but proved in actual practice to be indistinguishable from pure subjectivism. For if the perception of goodness is *sui generis*, one cannot argue with a man who maintains that he perceives goodness in torture. And the impossibility of starting a sensible argument is always a clear indication of subjectivism.

What is a little more surprising, perhaps, is the fact that the views of Jean-Paul Sartre lead to exactly the same kind of

subjectivism. Sartre, unlike Moore and Ayer, did not react against the naturalistic fallacy committed by the utilitarians. He began by reacting against the views of Hegel. But since Hegel was one of the foremost representatives of the negative (historicist) reaction to the employment of purely empirical methods in the study of human nature, Sartre's position is quite intelligible. The historicists, unlike the utilitarians, concluded from the observation that a purely empirical study of human nature leads to the view that men do in fact approve of the most diverse things in different ages and different societies, that ethical judgements have no cognitive value but are altogether relative to certain periods and certain cultures and that what happens to be approved of in one culture is neither worse nor better than the opposite that may happen to be approved of on the other side of the frontier or in a different age by the same society. Having thus denied the cognitive value of ethical judgements, the historicists made no attempt to commit the naturalistic fallacy. They simply resigned themselves to a complete and outspoken ethical relativism without trying to remedy it by means other than philosophies of history, i.e. by attempts to show that the various relative standards of value professed in certain societies at certain times stand in a certain necessary relationship to one another. Sartre was therefore not tempted to react against the naturalistic fallacy. He, on the contrary, reacted against the attempt made by these philosophies of history to show that there was a certain method in the way in which one relative judgement of value gave way to another. He questioned the validity of historicism; but he did not question the insight that ethical judgements have no cognitive value. On the contrary: having abandoned as unreliable all philosophies of history, he was left with the very simple view that ethical judgements are subjective. In this view he had not really parted company with historicism, but the subjectivism of this view came out more starkly in him because he had cut himself adrift from the moorings of the philosophies of history which had alleviated or disguised this subjectivism by their constant efforts at showing that though values are relative they stand in certain necessary and intelligible relations to one another and can, therefore, be imagined to add up to a total whole which is itself not relative. ('It takes all sorts to

make a world' – the historicist seemed to be saying, thus sugaring the pill of complete ethical relativism. Ranke, with greater sophistication, said: 'all periods are equidistant from God!')

Sartre formulated his ethical subjectivism as the theory that 'existence precedes essence'. This means in brief that we do not derive values from an awareness that human nature is such and such and that certain actions are more becoming than others; but the fact that we act in a certain way and not in another, is a free decision ('we are fated to be free') because it is not grounded on the necessity for acting in a certain way that is in conformity with human nature. Human nature, on the contrary, is the result of our free decisions to act in certain ways – and not the other way round.

From the point of view of moral philosophy, there is much to be said for Sartre's formulation. For it draws our attention to the fact that we are free to shoulder the responsibility for what we are or to feel self-pity instead and blame circumstances. We are always what we are and our choice lies either with Sartre and with saying that we have chosen to act in a certain way that has brought about what we are; or with self-pity and resignation and a refusal to accept responsibility. The argument seems in fact to recommend that we extend the meaning of the word 'responsibility'. Usually we hold ourselves responsible only for those actions which we know, or which someone else knows, we could have avoided by a more or less great and sincere effort. And we usually do not consider ourselves responsible for being English, Jewish, tall, stupid, or handsome. But Sartre's argument seems to recommend that we use the word 'responsible' in the wider sense, in the sense in which it makes us feel that we have chosen to be what we are and that we are thus committed to that choice and that no purpose can be served and no advantage gained by the belief that we are committed to what we are innocently, through no choice of our own.

However this may be, Sartre's view is, apart from these practical implications, indistinguishable from that of Ayer. In view of the famous criticism which Ayer has expressed on linguistic grounds of Sartre (*Horizon*, July and Aug., 1945) and in view of the vast distance that seems to separate *Language*,

Truth and Logic from *Being and Nothingness*, this may be surprising. But then differences in logical procedure do not always imply differences in outlook. And since both Sartre and Ayer belong to the generation that reacted against historicism and utilitarianism respectively; and since both historicism and utilitarianism were different forms of an ethical relativism that resulted from the empirical study of human nature, the similarity in the positions of the two men is probably not so strange as it may appear at first sight.

We have then come to a point at which the non-cognitive and therefore basically irrational character of ethical judgements is almost universally accepted. We do hear from time to time of re-examinations of traditional ethical theories and of attempts to steer a course between the Scylla of the views of Moore, which make ethical judgements cognitive in theory but relegate them in practice to a field where discussion and rational assessment of them is not possible and where they are in fact not distinguishable from subjective judgements, and the Charybdis of the views of such outspoken and self-confessed subjectivists as Ayer and Sartre, to whom ethical judgements are simply expressions of personal opinions or voluntary and undetermined choices. It seems to me that Toulmin's *The Place of Reason in Ethics* is the most noteworthy and at first sight the most persuasive of these attempts. But a closer examination of the argument shows that the author does little more than establish the fact that ethical arguments, once a certain fundamental ethical position is taken up, are a form of rational rhetoric. He shows in fact that once certain ethical premisses, such as the basic values recognized in a certain community, are accepted, ethical argument is rational argument in a sense in which neither Moore's perception of ethical qualities nor Ayer's or Sartre's preferences or voluntary choices are. But one can hardly feel that the proof that reason has in fact a place in ethical arguments of this kind is a convincing demonstration of the cognitive value of basic ethical judgements. Of these basic ethical judgements Toulmin says himself that there can be no argument about them, and that there is no point in inquiring whether polygamy is good or whether monogamy is better. Polygamy and monogamy happen to be the accepted rules in certain societies, and ethical argument is not concerned

with an inquiry into their ethical goodness; but merely with the various rational forms of arguments designed to encourage certain actions and discourage others – *given certain basic premisses*. But sooner or later, one will have to start an examination of the basic premisses; and then one will not be able to derive any comfort or rational guidance from Toulmin's contention that reason has a place in ethics. On this last, fundamental issue, his ethics is as helplessly irrational as the ethical theories of his predecessors. He can help us to be rational once we have decided to become Catholics or to be loyal to Britain or to live in a Mohammedan country because we favour polygamy. But he cannot help us, any more than Moore, Sartre, or Ayer could, to provide us with reasons or with arguments from human nature to make up our minds in regard to the initial, fundamental decisions themselves. For this reason the place assigned by Toulmin to reason in ethics is a very modest place and not one that is likely to alter the general picture we have gained of the position of ethics at the present time. For as to the initial and fundamental decisions that have to be made, there is no telling whether he would simply abide by the ones that happen to be the conventions in the place where one is born, or whether he would try to justify them and adhere to them by the historicist argument that an established convention at a certain period in a certain society, though relative, is ultimate because a product of necessary historical evolution; or whether he would prefer the utilitarian or functional approach and recommend their acceptance on the grounds of social utility or of their functional dependence on a large variety of other accepted customs and institutions. Whichever of these alternatives he prefers, and whatever theoretical justifications he may be able to advance for any of them, for all practical purposes none of them can carry much conviction. For in our modern highly individualistic and differentiated societies, there are always a large number of basic ethical standpoints competing for our support: in Britain one can be either for or against planning; one can be for or against the established church and for or against Catholicism. One may wish to emigrate to Russia or to Egypt because one believes in communism or polygamy, or refuse to accept a position in Ghana because one would hate one's children to grow up together with

negroes; and so forth. On none of these questions is it possible for reason, given the modest place which Toulmin assigns to it in ethics, to provide an answer or to suggest a rational way of weighing competing alternatives. His ethics, like those of Moore, Ayer, and Sartre, are therefore, in the last resort, irrational ethics.

It is certainly true that none of the upholders of these ethical theories has ever issued open invitations to irrationalism; and it is also true that, on the contrary, the form of their discussions is a very sophisticated form of minute and cautious rationalism. But since their rational investigations always lead back to the point where one sees that no rational distinction between different basic ethical positions is possible and where one admits that one cannot rationally discuss different ethical standpoints, one cannot but conclude that their arguments lead in fact to an ethical irrationalism. For ethical irrationalism is the doctrine that there is no possibility of a rational discrimination between opposing ethical standpoints.

If we want to reopen the question of the cognitive value of ethical judgements, we must ask ourselves in the first place whether this ethical irrationalism is not excessive. It is, of course, possible that it is not excessive. And the mere observation that it is undesirable because it makes rational discussion of ultimate issues impossible even when people would wish a rational discussion of such issues (though such a wish is by no means very general), is no proof that such rational discussion is, in fact, possible. We may well have to content ourselves with the insight that ethical irrationalism is right and that, in the end, we can say no more than St Louis who said that there is only one thing to be done with a heretic: one must run a sword through him. I do not mean to suggest that ethical rationalism would necessarily obviate the necessity for running swords through certain people, for it is quite possible that a man may say that he knows what is the good but refuses to do it. In such a case one still needs recourse to violence; but such violence would be violence for the sake of the good, it would be 'just' violence. Whereas if we all abide by ethical irrationalism, there can be no question of 'just' violence and the appeal to the irrational sword is the only possible rational appeal.

I would take it for granted that we are all agreed that ethical rationalism, though not necessarily possible, is preferable to

ethical irrationalism. Even though the former may not enable us to dispense with violence, it will help us to be more discriminating in its use. We must, therefore, not give up easily, and the importance of the whole question makes it appear worth while to try again to find a rational basis for ethical discussion and to establish that ethical judgements have a cognitive value.

A renewed search must take its cue from the observation made above: that the naturalistic fallacy is committed only in those cases where a value is inferred from the facts of human nature or human behaviour that are known by mere empirical observation. If, however, one were confronted with a picture of human nature that does not owe its existence to such purely empirical observation, an inference from facts to values would not be a naturalistic fallacy; for the facts in such a picture are themselves already value-charged, and the picture itself exhibits values. Only the value-free, purely empirical and statistical compilation of facts of human behaviour and human nature yields a picture that exhibits, by definition, no values. And only an inference from the human behaviour depicted in such a picture to values (i.e. the assertion that the good is what certain people are in fact doing) is a naturalistic fallacy. If we take our cue from here, we will see that our search for the cognitive value of ethical judgements is really a search for a picture of human nature that is compiled in a non-empirical way; or at least in part with the help of methods other than a mere statistical compilation of observable and measureable facts. If we can find a valid method of drawing such a picture, we will have shown how an inference from the 'facts' exhibited in such a picture to values is legitimate. We will thus have established the cognitive value of ethical judgements.

In this way, the question as to the cognitive value of ethical judgements or as to the feasibility of ethical rationalism resolves itself into a question of epistemology.

There are two possible procedures. One can either begin with an assertion of the good and then endeavour to demonstrate how and in what sense the truth of such an assertion is vouchsafed by a certain picture of the world we are living in. In this case one would begin with an ethical dogma and then search for an epistemology which would allow one to produce a picture of human behaviour from which the ethical assertions could be

inferred without the commission of the naturalistic fallacy. The second procedure open to us would begin with an investigation of epistemology and the construction of a picture of human behaviour from which one would infer a number of judgements that would have an ethical character. From a logical point of view either of these procedures is legitimate. But the second procedure might remind one a little bit of the magical trick of producing rabbits out of hats; for the reader would know from the start that the epistemological inquiry is not undertaken in a totally disinterested spirit, but with a view to finding a cognitive basis for ethical judgements, and that it is therefore likely to be carried out in a way likely to produce the desired result. The first procedure seems, therefore, more honest. It begins with some dogmatic ethical assertions and then shows that, given certain epistemological considerations, these assertions are not dogmatic and irrational. The epistemological investigations will, therefore, be quite openly designed to furnish grounds for the rationality of the ethical assertions with which one began. The second procedure may have the advantage of appearing less biassed and more independent: from certain epistemological arguments we conclude that it is possible to put forward rational ethical judgements and the validity of these ethical judgements will be enhanced because they are based on valid and independent epistemological arguments. But the conclusion may appear a bit like a conjuring trick – for it may look like an odd coincidence indeed that we manage to produce just the very conclusion we desired. In the former procedure the argument is less pretentious. There is no pretence at an independent epistemological inquiry, but a clear admission that that inquiry is undertaken in order to show the rationality of certain ethical judgements. There is no conjuring trick that produces the desired rabbit from a seemingly empty hat; but an open demonstration that the hat chosen for producing the rabbit was built to order. If we can then produce the rabbit in the form of our desired rational justification of certain ethical judgements we cannot be accused of a magical trick, provided no tricks were used in the choice of materials and methods used in the building of the hat. For this reason I have chosen to employ the former procedure. We will, therefore, begin by turning in the next chapter not to epistemology but to dogmatic ethics.

Chapter Two

THE SCIENCE OF ETHICS

A. Dogmatic Ethics

The science of ethics is primarily and fundamentally concerned with the fact of evil. Not, however, with the fact of evil as the psychological phenomenon that makes us experience revulsion or displeasure on certain occasions. It rests on the assumption that certain actions are intrinsically evil even though they may cause pleasure, and that one ought, therefore, to devise ways and means of avoiding them. Ethics, therefore, is the study of how evil can be avoided. It is concerned, by implication, with the knowledge of the good.

To begin with, then, it is necessary to find a conveniently abstract formula for a description of evil. It must be abstract enough to allow us to apply it to a very wide number of cases, so that we can subsume them all under one single heading. And it must at the same time be concrete enough for us to recognize actual cases as evil.

If one said, for instance, that everything that is material is evil, one would be lacking in abstraction. For there are, first, many material things that are not at all evil, and, second, many things that are evil, though not material. If one said, on the other hand, that all evil is the result of demonic interference with human life, or a human revolt against God, one would not be sufficiently concrete. Without being demonstrably wrong, one could, on such a definition of evil, never ascertain in any particular case whether man has revolted against God or not and whether his action, is, as a result, evil or not.

I propose therefore to describe as evil all those actions and thoughts, motives, instincts, habits, etc., which cause us, either partially or wholly, to make use of other people for our own purposes. This means that I presuppose that every human being is an end in himself and that, if he or she is not treated as such

but used in order to promote the well-being, the interests, the purposes, etc., of someone else, there is evil. It follows from this description that all those phenomena in which only one person is concerned are ruled out as being incapable of being evil. This shows that the proposed formula is narrow. But since ethics is concerned with human relations and not with human beings in hermitages, there is ample justification for this arbitrary narrowing of the formula.

I would suggest that one should understand the formula in a perfectly mechanical manner. Thus, when a baby needs its mother for its food and care and protection, it makes use of the mother. Hence there is some justification for speaking of evil. If a man needs a butler, if a child needs a teacher, we are face to face with the phenomenon of one person using another person for his own purposes. The same phenomenon is to be found in every marriage, no matter how happy the two partners are together. In a certain sense, they are using one another. In fact, all human beings constantly make use of a large number of human beings all the time. In some they have a personal interest as well, which they sometimes exhibit and sometimes wish to disguise; and in others they do not even pretend to have a personal interest. The man who handles my mail at the post office is someone I make use of; but for all I care he may be a machine.

Fortunately, this finely spun and seamless webb of 'use' relationships which constitutes human society has the all-important relieving feature that most of these relationships are mutual. The child needs the mother, but the mother needs the child. I need the postman, but the postman needs me to pay his salary. And so forth. In other words, although the prostitution of human beings to one another is a universal feature of human life and although, according to my formula, it is evil wherever it occurs, the evil has very often very little or no sting attached to it.

In fact, whether by careful planning or by natural selection, our societies, large and small, are organized in such a way as to bring about a great deal of such mutual interdependence. The mother finds the child, the man a woman, the postman a letter-writer and the policeman a criminal. In the most general terms, one could say that evil is enormously alleviated by the fact that

human beings need one another and that therefore the resentment of being prostituted to another person's needs is often very small. Given the variety of human needs and circumstances, however, it can never be totally eliminated. For even in the best of cases, such as the mother-child relationship, or a happy marriage, the time comes when the mutual needs no longer dovetail to perfection: the child grows up and becomes a man with interests and needs that can no longer be satisfied by the mother. But the mother remains a mother . . . and if she cannot find another child there are needs that will remain unfulfilled.

It is one of the chief purposes of society to organize mutual dependence – to bring the obsessive organizer together with the men who wish to be organized to play football and to jockey men who need to exercise authority into positions where authoritative decisions have to be made. By this kind of social organization one alleviates the necessity for too much repression as well as the necessity for more moral regeneration than one can reasonably expect. But even in the best organized of societies, there remain loose ends.

Ideally speaking it might be possible to alleviate evil by a huge effort at social organization. With the help of card indexes and electronic filing-systems it might be possible to make a list of all the needs of all human beings and then fit every human being with another human being who will satisfy those needs and have his in turn satisfied. In general terms, such a filing system would discover for every sadist a masochist* and thus obviate the necessity for either the sadist or the masochist to seek a cure or a less harmful outlet for his energies.

In practice, of course, this is not possible. No filing system could do justice to such a task, and even if it could, not all cases are so simple as the one of the sadist and the masochist. But even if they were, the problem of transportation would prevent us from implementing the human combinations recommended by our filing system. I have merely indicated the possibility of the filing system and of the dovetailing of human needs

* This is not to be taken literally. A sadist, unfortunately, cannot satisfy himself unless his victim genuinely suffers. If his victim is a masochist who enjoys the tortures inflicted on him a real sadist would not be content. I have merely used these two types as a rough-and-ready way of indicating an ideal possibility of dovetailing.

on a huge scale in order to show that, though evil could never be eliminated in this fashion, it would be ideally possible to alleviate it fairly effectively.

As we recognize that the filing system which would find a sadist for every masochist is a practical impossibility, we must turn our attention to the examination of an alternative way of transcending evil.

Even without a filing system, however, human society is organized in such a way that much evil is alleviated and that a great deal of social integration, though resulting in the large-scale organization of human prostitution for other people's needs, does not force us to seek radical and drastic solutions all the time. The sciences of social engineering are largely concerned with improving social integration and with thus alleviating evil without ever having to strike at the root of evil. Whatever I will have to say about radical and drastic solutions for eliminating evil, I would make it quite clear at the outset that these recommendations should never be taken as alternatives to those recommended by the sciences of social engineering. Social engineering is a far more practical technique for alleviating evil than any suggestion one can make for its complete elimination. And in view of the realization of how horrible evil is and of how much incredible suffering and pain it involves, it would be irresponsible to belittle or discourage those practical devices that can alleviate it for the sake of theoretical recommendations which are likely to eliminate it. The most one can say in favour of any drastic recommendation is that it should be tried only when all attempts at social engineering have failed, and when a radical course of action is not likely to make the situation worse.

Social engineering can be carried on in both private and public life. Everything, from marriage guidance councils that help couples with their personal problems and from the psychoanalytical couch, to the legislature which drafts a social security scheme and old age pensions, is part of social engineering. Radical recommendations for the elimination of evil, on the other hand, are always to be applied in private or in small, voluntary groups: they lose their cogency as soon as they get mixed up with large-scale public or social movements. They are, therefore by nature socially irrelevant though I will try to show later

that they can make a great deal of difference to human societies.

The alternative way of transcending evil is, in contrast to the social engineer's piecemeal attempts at alleviating it, a radical way. It cuts at the root of evil and recommends practices that will enable people to live without using other people. To live without using other people and rendering them services in return would mean, of course, to live like a hermit. Such may well be the final outcome, especially in the case of very scrupulous people. But common sense will suggest that there is no need to transcend the evil that is involved in the postman delivering my letters. I pay him; and provided I pay him enough (whatever this may precisely mean), neither he nor I can derive any suffering from our symbiotic relationship. There is therefore no real need for the elimination of evil which does not cause suffering to anyone.

The transcendence of evil is, however, an imperative in cases where mutual prostitution does cause suffering; and especially where such a mutual relationship is not perfectly and lastingly symbiotic, as in the ideal case of the sadist and the masochist.

If one agrees to neglect for the time being all those cases where mutual prostitution and symbiotic relationships are concerned with the satisfaction of purely physical and material needs, such as the delivery of letters, one will see that symbiosis is necessary because of the weakness inherent in human nature. A child needs his mother's love; and a husband, his wife's devotion. Very often the mother is lacking in her husband's attention and therefore seeks compensation by acting in such a way that the child is not only given the care he needs in order to thrive, but is also tied to his mother's apron strings as an insurance against loneliness and purposelessness. The ways in which a mother may defend and rationalize such actions need not concern us; they are commonplaces of psychological textbooks. Alternatively, a mother may have resentments inherited from her own childhood, and her actions towards her own child are governed by her conscious or unconscious desire to compensate herself for the suffering caused to her by her own mother. There is an inexhaustible variety of ways in which that sort of thing can be done. She may inflict the sufferings which she had to endure on the child; or she may act in a way diametrically opposed to the one in which her own mother has acted

towards her. The child itself, exposed to these constant attempts on the part of his mother to find compensations for sufferings and weaknesses, will in turn need compensation from his wife, his schoolmates, his friends and, in the end, from his own children. And thus the cycle continues, a never ending series of mutual dependences, of attempts to seek compensations, of using other people as supports for one's own life. In this way every human being is both the victim of all the evil that was perpetuated in the world before him, and the guaranteed instrument that that evil will be handed down to posterity. An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth; and it will be certain that the evil one suffers will be inflicted by oneself on one's fellows and in turn be visited upon one's children and their children's children. It is natural for a person to love or resent in return and in proportion to pleasures or pains which he has received – even though the love and resentment (as the case may be) need not necessarily (in fact it rarely is) be bestowed upon the person from whom one has received *the corresponding pleasure* or *pain. The fact* that this is so makes evil self-perpetuating; for if one returned love or resentment only to the person from whom one has received the corresponding pleasure or pain, evil would not be self-perpetuating. It would then exist only in small circles and would have to be generated afresh within the life cycle of every individual. But the fact that it is quite possible to resent A for the pain caused by B ensures that evil is passed on from generation to generation, from one group of people to another.

Once one understands this inexorable chain which constitutes the natural history of evil, the remedy suggests itself immediately. The remedy is, in fact, a very obvious one. One must try to gain the freedom to refuse to be part of the chain. If the series of actions and thoughts by which evil propagates itself is a natural chain of causations, one must gain the freedom to be non-natural, the freedom to extricate oneself. This freedom means that one will be able to suffer and accept evil without seeking compensation. This is the only conceivable way in which the ineluctable natural chain can be broken and evil be eliminated.

The elimination of evil consists in the capacity to suffer evil, i.e. to be used by others for their own ends. For one cannot

hope to live in a world in which others will not make such attempts at prostituting one for their own ends. Hence the ability to suffer without seeking compensation of any kind is the crucial factor in the elimination of evil. And we may now define the good as the ability to let oneself be used by other people without seeking compensation by using the people who use one or using others in turn. Goodness consists in the freedom to halt the natural transmission of evil.

There are two ways in which evil can thus be eliminated. The first way is by incommensurable love; and the second way is by absolute detachment.

There is a natural form of love which is very pleasant and often productive of much enjoyment; but it is part and parcel of the universal chain of causation of evil. For such love is a return for services rendered: we will love a beautiful woman for the pleasure she affords our senses, a child for the pleasure we take in fondling it and protecting it. The other form of love, *which is given spontaneously, not for the benefits received but* simply for the sake of the other person, is very rare. But such love is the love that breaks the series of evil actions. For if one loves another person absolutely, unconditionally, and independently of any benefits derived from him, love is spontaneous and incommensurable with any goods received in return. If one loves another person in that way, one will be able to refrain from using him or her for one's own purposes, no matter how great and deep one's needs are. Incommensurable love transcends evil.

The transcension of evil by absolute detachment is the very opposite of the transcension of evil by incommensurable love. Normally we are anything but detached from other people. We are dependent on their actions for the satisfaction of our needs and therefore attached to them in expectation, in love, in hostility and in a thousand other ways. But if we can reach a state of pure detachment from them and turn entirely to a life in solitude, we can release them from the expectations we have of them. It will then no longer be necessary for a child to satisfy his mother's expectations and for a wife, her husband's demands. An absolute detachment will enable us to forgo the services which we need from other people and enable us to cease using them for our own ends. In this way absolute detachment transcends evil.

For the sake of the following arguments I propose to introduce a number of technical words and labels. I propose to refer to incommensurable love and absolute detachment as absolute love and absolute detachment. It is not difficult to justify the use of the word 'absolute' in place of the word 'incommensurable'; for incommensurable love has in fact been described as the opposite of relative love, of love given in response and in proportion to certain solicitations. Furthermore, I propose to use the categories of *Relationship* and *Solitude* to describe the conditions referred to above as incommensurable love and absolute detachment. These two categories will serve to bring out the way in which the two forms of the transcension of evil are opposed to each other. Relationship means a heightening of one's love for others until it reaches the point of being absolute; and Solitude means the withdrawal from others to the point at which such withdrawal becomes absolute. Evil is transcended either in Relationship or in Solitude. I also propose to use the expression 'absolute consciousness' to describe Solitude or absolute detachment. This expression is commonly used by Indian philosophers to describe that state of complete solitude in which one's consciousness has been emptied of all contents and attachments – possibly something very much like the state Aristotle was thinking of when he wrote that 'the supreme mind thinks itself'. It is not easy, given the grammatical structure of our language, to envisage a state that can only be described as one in which consciousness is focused upon itself. Our linguistic usage prescribes that we always use the word consciousness when we are conscious *of* something and do not use it in the way in which it is used in the expression 'absolute consciousness'. I will discuss this question presently and state now no more than that this expression will be used to describe the state of solitude.

Although Relationship and Solitude are two states that are diametrically opposed to one another, it is of the greatest importance to understand that they are fundamentally related *to each other*, and that it is impossible to cultivate one state *without* cultivating the other state.

If one seeks Solitude alone and practises all the various forms of gradual detachment that will lead to it, one will find it extremely difficult to overcome the last and final attachment,

which may even prove the most intractable form of attachment, i.e. the attachment to one's own desire to find peace and abstention from evil. If this remains as the last vestige, the detachment cannot be absolute. In order for the detachment to become absolute, one must pursue it for the sake of someone other than oneself, one must pursue it for other people and precisely in order to become able to abstain from the evil which one does to others by making use of them. But one can only desire to avoid such evil if one loves other people – and loves them for their own sake (i.e. incommensurably), and not for the pleasure or comfort one derives from them. Solitude, therefore, in order to become true Solitude, must be sought for the sake of absolute love or for the sake of Relationship. This may sound paradoxical, but the truth of this contention is not difficult to see, and the paradoxicality of the statement is simply due to our mode of expression.

The same applies, *mutatis mutandis*, to the search of Relationship. If one seeks absolute love, one can never test oneself and one's love as to whether it is really incommensurable or not. If one loves, there may always be a thousand and one reasons for such love, and such love may therefore not be radically different from the selfish kind that is given in response to a service or a pleasure derived from the person loved. There is only one way in which one can make sure that love is really spontaneous and incommensurable. This is by having sought and found Solitude first: only when one is quite sure one has no expectations from the person that is loved, and when one is certain of living in complete withdrawal, can one test one's love clearly and make sure that it is gratuitous and not caused by a pleasure or comfort given by the person that is loved. Then, and only then, can one know whether one is in fact receiving pleasure and services from the loved person or not. Relationship, therefore, in order to become true Relationship, must be sought with the help of absolute detachment. This again sounds paradoxical, but the paradoxicality is only due to the expression, not to the situation.

Relationship and Solitude, therefore, are interdependent. It is not possible to seek the one without the other. And any statement made about Relationship must imply statements about Solitude. That is to say, whatever doctrines and recommendations are connected with the two goals, they must not

only be mutually compatible, but also be seen to be mutually dependent on one another. I would say quite categorically that the pursuit of either Relationship or Solitude by itself is self-frustrating, self-defeating, and pointless. The saint who is totally placid and stands serenely on a pillar for twelve years feels nothing and gains nothing. There is total solitude without love. By contrast, the person that does good to others all the time, achieves for himself no more than passing the time. And to others he is a menace. For the man who loves others and is incessantly active on their behalf, is a man who simply seeks to impose his will on others. As long as his love does not depend on his own Solitude – i.e. as long as his love is not completely detached and selfless – it is merely an endeavour at tyranny over others.

To forestall critical readers who may point out that it is naïve to maintain that all human conflicts can be solved by love or detachment, I would add the following remarks.

First, the preceding statements are not meant to prove that love will solve all human conflicts. They are really concerned with the transcension of evil rather than with the resolution of conflicts between person and person. The object of love, or for that matter, of detachment, is not to make society run more smoothly (although this may be one of its incidental effects); but to set up effective barriers to the propagation of evil from person to person, and from generation to generation. A person that loves absolutely may not always be able to solve other people's problems; but he can effectively cease being part of the chain along which evil is handed down from father to son, from lover to lover and from teacher to pupil. I know quite well that the love that is bent upon doing good to others may well wreck people's lives, and that often an unloving and dispassionate frankness, or even cruelty, is more likely to have beneficial results. But this is not my point. My point is that goodness consists in the transcension of evil; and that evil is transcended if and only if a person ceases to pass it on in the sense of seeking compensation for hurts suffered.

My second observation is this. I know that there are all sorts of love, from benign goodwill to passionate possessiveness. And I know that none of these loves is likely to transcend evil. Any action or attitude towards another person, which is based upon

any of such loves, is likely to continue the ineluctable passage of evil from person to person; for it ensures that the person to whom one gives advice based on such love, or towards whom one acts lovingly in such a sense, will subtly become the victim of one's own selfish desires and one's own egotistical notion of what is and what is not beneficial. The recipient of such forms of love can become prostituted to one's purposes in the most subtle of all ways. I would, therefore, be the last person to argue that love by itself can resolve human conflicts and problems. But I would add one all important exception to this admission: if love comes from the centre of one's Solitude then, and only then, can it indeed resolve all conflicts. If one's love is prompted by nothing at all, it comes from one's own detachment. And then it will have a force of conviction and inspire a confidence and trust that will prove irresistible. Any advice or any action prompted by such love will be effective in the sense that it will disarm. The person to whom it is extended receives it without suspicion or resentment, because he or she will know that it is not a subtle device (no matter how unconsciously contrived) for prostituting him or her to someone else's purposes.

In this sense I would answer to possible critics of the view that love resolves all human problems, that love does indeed solve them, provided it is a love that comes from the centre of one's Solitude. Any love less than such love, it must be admitted, will not only not transcend evil but is likely to reinforce it in a very subtle manner. Moreover, it would indeed be naïve to believe that one could recommend it as a panacea. Any love other than the one that is centred on Solitude, is still part of the natural process of evil. And no one could recommend its pursuit without being guilty of a platitudinous recommendation. For simply to recommend people to love one another without insisting that such love ought to come from the centre of Solitude, is no more than a well-meant but totally meaningless general exhortation to goodness, as ineffective as it is vague. But the love that is here recommended as a means of transcending evil is not a general kind of love; but a very specific form. And one need not fear, therefore, that it is not more than a pious platitude to invite people to practise it; and that one must qualify it and supplement it with utilitarian forms of thought and calculations in order to make it the least bit effective. I

would indeed stress that perhaps the most important aspect of my dogmatic ethics is the interdependence of Relationship and Solitude; for without that interdependence, both Relationship and Solitude become vaguely pious phenomena. They acquire their effectualness and their strength and precision directly from their interdependence.

B. Cognitive Ethics

So far I have made a number of dogmatic ethical assertions. It would be quite possible and very much in keeping with contemporary discussions of the nature of ethics, to leave the matter at that. Moore would say that I seem to have discovered the goodness of certain acts of love and of consciousness, as I might have spotted that the table in the garden was yellow. Sartre would point out that if I freely chose to love absolutely and to seek absolute consciousness, I would be committed to these activities, and that by such acts of existence I would have created my own essence. Ayer would see in the preceding pages an attempt at preaching, an effort to express certain moral preferences and to state them in a way likely to persuade others to accept them, or at least, if they do not wish to follow them themselves, to tolerate my pursuit of them. And Toulmin would endeavour, provided he was certain that, like monogamy in Britain, these values were accepted in the society he was living in, to use reason to show how they could be used to evaluate rationally all manner of ethical statements.

But we set out to discover the cognitive value of ethical statements. We decided not to remain satisfied with the insight that there can be no ultimate argument about ethics and that, though we have to be satisfied with the man who says that he knows what is right but decides not to do it, we do not mean to be satisfied with the man who says that there is no knowing what is right and that he will therefore do exactly as he likes. And if we search for the cognitive value of ethical judgements, we mean to search for more than Moore's view gives us, for we have seen that according to that view there still cannot be a rational discussion about ethical discoveries when people happen (as is often the case) to differ in what they 'discover'.

We must dismiss from the very start both the historicist and the utilitarian approach to the matter. The utilitarian might

think that our ethical beliefs are justified if he can discover by a statistical survey that a very large number of people really desire to pursue our ethical values. It so happens, of course, that the two ethical values in question are such that the utilitarian would actually never succeed. But since we are agreed that the utilitarian is committing the naturalistic fallacy and that his inductive definition of the good is not a definition of the good but merely a factual survey of people's behaviour, such a conclusion has no bearing upon our problem any more than if, in some queer social system, he would indeed find that people were striving for absolute love and absolute consciousness, and that such attainments would therefore result in the greatest happiness of the greatest number.

Similarly, the historicist approach is of no use. The historicist might accept our values if he could find them put forward as an aim in a certain society; but then he would add the proviso that they were values in that particular society at that particular time, and no more; and that, on an overall view, they were no more urgent aims than, e.g. the aggressiveness or the scientific technology pursued by other societies at other times. He is not committing, by such an argument, the naturalistic fallacy, of course; for the very simple reason that he is in fact not holding up the actual aims pursued in any society at any time as real ethical values. In this way his position is perhaps more unassailable than that of the utilitarian. But it is also less useful: for the utilitarian at least can provide a practical guidance for assessing the values of certain customs and institutions, and does not leave us, like the historicist, helpless in a world of conflicting values without chance of finding a criterion of discrimination. The historicist, unlike the utilitarian, leaves us helplessly at the mercy of any aim and value that happens to prevail, often by brute strength.

We must find a picture of the world in which the states of Relationship and Solitude occur. And furthermore they must occur in such a way that we cannot only formulate descriptive judgements such as 'there is Relationship' or 'there is Solitude', but descriptive judgements such as 'Solitude is good' and 'Relationship is good'. Only when we can formulate propositions of the latter kind about a picture of the world, can we say that the ethical judgements prescribing absolute love and absolute

consciousness have a cognitive value. In this case an ethical judgement that we must seek absolute love or absolute consciousness or both is a description of a state of affairs – and no longer a dogmatic assertion or an arbitrary expression of a preference or a whim. In this case we are entitled to speak of the truth of the ethical judgements expressed, because there is nothing arbitrary or conventional in the designation of Relationship and Solitude as good.

It is important that we be quite clear as to the precise meaning of this argument. We are seeking a picture of the world in which Relationship and Solitude occur; and, furthermore, in which they occur in a particular way, that is, in a way in which we are entitled to describe them as good. If we found, for instance, a picture of a monastic society, we might easily detect in it not only the occurrence of Relationship and Solitude, but also the fact that most of the members of that society are striving for Relationship and Solitude. But such a picture would not entitle us to the conclusion that Relationship and Solitude are good. If we drew such a conclusion from the observation of such a picture, we would clearly be committing the naturalistic fallacy, i.e. we would be inferring certain values ('Relationship and Solitude are good') from the fact that they are being sought. The picture we are searching for must, therefore, be of a different kind.

In it, the goodness of Relationship and Solitude must be part of the picture. If it is, there is no naturalistic fallacy involved in the statement that Relationship and Solitude are good, for the values enshrined in Relationship and Solitude are part and parcel of the original picture. In this case our ethical judgements that Relationship and Solitude are good, are judgements about the picture of the world and not inferences from certain facts as to the goodness of these facts.

There are two senses in which the picture we are seeking can contain the fact that Relationship and Solitude are good. In the first sense it can contain the goodness of Relationship and Solitude in a negative sense. Goodness, I have argued earlier, is the avoidance of evil. If evil is the use one person makes of another person, then we must see goodness in all those performances in which there is no evil, i.e. in which a person is willing to bear the suffering inflicted on him by other

people without trying to seek compensation from these people or from a third party. On our definition of evil, any act which breaks the inexorable chain of the natural history of evil as described above is good.

It is natural, I have argued above, for a person to love or resent in return to and in proportion to which he has received pleasures or pains. Any act which breaks this natural chain is good. This conclusion is not so much merely an inference from my definition of evil as an observation of fact. The goodness of acts that break the chain consists in the avoidance of evil; in the fact that such acts are like a barrier through which evil cannot be passed on and handed down to the next generation. Now I have explained that Relationship and Solitude constitute such barriers. A person who can love absolutely or live in absolute detachment does not make use of other people to compensate himself for the pains inflicted on him by them or third persons.

It is true that the appearance of goodness in a picture which contains such barrier acts is a direct consequence of our initial definition of evil. One might, therefore, object that we are able to find goodness as a fact in the kind of picture we are seeking, only because we have initially asserted as a dogma that evil is to use other people for one's own purposes. This dogmatic value judgement makes it possible to think of a certain picture of the world that contains performances which are good. The observation of such a picture would entitle us to say that Relationship and Solitude are good and that, when we are saying this, we are merely describing certain facts, namely the barrier-like quality of Relationship and Solitude. If ethical judgements to the effect that Relationship and Solitude are good acquire thus a cognitive value, they do so only because we have pushed the argument a stage further back. We really ought to admit then that our initial evaluation, our statement that evil consists in making use of other people, is an ethical judgement which has no cognitive value. It is a dogmatic assertion, and not a description of certain facts contained in the picture we are searching for or in any picture.

It is not possible to meet this objection. But it is possible to weaken its strength by a further consideration. I said that there are two senses in which the picture we are seeking can contain

the fact that Relationship and Solitude are good. So far we have only considered the first, negative sense in which it can contain goodness. We must now consider the second, positive sense.

If the picture contains an account of human nature which shows that Relationship and Solitude are the natural end of human existence, we are entitled to the conclusion that in terms of that picture it is becoming to man to seek Relationship or Solitude or both; and that any refusal to do so would be an arbitrary refusal to be natural. Now I admit that in a strictly logical sense it would be wrong to maintain that just because Relationship and Solitude are thus seen to be becoming to man, they are good. In a sense, the natural end of all human existence is death – and in the universe as a whole (if we are to believe the second law of thermodynamics), energy is continually and heat irreversibly decreasing. But one could not really maintain that it follows from these and similar observations that death or the loss of energy enshrines any ethical value. All the same, it seems true to say that the acceptance of one's natural end and the pursuit of it enshrines an ethical value. If such an acceptance offends one's moral sense, it can have little ethical value. But if it actually enhances it and corresponds to it, then we are entitled to conclude that the acceptance of what is becoming for man lends to our moral sense a very strong basis in fact. If we find that Relationship and Solitude are a fitting and becoming goal of human existence; if we find a picture of the world in which these two goals appear – as a matter of fact – as the end towards which all existence converges, there is a strong presumption that we should accept them as ethical values. And if we then remember our earlier reflections upon evil and the barrier-like quality of Relationship and Solitude, and how this barrier constitutes the avoidance of evil, the reasons for this acceptance are strongly reinforced. In short: I do not wish to argue (and I cannot see how anyone could argue) that the appearance of Relationship and Solitude as the final goals of existence in the picture we are seeking would entitle us to express the judgement that Relationship and Solitude are good. But I do wish to argue that, taken in conjunction with our earlier considerations about the way in which evil can be transcended, the observation that Relationship and Solitude

are the goals of existence would lend a very strong presumption to the conclusion that they are in fact good. If we then could find a picture of the world in which there occur acts of Relationship and Solitude as barriers to evil, and in which Relationship and Solitude appear as the ends of existence, we would be strongly entitled to the assertion that in such a picture Relationship and Solitude are good; and that any judgement to that effect is neither arbitrary nor dogmatic nor conventional nor the result of a naturalistic fallacy, but a statement of fact. Given such a picture, then, the ethical judgement that Relationship and Solitude are good would have a clear and unimpugnable *cognitive* value. It would have this cognitive value firstly in the sense that the barrier-like quality of Relationship and Solitude in regard to evil is a fact; and secondly in the sense that it is a fact that Relationship and Solitude are the goals of existence. I have admitted that in a strictly logical way nothing definite can follow about the goodness of Relationship and Solitude from either of these two senses taken singly. As far as the first sense is concerned, we have found on closer examination that the goodness of Relationship and Solitude depended on a prior, dogmatic assertion about the nature of evil. And that as far as the second sense is concerned, mere fittingness or becomingness is not quite the same as goodness. But if the two senses are taken jointly, they can be seen to lend strong support to the view that the judgement that Relationship and Solitude are good, is a cognitive judgement, i.e. the result of the observation of a certain picture of the world. It is, moreover, worth recalling at this stage that for ethical judgements to be cognitive ones, they do not necessarily have to be factual descriptions of a state of affairs. All that is required for them to have cognitive value and for them to be distinguished from the various other alleged kinds of ethical judgements which we have discussed, is that there should be reasonable grounds (as opposed to arbitrary, conventional or subjective ones, etc.) for making them, and that there should thus be a possibility for discussing them. And, in the case described, that requirement is amply fulfilled.

We must now turn to an examination of the kind of picture we are seeking and which alone will give to the ethical judgements in question their cognitive value. A few considerations will make

it clear that the picture we are seeking cannot, by the nature of the case, be an ordinary naturalistic picture of human nature (even though this may sound paradoxical: but it is not really paradoxical when one remembers that the word 'naturalistic' in 'ordinary naturalistic picture' is a completely different word from the expression 'nature' in 'human nature'). I will explain in the following chapter what precisely is meant by an 'ordinary naturalistic picture' and how it differs from other conceivable pictures. Here it must suffice to say that I mean by it a picture that is compiled according to the simple criteria of empirical and statistical observation.

There are two simple and cogent reasons why the picture we are looking for must not be an ordinarily naturalistic picture. Firstly, any inference in an ordinarily naturalistic picture from facts to the values in question would be a naturalistic fallacy. And this would be so quite apart from the fact that it would be very difficult to show that in our contemporary western societies the aims in question are being pursued or desired by a sufficiently large number of people for us to maintain that they are the good; even if we were willing to commit the naturalistic fallacy. The most we could hope to show is that there were societies in the past where the pursuit of absolute love and of absolute consciousness was either sincerely desired by a large number of people or believed to be desirable even by those people who for some reason or other did not actually pursue them. Such observation would at best give rise to the historicist reflection that the values in question are two values relative to a certain society, but of little significance in the societies in which we happen to be living now. There is no need to survey the problem again: no amount of observation of what people are in fact doing or desiring could ever provide the smallest clue as to what is good. If we are seeking the kind of information which would make an ethical judgement cognitive, this information can, by definition, not be found in an ordinary picture of the world, composed of pieces of straight factual observation.

Secondly, it is by definition almost impossible that acts of absolute love and of absolute consciousness should occur in a picture that is compiled according to empirical criteria. As far as absolute consciousness is concerned, there can be no doubt at all: consciousness (our empirical method of relating events to

one another tells us), is always intentional. One is always conscious *of* something, and the expression 'to be conscious' should not be used in a sense other than a transitive sense. The very expression 'absolute consciousness' makes no sense and should not be used. There is nothing in our empirical experience to correspond to it; nothing that could be described by it. The case is less clear and decisive with the expression 'absolute love'. For it is well known that there are cases of love that stand in no commensurable relationship to the object or person loved. The expressions 'incommensurable love' or 'absolute love' are therefore not senseless in an empirical context in the sense in which the expression 'absolute consciousness' is. But our empirical habits of treating evidence make us inclined to look upon all manifestations of love that are out of proportion with the desirability of the object as neurotic. We tend to consider such acts of love to be abnormal, and we feel it therefore incumbent to seek for special explanations: when a man loves a woman with a love that is out of proportion to her desirability, and when the woman is actually the kind of woman that destroys the man who loves her, we will say that his love is neurotic or obsessive, and that the incommensurability of the love is due to some hidden guilt feeling, or to an aggressiveness which the man wishes to compensate for, or hide from himself, as the case may be. Now in many cases of incommensurable love there is little doubt that such an explanation, or a very similar one, is actually called for; and that a return to a normal, i.e. a commensurate form of love, is desirable. But it does not follow *necessarily* from this insight that every time a love is out of proportion to the lovableness of the loved object, that love is due to a mental unbalance; and that love, like consciousness, should always be 'intentional', i.e. a well-proportioned response to well-measured degrees of desirability. And yet that is the conclusion that one is more or less consciously driven to by empirical methods of observation. For these methods of observation predispose us, one might almost say require us, to see in love a response to a stimulus. If one takes, for instance, the very crude principle of empiricism that there is nothing in our mind that does not enter it through our senses, one will naturally think that any love that is greater than the received stimulus warrants, is a fancy, an illusion, a mirage or a neurotic response.

People very frequently believe that any failure to love on their part is fully justified if they can prove that the object or person loved is in fact not loveable, i.e. fails to deserve love. On the assumption that love is a well-proportioned response to a stimulus, this justification seems indeed a sensible one. And as long as the phenomenon of love is viewed in this empirical manner, it is very difficult, if not impossible, to appreciate the significance of incommensurable or absolute love which is *not* relative to the desirability of the object, and which, therefore, cannot be sized up by any empirically ascertainable stimulus-response relation.

The most striking example of the view that absolute love does not occur if we confine our observations to positive facts, is the opinion of Sartre that there is no love other than the love of the master for the slave, of the sadist for his victim. He means to say that no man ever loves unless it is in proportion to the gratifications the 'loved' object affords him. According to this view, 'love' is defined entirely by a give and take, stimulus and response, relationship. The outgoings are exactly conditioned by the income, and are strictly proportionate to it.

We are now in a position to state with some precision the qualities the picture we are seeking must have. To begin with – and this really goes without saying – the picture must be epistemologically convincing. That is, it must show the world in such a way that our criteria of logic and critical rigour are satisfied. Secondly, it must be such that Relationship and Solitude, that is acts of absolute love and of absolute consciousness, appear in it. These acts, as we have seen, cannot really appear in a picture which is composed entirely of empirical data; for absolute consciousness certainly does not appear among our empirical data; and absolute love, when it does so appear, appears in a way that makes one inclined to think of it as a case of neurotic obsession or some other kind of mental aberration. Thirdly, the picture must not only contain Relationship and Solitude; but must contain them in such a way that practically everything else in the picture converges towards either the one or the other or towards both. The picture, in other words, must be a teleological one, with Relationship and Solitude as the two ends.

The third requirement is not an epistemological one. When

we have obtained our picture, we may or may not find that it has been met. But the second requirement is of an epistemological order: it amounts to nothing less and to nothing more than that the picture be a non-naturalistic one. This means that it must contain facts (e.g. Relationship and Solitude) which we are either not able to observe, or observe only in an oblique way. For we have seen that neither of these two phenomena can possibly appear among facts as ordinarily observed. The picture we are seeking must then, at least in parts, be a non-empirical picture, or to use a much abused term, a metaphysical picture.

For, to make a long matter short, propositions asserting the existence of absolute love and of absolute consciousness are metaphysical propositions; and Relationship and Solitude are metaphysical facts. By metaphysical proposition I mean a proposition, the truth or falsity of which cannot be ascertained by empirical evidence; a proposition, to the meaning of which all empirical evidence is irrelevant and which is, therefore, held in complete disregard of empirical evidence. Metaphysical propositions are not about the empirically constructed, naturalistic picture of the world. Whenever they are confronted with such a picture, they turn out to be not so much false (for that would already imply that they have some bearing on the picture) but meaningless, i.e. they turn out to be totally indifferent or irrelevant to any occurrence in the picture. If one says, for instance, that time is unreal, one is making a metaphysical statement. When confronted with ordinary experience, such a statement is neither true nor false; for even though we may believe in its truth (i.e. its metaphysical truth), we would never risk not paying attention to train time-tables only because we believe in its metaphysical truth. This observation has unfortunately tempted many philosophers into maintaining that metaphysical propositions, since they so obviously have no relevance to the practical world we are living in, and since no metaphysician putting them forward is willing to alter his ordinary behaviour accordingly (e.g. become oblivious to time-tables), are meaningless propositions.

It seems to me that such a conclusion is completely unwarranted. The observation merely proves that metaphysical propositions do not refer (and in fact nobody ever said that they did) to the world presented to us in our ordinary experience.

And considering the stubbornness with which people have clung to metaphysical propositions, and considering that philosophers like Bradley and McTaggart both used to argue that metaphysical propositions are held by instinct, it would be rash to conclude that the only world there is is the one that is presented to us by our ordinary experience, and that propositions that obviously do not refer to it are meaningless propositions, i.e. propositions that refer to nothing. I would propose, therefore, that it seems much more reasonable to infer from the said observations that metaphysical propositions do in fact refer not to the ordinarily experienced picture of the world, but to a different picture altogether. And that it is not only not surprising when propositions about absolute consciousness and the unreality of time cannot be seen to be meaningful in terms of ordinary experience, but that, in fact, it would be surprising if they could.

Our next task is, therefore, an investigation of metaphysics. It will turn out that the whole problem of metaphysical propositions can be solved if one understands clearly the relationship between various pictures of the world, and more precisely between those pictures that are the subject-matter of metaphysical speculation and those that are the subject-matter of scientific theories.

THE PRINCIPLES OF METAPHYSICS

I wish to put forward the thesis that metaphysical propositions are synthetic *a posteriori* propositions.* To say that they are synthetic is to say that there is evidence in terms of which they are either true or false; and to say that they are *a posteriori* is to say that there are phenomena that are described by metaphysical propositions and the observation of which gives rise to such propositions. This thesis is opposed to practically all the various, commonly held, beliefs about the nature of metaphysical propositions. It is, for example, opposed to the view that metaphysical propositions are due to pure reason and are therefore *a priori*, and that they do not refer to any observable phenomena and can, therefore, not be said to be synthetic. It is equally opposed to the view that metaphysical propositions are synthetic *a priori*. It is, of course, also opposed to the view that they are analytic *a posteriori* – although I do not think that anybody has ever held this view. There are many possible variations of the first two views to which my thesis is opposed.

* The expression 'synthetic *a posteriori*' is quaint and possibly a pleonasm. I have chosen it on purpose in order to indicate the point at which my argument differs from that of Kant. For Kant was adamant that metaphysical propositions, if they are possible at all, are synthetic *a priori*. As I propose to argue that metaphysical propositions are not derived by pure reason but are propositions about certain experiences I thought it best, in this context, to stress that metaphysical propositions are synthetic (as Kant thought they would have to be) and *a posteriori*, i.e. based upon experiences. By the choice of this expression I mean to indicate that, contrary to Kant's view, they are not unlike scientific propositions. If it were not for the fact that Kant had argued that they would have to be synthetic *a priori* and that I would like to contradict this view, it would be perfectly sufficient to describe them as either synthetic or *a posteriori*.

For the time being I will leave these views as well as the many possible variations that are opposed to my thesis aside, and deal with them at the end of this chapter.

By metaphysical propositions I mean such doctrines as 'time is unreal', 'consciousness is absolute', 'the supreme mind thinks itself', 'God is triune', and such like. One should note at the outset that these propositions are not generalizations, like scientific theories but, in their logical form, more like particular statements, like assertions of particularity.

There are two other kinds of general statements which are with more or less justification called metaphysical statements. Whitehead's doctrine that 'all organisms prehend' is an example of the first kind; and the generalizations of the 'all-some' type, described by Watkins,* are an example of the second type. Whitehead's doctrine is, however, not really different from an ordinary scientific generalization. It differs from such generalizations only in degree. It is so highly general that it is difficult to say what particular facts would count for or against its truth. The only reason for calling it metaphysical is its high degree of generality and the fact that that generality is not the kind of generality that is described as 'unlimited universality', but a kind of generality that consists in the meaning of the concepts of organism and prehension. Whitehead was not only interested in establishing the fact that *all* organisms prehend; but also in showing that the most general characteristic of organisms is *to prehend*. But since Whitehead himself always insisted that he was merely aiming at scientific doctrines of such generality that all other scientific doctrines could be subsumed under them, it is very questionable whether anything can be gained from dubbing his and similar doctrines metaphysical.

As far as the 'all-some' statements are concerned it is certainly

* J. W. N. Watkins has shown that there are certain statements of the 'all-some' kind which are in principle incapable of falsification. They enjoy 'a charmed life' and ought therefore to be considered metaphysical. At the same time they may be inconsistent with hypotheses which are controlled by experience and therefore, though metaphysical, have an important logical connection with science. Cp. his 'The Haunted Universe', *The Listener*, 21 and 28 November 1957; 'Between Analytical and Empirical', *Philosophy*, 32, 1957; 'Confirmable and Influential Metaphysics', *Mind*, 67, 1958.

true, as Watkins contends, that they are neither verifiable nor falsifiable. The theory that every event has a cause, for instance, can neither be verified nor falsified; but we can get an inconclusive instantiation of it by discovering that an event A has a cause. One may conclude from this observation that the theory in question is metaphysical in some respects (e.g. it cannot be shown conclusively to be either true or false), but 'scientific' and non-metaphysical in another respect (e.g. it has a bearing on ordinary existential statements such as 'event A is caused by event B'). All this shows that scientific statements and certain types of apparently metaphysical statements are not wholly different from one another. But for that very reason I propose to omit any further consideration of such types of metaphysical statements.

Furthermore, I do not propose to adhere to the time-honoured distinction between theological and non-theological (but metaphysical) statements. Propositions such as 'God exists' or 'God is triune' are to my mind, and for reasons which will appear presently, as metaphysical as the proposition that time is unreal. Any attempt to distinguish theological propositions from metaphysical ones is based on purely material considerations. That is to say that at best one can draw such a distinction only according to the content of the doctrines, not according to the way in which they are arrived at. Some are obviously more concerned with the nature of God than others, but such a difference in material content does not provide a reason for believing that from an epistemological point of view they form a class apart. I know that this too is very commonly denied, and again I propose to postpone a discussion of this denial to the end of the chapter. To begin with, it is enough to state that all these metaphysical propositions have one feature in common and that that feature constitutes their metaphysicalness: there is nothing in our ordinary experience, nothing in our picture of nature and of the natural world we live in, that would enable one to say whether these doctrines are true or false; and that one must, therefore (unless one decides blindly and stubbornly that the natural world is the only world there is), form the conclusion that these doctrines do not refer to the natural world we know. When it is said that they are synthetic *a posteriori* doctrines, this is meant to state that they are

doctrines about phenomena that do not occur in nature. But, and this will appear in the course of the argument, I do not mean to suggest that they are doctrines about extra-sensory phenomena or about events that are miraculous either in the sense that they are miraculously perceived, or in the sense that they are of a miraculous nature and ordinarily perceived, or both. On the contrary, the phenomena the metaphysical doctrines are about (their subject-matter), though they do not themselves occur in nature, stand in a very clearly definable relation to the phenomena that *do* occur in nature. There can, therefore, be no question of any miraculous or irrational form of perception of these phenomena, and I would reject as non-philosophical any attempt to account for metaphysical doctrines in any irrational way.

My thesis is based upon a complete confidence in the validity of Kant's distinction between phenomena and *noumena*. Whatever knowledge we have is a knowledge of certain appearances, not of the World Itself. All attempts to discover what the World Itself looks like seem to be based upon a very serious logical confusion. To ask what the World looks like in reality, that is as distinct from the way in which it appears, is like asking what the World looks like when nobody is looking. In other words: all knowledge is linked to the categories of our sensuous experiences and a knowledge that is not so linked is completely inconceivable, for such knowledge would have to be linked to a category of which we can form no conception. All one can say about the World is what Heidegger said about it: 'The World worlds'. Heidegger himself, it would seem, thought that this proposition expressed a profound insight into the nature of the *noumenal* World. I cannot see that it does. But the statement is nevertheless a significant one for a reason precisely opposite to the one for which Heidegger thought it significant: it expresses the fact that there is nothing, absolutely nothing, to be said about the World Itself. It is true that philosophers like Bergson have maintained that there are in fact non-rational categories by which we can manage to understand the World as it is in Itself. But a discussion of these non-rational categories would require a suspension of reason; and such a suspension can, from a rational point of view, be hardly considered feasible. It would indeed amount to a self-denying ordinance,

to an arbitrary decree, based on rational insights, which rules reason, at a certain point in the inquiry, out of order. Some people may be inclined towards such a despotic act of philosophical self-mutilation. But for the genuine philosopher such a self-denial is impossible. If he wishes to remain true to his philosophical activity, he must abide by the requirements of reason and therefore eschew the invitation to pursue his inquiries with the help of non-rational categories. In the context of our present problem, this means that he must remain content with the assertion that the World Itself cannot be 'known' and that all our knowledge is of phenomena, i.e. of the world as it appears.

This is, of course, an old argument and there is no need to repeat all detailed considerations that have from time to time been advanced in its favour. Basically they all come to this: the World is a seamless whole. Every single statement about it must be couched in terms that relate one part to another. But since in the seamless whole no part can be isolated and still remain part of a seamless whole, it is not possible to formulate adequate expressions about the World. It follows, therefore, that no single statements can be made about the World. But it is equally true that nothing at all can be said about the World as a whole. We cannot assert even that it exists; and we cannot say anything about the nature of its existence, e.g. whether it is finite or infinite. There is no conceivable answer to the question why anything, rather than nothing, exists. And our minds cannot conceive that the World should be neither finite nor infinite. And yet, since it is also inconceivable that it is either finite or infinite, this is exactly what we should be required to conceive. In every single respect, therefore, the World is a mystery. (I would like to stress that I do not say that the existence of the World is a mystery. To assert that it exists is already to assert more than we can answer for.) I think, therefore, that Wittgenstein was wrong when he made his celebrated statement that the mystery is *that* the World is; not *how* it is. Quite generally speaking, the nature of its existence is as mysterious as the fact of its existence:

Nicht ist die Liebe erlernt
Nicht ist das Leiden erkannt.

Was im Tod uns entfernt,
Ist nicht entschleiert.
Allein das Lied überm Land,
Heiligt und feiert.
(R. M. Rilke)*

We must conclude, therefore, that the only thing that can be said about the World is a tautology such as 'the World worlds'.

As the next step, I would insist on an important distinction between the various appearances of the world. Every appearance of the World is a picture of the World. And I would like to argue that there are many different pictures of the World and not, as is frequently supposed, only one. Every picture that is drawn of the World is a picture drawn according to certain criteria; and while it is impossible to consider that any picture of the World contains phenomena other than the ones that can be observed with the one or the other of our senses, it is certainly possible to consider that there are many different criteria by which the various phenomena can be arranged and put together into determinate objects or events.

I would, first of all, like to describe that picture of the World which I shall call, for reasons which will presently become apparent, the positive picture of the World.

The positive picture of the World is the picture that is made use of in the construction of or in the testing of scientific theories. It coincides up to a point with the picture of our ordinary experience, of the kind of experience we make use of in our daily round of activities. The coincidence is, however, not perfect: in our daily activities we often are less exacting in the measurements of objects and events; and we seem to be able to get by, catching trains, sizing up people, gathering our food, and so on, without adhering strictly to the standards of measurement and observation required for the testing of scientific theories. This observation has made people puzzle a great deal

* Sorrow we misunderstand,
Love we have still to begin.
Death and what's hidden therein

Await unveiling.
Song alone circles the land,
Hallowing and hailing.
(Leishman's Translation)

and has even given rise to several grandiose attempts at persuading us to speak in such a way as would be in fact consistent with the requirements of scientific theories. Eddington, for instance, tried to persuade us that when we are putting our finger on a table there is a rare chance that it will go right through, for the material table, so atomic theory says, is more like a swarm of atomic flies than like a solid object. There have been many controversies about the desirability and the feasibility of bringing the picture of the World we use for ordinary practical purposes into line with the picture that is drawn by scientific theories. But when one considers that apart from the scientific, positive picture, there are so many other possible pictures of the World, the problem can hardly seem a very urgent one. Only if one believes that the positive picture is the only possible one, does the question acquire some immediate urgency. On the assumption that there are other pictures, the problem loses its urgency: for it is quite conceivable that the picture we ordinarily make use of is a mixture of several possible pictures and that it is only roughly consistent with the positive picture.

The positive picture of the World is the result of a number of requirements.

Ordinary experience is collected according to two major rules. It must be inter-subjectively testable; and it must make an observable difference to something or someone. We often do hear of records of experiences which satisfy neither of the two rules. But it is customary to treat such experience with the greatest of caution and not to make it the basis for altering our behaviour, our beliefs or our scientific investigations, unless it has been reproduced in one way or another in conformity with at least one of the two rules. The two rules themselves seem somehow to be connected with each other. For 'inter-subjective testability' means that the experience must be capable of being reported in much the same way by more than one person. And this in turn demands adherence to the second rule, for an experience that makes no difference at all to someone or something, whatever else it may be, is certainly not inter-subjectively testable.

More generally speaking, the two rules have given rise to a standard requirement for ordinary experience. Ordinary experience

must be such that any event can be seen as the function of another event. This requirement is the result of the imposition of the two above rules. It means that whatever is ordinarily experienced must be an event which is related to another event which, in turn, can be ordinarily experienced.

For instance: when I see a cow, I do not ordinarily state that I am conscious of a cow; for consciousness is an event which cannot be observed by others, and to be just conscious of a cow need not necessarily make any observable difference anywhere. I may be dreaming or suffering from a hallucination. In order to fulfil the two rules and to satisfy the general requirement they give rise to, one says that the cow is related to certain changes in the visual field; that it causes changes in the retina; or that it is linked to a certain behaviour of light rays, etc. Any statement of the experience in terms that link the cow with certain other events, which themselves satisfy the rules and the general requirement, is a genuine description of experience. It is true, of course, that this process of describing experiences is a never-ending one. For, say, the behaviour of light rays becomes itself only a genuine experience when it is, in turn, related to another observable event. Thus it can be related to the difference the rays make to a photographic plate; and these differences, again, can be related to the differences produced in certain chemicals with which the plate is coated, and so on. This problem, however, need not concern the present argument.

Given the various requirements which the positive picture has to fulfil, we can say that it is a picture in which every single feature must be functionally related to another feature – which in turn must be inside the positive picture in the sense that it too can be functionally related to another feature – which in turn must be inside the positive picture in the sense that it too can be functionally related to another event in that picture; and so on. The positive picture is therefore autarchic. The order that emerges in it, and the way in which its parts or features assemble themselves and are connected with one another, can therefore be said to be inherent in the picture itself. It is not ordered through an outside criterion, but is entirely autarchic. The order that arises in the positive picture is self-made or spontaneous. It can be changed, of course, by ascertaining that

a functional dependence is in fact not a functional dependence or that its function is other than it appeared to be. But even such a change of order is entirely due to the establishment of a different functional dependence inside the same picture. No extraneous consideration can ever have any influence upon the order in the positive picture.

We find, therefore, that through what we have called ordinary experience, there emerges something like a picture of the world or of nature. The picture is a fluid one in that it can never be complete. But what interests us is the observation that it is of necessity a picture that is poorer than the totality of the world. All pictures, if they are to serve any purpose at all, must be poorer than the totality of the world; for if one could survey that totality, one would become quite giddy and soon lose one's way. But the picture that results from experience is poorer than the totality of the World in a different sense as well. It is in fact poorer than another possible picture of the same world; but one that is not drawn in conformity with the requirements of experience as stated.

The poverty of the picture which emerges from experience and which I shall henceforth call the positive picture, consists in the fact that it leaves out, in conformity with the requirements according to which it is being drawn, a whole class of events. The nature of these events is such that any awareness of them would, by definition, not be classed as experience. These events are then omitted from the picture of the world such as it emerges ordinarily.

The events in question, if such they can properly be called, have variously been described as 'inner experiences' (Maine de Biran) or as subjective states of mind or as feeling-states or states of consciousness. By definition it is impossible to characterize them in terms of ordinary experience. (But this fact can, of course, not be taken as a ground for a denial that they occur; for in view of the fact that what I have called ordinary experience is subject to a number of self-limiting rules, it cannot be used as a criterion of what does and what does not occur.) At the same time, there is such a widespread unanimity of opinion that they *do* occur that it would seem wrong-headed to seek for grounds on which their occurrence could be denied. And one could do no better than remember the wise words written

recently by Professor Campbell on this subject in his essay on 'Self-Activity and Its Modes':*

> There are not, perhaps, many errors that bring in their train so extensive a series of philosophical disasters as that of supposing that 'experience' is reducible without remainder to consciousness of something before the mind, something presented to the subject. The error is in part explicable, no doubt, by the fact that it is not his subjective activity, but the object to which it is directed, that commonly interests the experiencing subject, and that thus lies in the focus of his attention. The subject's consciousness of his own subjective functioning is, as a rule, very faint and inexplicit by comparison with his consciousness of his object. Yet it is a little surprising that the strenuous efforts of notable thinkers like Maine de Biran in the nineteenth century and Alexander, Pringle-Pattison, and Bowman in our own day, who have laboured to show that awareness of the subjective side is in some degree present in all experience, should have borne so very little fruit. Even if we are a little hesitant about endorsing their thesis in its full universality, still there do seem to be at least some experiences, for example, that of effortful willing, in which the direct awareness of subjective functioning can hardly be missed save by those who are determined on a priori grounds not to find it. When we have collated with meticulous care all the items 'objectively' apprehended in an experience of effortful volition, it remains perfectly clear that these items in their totality do not add up to what we in fact experience in 'making' the volition. There is missing what one might call, in Bradley's phrase, 'the felt outgoing of the self from the self', the inner experience of the subject in its subjective functioning. To this experience we can at least attach a meaning; for we can reproduce it whenever we set ourselves to 'relive' a volition, although in the nature of the case it cannot be presented to us as an 'object'. It is thus, and thus alone, that activity in general is to be known: and I ought perhaps to give warning that a good deal of what I have to say in this paper will be incomprehensible to anyone unable to discover in his experience anything more than the presentation of 'objects' to a 'subject'.

The whole weight of opinion in contemporary British philosophy is opposed to the belief that there are mental states or mental events of that kind. I wish to argue not only that they exist; but also that their presence can only be detected and

* *Contemporary British Philosophy*, 3rd series, London, 1956, pp. 88–89.

indicated, and that their nature can be described only in a very special and indirect way.

Ryle argues that there is nothing over and above doing or saying something. The view that there is, he says, is the view that things happen double – that there is a ghost in the machine. To do something sadly or intelligently, is simply to do something in a certain special way.

Wittgenstein's arguments seem more sophisticated. He insisted that to be in pain or to be sad is something one is immediately aware of. One cannot *know* or *perceive* that one is sad or in pain as one can know that there is a chair in the room. He concluded from that very sound observation that we do not learn the right application of the word 'pain' by knowing something, but that we learn its right application by learning the right use of the word, i.e. its 'logic'.

Ryle, it seems to me, is quite wrong. We certainly know by introspection (we shall return presently to the exact meaning of this process) that there is something over and above doing something sadly. And I have no hesitation in subscribing to Campbell's statement quoted above. It is true that we know of this 'over and above' only by introspection. If someone maintains that introspection does not count, then Ryle is right. But he is right, in that case, only because he begins his argument by legislating that a certain kind of evidence does not count, i.e. by a despotic act.

Wittgenstein, on the other hand, seems to me to be right in thinking that pain and sadness are known immediately: they are felt, rather than perceived. He is right in saying that we cannot *know* that we are sad; because our sadness is a feeling and is, therefore, not an object of knowledge. But he is wrong in inferring from these observations that the appropriateness of saying 'I am sad' depends on the logic of 'sad'; or in inferring that since sadness is not an object of knowledge we learn the meaning of sadness by the way the word 'sadness' is used. He is wrong on the ground of his own argument. If I say I am sad, I say no more than any observer can say about me. And to such an observer *my* sadness (i.e. my tears, etc.) *is* an object of knowledge. Hence, when I say 'I am sad', I pretend to be talking about myself as a stranger would, i.e. as a man to whom my sadness *is* an object of knowledge. But Wittgenstein himself asserted

that my sadness is *not* an object of knowledge to me. It would rather follow from this assertion that when I say I am sad, I *mean* something other than the person who observes my sadness means and to whom my sadness is an object of knowledge. Hence there must be a way of giving expression to the fact that my sadness is *not* an object of knowledge, to me, *other* than making the statement 'I am sad' – which latter is a statement, the meaning of which one may indeed learn by learning the logic of the word 'sad'.

Wittgenstein's argument draws attention to an incontestable fact. Sadness and pain are feelings and not objects of knowledge. The weakness of his view lies in the fact that he insists that the truth or falsity of the observation that one is sad does not depend upon knowledge, i.e. on whether something is the case; but upon the right use of the words in question. Only knowledge, he says, can be right or wrong. And since feeling sad is not knowledge, there must be a different procedure for deciding whether the statement 'I am sad' is appropriate or not.

This whole reasoning is based upon the more or less tacit assumption that introspection or one's awareness of one's feelings cannot be wrong in the sense in which one can be wrong about the perception of a chair. If one grants this, then one must also grant that Wittgenstein was right in believing that the only procedure left for testing the statement 'I am sad' is to ask whether 'sad' in the statement is used according to its proper logic – whatever that logic may be. (It is only fair to add that Wittgenstein believed that a word can have a variety of logics.)

As against this, I want to argue that there *is* a way in which introspection can be wrong and in which one can make a mistake when one is saying 'I am sad'. There is therefore no need to conclude, as Wittgenstein did, that an examination of the logic of the words in question is the only procedure left for deciding the validity of the assertion that I am sad.

If one takes it that introspection is simply a form of inner perception, of taking a look at the inside of one's mind, then there is no difficulty in the view that such a look can lead to wrong knowledge. One could then be wrong as one might be wrong in taking a look at a room and saying that there is a chair in the room, when in fact there is none, or when in fact

the only object in the room is a stool. But I think most people are now agreed that whatever introspection is, it is not a form of inspecting one's mind, not a form of inner perception. And it is true that one can therefore not say that one is mistaking a feeling of joy for a feeling of sadness as one can mistake a chair for a stool.

In order to show how one can be wrong about one's feelings (albeit not wrong in the sense in which one can be wrong about the perception of a chair), I must repeat the argument which I advanced above in criticism of Wittgenstein. A mental state, such as sadness, cannot be described literally. When I say I am sad, I say no more about myself than any outside observer who is noticing my tears might say about me. But since *my* sadness is in fact a feeling that differs profoundly from anything an outside observer can know or feel, it follows that my statement 'I am sad' is a wholly inadequate description of my feelings.

I would like to argue, therefore, that there is only one adequate way of describing or indicating one's feelings. And that way is an indirect one. In order to stress that when one is feeling sad one is feeling something other than an observer of one's tears and one's long face, one must point at an event or an object and say 'that is how I feel'. That event or object becomes then the symbol of one's feeling-state. It indicates (it can hardly be said to describe) the state of how one feels oneself to be. This kind of symbolization takes care of our difficulty. For a symbol can really symbolize a state of feeling in a way in which the statement 'I am sad' cannot. For the statement 'I am sad' does not indicate more than an observer can notice. And we found that a proper 'description' of a feeling-state requires an act that does *more* than that.

Bearing this in mind, we can now return to the proof that one can indeed be wrong about one's feelings, even though it is admitted that awareness of these feelings is not a form of perception. One can be wrong about one's feeling-states in the following way.

If I have a feeling of distance I might say to myself that I feel as if everybody on the street were infinitely far away. In this case I form an image (symbol) of certain events that are not physically verifiable (they do not exist in the positive picture). These events symbolize my feeling-state.

On second thought I might realize that the image does not appear to be meaningful (where 'meaningful' is an undefined and unexplained category). I therefore cast around for another image. It arises when I picture people not infinitely far away from me – but only incapable of making their voices carry sufficiently far to reach me . . . I'm for ever stretching my ears to catch what they say.

The second image is an alternative to the first and turns out to be more meaningful. Hence it must replace the first as a symbol. The first symbol is now said to have been a mistake, an error of judgement.

To discover such a kind of mistake, is certainly very different from discovering that one has used a word wrongly. Since one cannot describe or indicate a feeling-state other than by symbolizing it, one can very well be mistaken in a description of a feeling by choosing the wrong symbol for it. Such wrong choices are frequently experienced, and they stem mostly from carelessness in what one considers to be meaningful. They are also often made by people whose idea of meaningfulness is not a very exacting one. On reflection, such mistakes can be corrected by substituting one symbol for another or by amending the original symbol. But since the feeling-state is identified and distinguished from other feeling-states by symbolization, the choice of a wrong or vague or ambiguous symbol must lead to a mistake in identification. In this way 'introspection' can very well be wrong.

We can thus state a number of conclusions. Mental events take place. They are not ghostly duplicates of 'real' events, and they are not known by perception. Although not known as chairs and tables are known, one can be wrong in identifying them as this or that feeling. And such mistakes of identifications are not mistakes in the use of words, but genuine mistakes in symbolization. For mental events and feeling-states cannot be described by so many words, but can only be symbolized.

Attacking this same problem from a different angle, Professor I. A. Ramsey has reached strikingly similar conclusions and I consider this part of the argument so important that I would like to quote him at some length:

> Can human behaviour in principle, and on all occasions, be adequately and satisfactorily treated in terms of observables, in terms of what can be perceptually verified?

> Let us admit at the outset that human behaviour would be no more than the observables which characterize it if A's saying 'I did X' *always* meant in principle no more than B's saying of A, 'He did X'. Further, let us readily admit that *sometimes* this is the case. Sometimes I *do* speak of myself as others speak of me, i.e. wholly in terms of observables. . . . While we may readily allow that 'I' sometimes functions as 'he', yet we may also argue that this is not the whole account of the logic of 'I'. At this point we are both echoing and rejecting something which Wittgenstein once said.

Ramsey then explains that Wittgenstein held that the word 'I' or any other word which denotes a subject, is used in two utterly different ways, one in which it is on a level with other people and one in which it is not; and that this difference was a difference in the grammar of our ordinary language. Ramsey continues thus:

> There are thus two uses of 'I'. But Wittgenstein said, let us notice, that this difference is just a difference of 'grammar', and by this I suppose he meant not only that the distinctive use of 'I' is not one which is perpetually verifiable (with which we would agree), but more positively (with which we would not agree) that the difference arises merely and simply because we need somehow to distinguish the speaker from the hearer. I do not deny that we need to make the distinction. *My point is that more needs saying as well.* But what more?
>
> To answer that question consider the three assertions:
>
> *a*) 'The Dean shuts the door' said by the Dean or someone else, say B, of the Dean.
> *b*) 'I shut the door' said by the Dean of the Dean.
> *c*) 'He shut the door' said by B of the Dean.
>
> There is no difficulty with *a*); everything can be verified equally well by everybody; speaker and hearer are on the same footing. But in *b*) does 'I' just 'indicate' the speaker? Certainly it does that; but it surely does more than peg the assertion to this point, this speaker, this chap talking. For it asserts that particular existence which I know to be definitely mine. Now I agree that this 'extra' in *b*) is not a perceptually verifiable 'more'. It is not like the 'more' we tell about Tom's uncle by speaking of 'Tom's *rich* uncle'. The 'more' in this assertion *b*) is something which can never be enumerated in observational terms. How then can it be secured?*

* 'The Possibility and Purpose of Metaphysical Theory', in I. A. Ramsey, ed., *Prospect for Metaphysics*, London, 1961, pp. 164–6.

The answer to this question can be given if we now return to the main line of the argument. For simplicity's sake I would suggest that we draw the following diagram:

Field A contains all feeling-states or states of consciousness; and field B contains all other events. The positive picture of the World emerges when events in B are related to other events in B; such relation constituting an 'experience'. A different picture of the same World will emerge when events in B are described in their relation to events in A. Both pictures, it is true, are poorer than the totality of the World in the sense that pictures are always poorer than the objects they represent. But the second picture is richer than the first. This does not mean that it is more adequate or more real than the first; for it will be easy to see that, though richer than the first, it suffers also from very obvious disadvantages in that it will be less tangible and less precise.

The events of A are such that they cannot be adequately described by themselves. The truth of this assertion is crucial to the argument. It is, of course, possible to say 'I am sorry', or 'Jones is happy', or 'Smith is wishing he could try harder to raise his arms', etc. But all these descriptions of events in A suffer from a very severe shortcoming. It is one of the essential qualities of events in A that the person 'in whom' they occur has a knowledge of them that differs from the knowledge which a mere observer can have. For it is one thing to see Jones being sorry; and quite another thing to be sorry oneself. But a statement 'Jones is sorry' is very much like the statement 'I am sorry'. This means that such purely descriptive statements of events in A fail to bring out the enormous difference between two different states of affairs, i.e. between being sorry oneself and watching someone else being sorry. These descriptive statements can be rough hints; but they cannot accurately indicate what is going on because they slur over this important difference. If I observe Jones being sorry, I relate an event in B (his facial expression) to another event in B (e.g. my visual

perception of his face). As far as Jones is concerned, this is all I can do. But suppose the person that is sorry is me. In that case to say that 'I am sorry' would be to relate an event in B (the expression of my face) to another event in B (e.g. to my visual perception of my face in a mirror). But whatever advantage I can gain from such a perception, it will fail to do justice to the state in A, i.e. to my being sorry.

Hence there is only an indirect way of describing events in A. This way is to use the events in B as a store-house of symbols that indicate (but do not stand for) events in A. Since there is no direct way of describing events in A without making them look like events in B, we can only use a symbolic method. Events in B can be embroidered and exaggerated; they can be loosened from their context and joined with events with which they are not ordinarily connected; the resulting phenomenon can again be exaggerated and given a twist by putting an emphasis on a certain feature; and so forth. In this way we obtain symbols which 'mean' events in A. We can construct or obtain stories which can themselves not be said to be true, for they cannot be related to events in B that are related to other events in B (such as visual impressions or readings on certain measuring instruments, etc.).

The notion of the symbolization of feeling-states is fundamental to the whole thesis. It so happens, however, that very little can be said about it. One can prove, as I have attempted to do, that states of feeling must be symbolized rather than described literally. For the rest, one can only insist that the concept of meaning in such symbolization is itself undefinable. Either a symbol means something or it does not mean anything. One could perhaps add that the presence of such meaning is usually indicated by a state of clarity or illumination, in which one identifies the feeling-state. But since the feeling-state itself cannot be properly described in so many words, it is impossible to explain that 'such and such' a feeling-state is symbolized by a tree in sunshine. For it is precisely our inability to say what the 'such and such' precisely is that makes it necessary to seek symbolization. Furthermore, it is easily possible to see differences in symbols; but it is not equally possible to state in so many words the differences in the feeling-states they symbolize. Let us consider, to choose an example

at random, the enormous differences between the Babylonian creation story and the story related in Genesis. They have something in common. In both stories, chaos is overcome and shaped into definite objects. In the Babylonian story, we are given to understand that the original chaos was a female, by the name of Tiamat, and that Marduk pierced her with a sword and carved her up into the separate things that went to make the world. In Genesis, an omnipotent God is said to have made all separate objects and beings, thus producing different shapes where there had only been undifferentiated chaos. It is not hard to point at the differences between the two stories and to state quite literally where the difference lies between the *Tohuwabohu* of Genesis and the Tiamat of the Babylonian story, and so on. But when we consider the stories as symbols and try to assess the differences in the emotional impact (the differences in meaning *qua* symbols), we are at a loss. We can give general indications of the different states of feeling the two stories symbolize. But since we can never hope to describe the feeling-states independently in a precise fashion (if we could, there would be no need to symbolize them, of course), we can never really state with precision the differences in 'meaning' of the two stories. These differences, though completely obvious, must ultimately remain undefined and undescribed. It is possible to make some fumbling attempts at indicating them. But our power of speech gives way in the end. And we can do no more than point at the two symbols and refer to the differences in their meaning, that is, to the differences in the feeling-states they symbolize, in this oblique manner.

The 'truth' of these stories about events in B will, however, depend on the symbolic character in which they stand to events in A. If I feel very sorry, I can pick a few events in B and compose them into an image of mourning or dejection (e.g. people are mourning, I walk round dejectedly in a cloudburst at night). And even though these events have not actually been observed to have taken place, or are such as can conceivably never take place, their symbolic value will consist in the way in which they confer meaning on events in A, and thus enable us to point at events in A and describe them in this oblique symbolic manner.

Once events in B have acquired this symbolic value, the

conventional distinction between their being 'facts' and 'non-facts' disappears; or, at any rate, ceases to have any meaning. This has been put admirably by Professor M. Oakeshott in his essay *The Voice of Poetry in The Conversation of Mankind*:

> Let me recall a manner of being active different from that in either practice or science but nevertheless not unfamiliar. I will call it 'contemplating' or 'delighting'. This activity, like every other, is making images of a certain sort and moving among them in an appropriate manner. But these images, in the first place, are recognised to be mere images; that is to say, they are not recognised either as 'fact' or as 'not-fact', as 'events' (for example) to have taken place or not to have taken place. To recognise an image as 'fact', or to ask oneself the question: Is this 'fact' or 'not-fact'?, is to announce oneself to be engaged in some other manner of activity than contemplation – a practical, a scientific, a historical manner. Nor is it enough to say: 'This image may not be "fact", but in contemplating it I ignore the possibility of its factual character.' For images are never neutral, eligible to be considered in this or that manner: they cannot divest themselves of the considerabilities which determine their character and they are always the partners of a specific kind of imagining. Where imagining is 'contemplating', then, 'fact' and 'not-fact' do not appear. And consequently these images cannot be recognised as either 'possible' or 'probable', as illusions or as makebelieve images, because all these categories look back to a distinction between 'fact' and 'not-fact'.*

The picture of the world which thus emerges will be pointedly different from the positive picture. In itself, it will again be poorer than the totality of the World; but it will be richer than the positive picture in that it will be a picture which includes a reference to events in A. And such reference consists not in the rough and inaccurate description of A by way of direct statements ('I am sorry'); but in the fact that all events in B, such as they emerge, are seen through the screen of events in A; and their perception has, therefore, a clear reference back to A. At the same time, it is crucial to my argument that the symbol picture itself will differ from the positive picture only in the mode of its composition, in emphasis, accent, and stress; but it cannot itself contain events other than can be culled from B. For what we cannot perceive in one way or another quite

* *Rationalism in Politics*, London, 1962, p. 217.

ordinarily, that we cannot perceive. And there the matter rests. Even the most complicated event in A can be symbolized only by an intricately composed series of symbols, every part of which and every feature of which must be found somewhere in B. The positive picture and the symbol picture thus must always contain the same parts. They merely differ in the way in which these parts are put together. In the positive picture they hang together as they appear to be related to other events in B, such as physical changes in a retina or chemical changes in a photographic plate. This is the reason why we say that the positive picture is autarchic: it exhibits the order in which the parts of B stand when they are *not* related to events other than occur in B. But in the symbol picture these events hang together as required by events in A, i.e. in such a way that they become clear and efficient symbols of events in A.

The existence of events in A makes it necessary that from time to time the natural order of events in B be disturbed. A reshuffling of the natural order will create a second picture, the symbol picture, and that picture will provide numberless additional facts and events for the symbolization of our feeling states. The symbol picture will, therefore, contain artifacts, that is facts additional to the positive picture. For the sake of symbolization we must perform more acts than are biologically or socially necessary or useful; and we must tell more stories than are *positively* true. The symbol picture must therefore be seen primarily as an enlargement of the positive picture. It can even contain acts that are biologically or economically harmful – but there is no denying that in view of the existence of field A it is a necessary adjunct to the positive picture.

If one were to put this in more purely psychological language, one would say that the private and the public world do not lie apart, are of much the same order, and that knowledge of the public world may be illusory unless the workings of the private world are recognized and allowance made for them. In brief, the inner and the outer world are of one fabric and overlap.*

The most primitive attempt at creating additional facts (artifacts) is the famous picture of the so called 'great sorcerer' of Trois Frères. It is easy to see how the reshuffling of parts of

* I owe this formulation to an unpublished lecture by Dr Harold Bourne.

the positive picture took place. A man was made to look like an animal by putting a mask and a skin on him. This is an example of a very primitive exercise of the imagination that resulted in the creation of an additional fact, i.e. of an artifact that supplements the facts put at our disposal by the positive picture.

Historically, the primitive exercise of the imagination always leads to a violent reshuffle, and thus produces artifacts of startling, if clearly traceable, novelty. The more controlled imagination manages to produce more sophisticated reshuffles by the slightest shaking of the original picture. So much so, that the resulting symbol picture will contain hardly any non-natural events. Take, for instance, the case of a great novelist like Tolstoy or Proust. A novel is a set of facts additional to the positive picture. But the story and the characters are obtained by the most controlled kind of reshuffling, so that the novel contains nothing that could not be found in the original positive picture. Although the novel is an artifact, it contains no non-natural events and manages to be a set of additional symbols all the same. Proust gave his own description of the process. He explained that for every character of his novel there are eight or ten keys. When he described, for instance, Madame Swann going for a walk near the Tir-aux-Pigeons, he thought of an admirably beautiful *cocotte* of those days who was called Clomesnil. The same, he said, was true of the church of Combray; for many churches had posed for it and he could no longer tell whether the paving stones had come from Lisieux or another church, and whether the windows were those of Sainte-Chapelle, of Evreux or of Pont-Audemer.

The theory and practice of reshuffling has been described most explicitly by Baudelaire and Mallarmé:

> Fantasy decomposes the whole of creation. According to laws that have their origin in the deepest depths of the soul, the fantasy collects and assembles the various parts derived from this composition; and thus generates a new world.*

> Nature is given. One can only add material constructions to it, cities, railways. But true freedom consists in this: thanks to an inwardness which spreads according to its own laws, over the whole world, we can seize hidden relations. And for this reason poetic

* Baudelaire, *Bibliothèque de la Pléiade*, Paris, 1954, p. 41.

creation consists in the invention of a word for a thing that does not really exist.*

And lest anyone should think that the theory and practice of reshuffling is essentially linked to symbolist poetry, one ought to recall the most accurately and most amply documented case of reshuffling – the composition of *Kubla Khan* and *The Ancient Mariner* as presented by J. L. Lowes in *The Road to Xanadu*.

Very little reshuffling may be enough. To obtain the story of events known as 'fiction' (novel, epic, etc.), it is enough to reshuffle dates and places, and transfer qualities from one historical (positively locatable) person to another. In this way a story will emerge that is 'richer' than any in the positive picture; but one which is not necessarily *outside* the positive picture. This kind of story, though it is *fiction* in the sense that it did not really happen quite in the way in which it is told and that nobody actually observed it, is *not* part of a symbol picture (though it can fulfil the function of a symbol) in the sense that it is conceivable that it *could* have happened and that someone might actually have observed it in the sense in which one observes any other event in the positive picture.

Apart from the creation of such sophisticated artifacts as are contained in 'fiction', it is customary to reshuffle with enough violence to create artifacts that are actually non-natural. The first reshuffle, as a rule, results simply in the creation of additional facts. People make additional animals by painting them on walls; they perform more hunts than are necessary for the food supply and underline them by ritual repetition of certain features; they fashion additional women in the form of stone statues, perhaps with all sexual characteristics exaggerated; they crawl into caves that are obviously not suitable as shelter; and so forth. Their object here is simply to multiply the number of available facts and to multiply them in such a way that all newly created facts (artifacts) should be richer, less schematic and more suggestive than those that are naturally located in the symbol picture.

I would, therefore, also suspect that the phenomenon that is commonly described as sympathetic magic owes more to the

* Mallarmé, *Bibliothèque de la Pléiade*, Paris, 1952, p. 647.

desire to multiply facts than to a process of reasoning, complicated and foolish at the same time, which suggests that an imitation of a natural event will hasten and promote that event. If a man reproduces a natural event (growth of corn, melting of snow, hunting of a bear), it is usually believed that he is doing sympathetic magic, that is: he imitates nature in order to speed her on her way or assure that she will perform well and according to expectations. I wonder, though, whether such actions, done in imitation of nature, do not primarily represent attempts to enrich nature – that is, to multiply existing symbols and to add an event (e.g. a hunt or the melting of snow) which is more clearly specified and in which certain features are emphasized, underlined and pronounced, to the already existing events. Sympathetic magic may well be there. But the primary purpose of such performances is symbolization, i.e. the creation of additional and more highly elaborate symbols than nature herself provides.

The symbol picture, then, consists of artifacts, i.e. of events and objects that are 'artificially' put together for the sake of symbolization. An artifact may differ only very slightly from a natural phenomenon, such as would also occur in the positive picture. Sometimes no more than a slight emphasis of a single feature is required for the natural phenomenon to be turned into a quite adequate symbol. At times, however, a great deal of abstraction is employed, so that the resulting artifact is only in its barest outlines related to the natural phenomenon. And again, at times some of the features of the natural phenomenon are completely detached from it and are transposed to another part of the field of vision or sensation and linked there with some other features equally artificially detached from the original natural phenomenon to which they had been linked. In this manner a completely new object or event may be created. Such a new event is, of course, not directly related to, or recognizable in, any natural phenomenon that had occurred or that conceivably might occur in the positive picture. In such a case we are dealing with a completely artificial symbol.

I would insist, however, that the artificiality of the artifacts (symbols) is to be understood in a very relative sense. Usually one opposes the concept of artificiality to the concept of nature;

and one says that a thing is either natural or artificial. But in this particular case there is no such clear opposition between the natural phenomenon that occurs in the positive picture and the artifact that occurs in the symbol picture. And it would be quite wrong to think of the symbol picture as one that is altogether opposed to the positive picture. The two pictures are in fact related in two different and very essential ways.

They are firstly related in an essential way because both pictures are an abstraction from the totality of the World. The *noumenal* World itself can never be known. But both the symbol picture and the positive picture are different forms of appearances of the World Itself. Both pictures are poorer than the whole World. They differ in the emphasis they give to certain features which are incontestably part of the World Itself. In the positive picture feeling-states or states of consciousness are never referred to; and in the symbol picture they are included obliquely. The two pictures, therefore, differ in the emphasis they lend to certain features of the World, and the World *appears* in them with accents on different features. But there is no cogent reason why the positive picture should be considered more 'natural' than the symbol picture. Both pictures are appearances; and if common usage has conventionally agreed to call the positive picture a natural picture of the World and has in fact tended to identify it as 'nature', we should be on our guard and take this conventional identification not for more than it is. Conventionally we may well speak of the natural phenomenon of the positive picture and of the artifacts of the symbol picture. But one might just as soon invert this usage and speak of the artifacts of the symbol picture as the natural events – for there is nothing unnatural in the occurrence of states of consciousness and hence nothing unnatural in the method employed for their symbolization. For symbolization is only a roundabout manner of referring to or describing these states of consciousness. One should, however, agree to maintain the conventional distinction between natural facts and artifacts, because such distinction helps us to discriminate between the two appearances of the World and helps us to understand the different emphases given by the two pictures to the various 'parts' of the Whole.

The two pictures are secondly related in the following manner.

Even though the artifacts of the symbol picture refer to the states of consciousness of A, they are themselves all located in field B. That is to say that at no time a sixth sense or a special revelation or intuition is required for discovering them, for seeing them or for sensing them in any other way. Every artifact is clearly to be *perceived* in a perfectly ordinary manner. No matter how fully artificial an artifact is and no matter how completely invented it is and how unable we are to locate it in the positive picture (to locate it there, would mean that we are able to establish its functional dependence on other facts, whose functional dependence on further facts can in turn be established; and it would further mean that any variation in it would be detectable by a corresponding variation in another fact . . . and so forth), its parts and the various features of which it consists can always be located in the positive picture.

A symbolic artifact may be an image of a giant. But a giant is, after all, only a very large man. And both men and largeness are natural phenomena – even though the two may not occur together in the positive picture. Or again, a symbolic artifact may be an image of a giant flying through the air. No such giant can be traced flying through the air in the positive picture. But 'largeness', 'man', and 'flying' all refer to natural phenomena, and every one of those natural phenomena can be separately located in the positive picture. The artificiality of the symbols in the symbol picture consists therefore entirely and exclusively in the manner in which the various features of the positive picture are put together, in which some features are suppressed and others transposed from the place where they occur naturally to a place where they do not occur naturally. For this reason it is always possible to make a clear sensuous representation of the symbolic image. Since every part of the image is singly a natural fact, it is possible to provide a representation of the whole image in sensuously perceptible terms. A symbolic artifact may be an imaginary landscape, such as the Garden of Eden. But since every single feature in that garden is a natural pheomenon, and since the artificiality of the symbol consists merely in the manner in which various natural plants and trees and brooks are transposed from the place in which they occur in the positive picture, it is possible, e.g. to paint a picture of the Garden of Eden – a picture which can be perceived by

the eyes. In short, symbolization, no matter how extravagant and forceful it is, can never dispense with the materials furnished in field B; and the artificiality of symbolization consists merely in a reshuffling of the separate elements in that field and in their transposition.

Myth and ritual are the most fundamental forms of all such symbols. Myths are stories; and rituals are performances. A myth is a story of an event which cannot be located in the positive picture. It is told for the sake of the symbolization of an occurrence in field A; and if there is that certain occurrence in field A, there is a certain compulsiveness about telling the myth which symbolizes it. The occurrence in field A cannot be laid hold of unless the symbolic myth is created. In this way, certain events in field B are seized upon and moulded, by suitable transpositions, by emphasis, by exaggeration and so forth, into an artificial event. This new artifact is a myth. It consists of many parts, each of which can be located somewhere in the positive picture. This makes it possible for the myth to be pictorially represented. The pictorial representation, whether it is in the shape of a theatrical performance, of a sculpture, or of a painting, must in turn form part of the positive picture: for it can be ordinarily perceived in the sense that it is functionally dependent on certain changes on our retina or on a photographic plate. The pictorial representation itself is therefore a positive fact; the existence of which can be no more in doubt, in terms of the positive picture, than the existence of, e.g. a rock or the sun. The subject thus depicted, however, is an artifact and as such part of the symbol picture. By the standards of the positive picture, that artificial event has never occurred. But even though it has never occurred in the sense in which the events in the positive picture are said to have occurred, it is not a figment of the imagination or pure phantasy: it symbolizes an occurrence which is only too real, namely an event in field A.

Ritual performances must be understood in much the same manner. For the sake of symbolization one seizes a perfectly ordinary performance, the occurrence of which can well be located in the positive picture, such as, for instance, a hunt or a meal. But in order to make it into a suitable symbol, the performance has to be turned into an artifice: it has to

be embroidered by repetitive gestures which serve to heighten the effect of this or that of its features. In this way, the performance of a perfectly ordinary action becomes a highly stylized and artificial event. The artificial performance of, e.g. the meal, can as such again be located in the positive picture. The artificiality of the performance does not consist in the performance itself; but in its repetitiveness, in its stylization, in short in its rituality. As such it functions as a symbol of an event in field A. And since such an event, if it occurs, will out, there is again a certain compulsiveness about the performance of the ritual.

In this way the symbol picture, consisting basically of myths and rituals, is a world of artifices. These artifices are an enrichment of the positive picture in that they afford a glimpse of the events in field A. But each artifice, if it is a story, is capable of a pictorial representation which is part of the positive picture; and if it is an action, is capable of a physical enactment which can be located in the positive picture. Ritual performances like mythical pictures, can be sensuously perceived. The existence of events in field A requires these artificial additions to the positive picture which by itself is too barren and not rich enough in variations to symbolize events in field A. But these additions are themselves represented as natural events.

All this points to the conclusion that even in the highest flights of our imagination, which are employed in the symbolization of states of consciousness, we are completely limited to the various features and parts of field B. The most imaginative acts of human fantasy can never do more than transpose single features from the place in which they occur in the positive picture to other places, and link them with other features of the positive picture, possibly similarly transposed. But no amount of fantasy can ever result in the creation of a symbol that consists of features other than occur in field B and for the 'perception' of which one would require either a sixth sense or a special act of intuition or revelation; or which could not be either enacted by existing people in suitable disguises or represented pictorially. The difference between the positive and the symbol picture, between the two appearances of the World consists, therefore, entirely in a rearrangement. To obtain the one picture from the other, no more is required than a reshuffling

of the single elements. To turn the symbol picture into the positive picture, all one needs to do is to reshuffle the various elements with a view to the order that obtains when every feature is assigned the place in which it appears functionally dependent on another feature. And to turn the positive picture into the symbol picture, all one needs to do is to prize the various features loose from the moorings they occupy in virtue of their functional dependence on other features and allow them to rearrange themselves in the order in which they appear as symbols of the events in field A.

It is now possible to see that there are very good grounds for maintaining that there is a perfectly intelligible connection between myths and rituals on one hand, and the world that appears in our ordinary experience, on the other. This intelligible connection is very commonly overlooked. And this oversight has compelled people to seek various other explanations for the occurrence of myth and ritual. These other explanations seem now, epistemologically, both superfluous and irrelevant, and we will postpone a discussion of them to the next chapter.

A myth is a concrete story. It is composed of events that take place in the world; even though they do not actually take place quite in the way in which the myth insists. A myth about giants moving mountains consists, for example, of a number of single features, every one of which is taken from the world of ordinary experience. Giants are very large men; and both the notion of largeness and the fact that there are men are taken from nature. Only in nature they do not really occur together. Here, however, they are put together in order to serve as a symbol of an event in A. The story in question is, therefore, still a story about something that takes place in the world – only that something comprises events in A as well as in B. The myth, therefore, is a story that is quite rationally connected with the world. And whatever appearance of irrationality it may have stems entirely from the fact that we are accustomed to identify rationality with ordinary experience. But once it is understood that a myth is part of a symbol picture which refers back to events in A, and as long as we remember that the events in field A are as much part of the totality of all occurrences as the events in field B, a myth becomes a significant report about the world, the truth of which

can soon be tested, albeit in a very complicated manner, by a reference to events in A.

If events in B, as ordinarily observed, are incompatible with events as related in the myth, this means precisely nothing. The truth of a myth has to be investigated not by confronting it with events as they occur in the positive picture, but by confronting it with the events in field A. To begin with, it can always be taken as a primary indication of the truth of a myth if there are other parts of the symbol picture (that is, of the *reshuffled* field B) that *are* compatible with it. For this is proof that the myth in question is not a freak fantasy, but that the event in A, to which it has symbolic reference, is symbolized in a slightly different manner by the other myth. In fact, if one can show a long series of compatible myths, the likelihood of their being a consistent series of symbols of genuine events or series of events in A is increased.

This is not the place for an investigation of the conditions under which myths can be said to be true. Suffice it to observe that false myths, i.e. those that have no cogent symbolic reference to an event in A and which are mere concoctions by people who for some reason or other wish to break up the pattern of events as presented in ordinary experience and who wish to reorder it according to some private fancy, have no survival value and are, as a rule, forgotten as soon as they are made. An ordinarily perceived series of events in B has its ordinary, inherent justification; a symbolically perceived composition of events in B has its justification in the meaningful way in which it symbolizes events in A. But an arbitrarily concocted story of events in B has no grounds for existence*

* The following passage from Apollinaire's *Oneirokritika* is a good example of an arbitrarily concocted story:

'The coals of heaven were so near that I became afraid of their smell. Two animals of different species began to mate and the shoots of roses turned into grape-vines, hanging heavily from the moons' bundles. Flames shot up from the throats of monkeys and decorated the world with lilies. The monarchs were amused and twenty blind taylors emerged. Towards evening, the trees flew away and my Self multiplied a hundred times. The herd which I thus was, sat down by the sea. The sword quenched my thirst. A hundred sailors killed me ninety-nine times. A whole nation, incarcerated in a wine-press, bled while singing. Uneven shadows lovingly obscured the scarlet of the sails while my eyes were multiplying in the rivers, in

and, therefore, no survival value. Hence the apparently curious phenomenon that there are actually no 'false' myths; and that all the ones one can think of turn out to be true ones. This is no ground for suspicion and for thinking that there are after all no rules for distinguishing false myths from true myths, and that myths are just myths, one as weird as the other. It merely indicates that a myth is a symbolic story which has survived, because it *does* have symbolic reference to an event in A. If it were a false myth, it would, for the lack of such reference, never have come down to us. This explains why there are, in fact, no such stories as 'false myths'. (Myths seem to be in a position that is the converse of the position of treason. 'Treason never prospers', one says. The truth of this observation is not due to the fact that treason never really does prosper, but to the fact that, when it prospers, it is no longer called treason. Similarly, there are false myths; but since they have no possible survival value, the myths that do survive are all, without exception, true ones.)

The positive picture of the World, then, emerges through the establishment of the relations of events in B; and the symbol picture of the World, through the establishment of relations between events in A and events in B. Both pictures, though of varying degrees of richness, are pictures of the World.

We come now to the final stage in the argument, to the way in which theories about the various pictures of the World we have discussed are put forward. There is no need to say much about scientific theories. They are clearly put forward *about* the positive picture. It matters little to our argument as to whether they are put forward as inductive generalizations or as bold hypotheses which are held to be provisionally true as long as they have not been falsified by events observed to occur in the positive picture. Scientific theories are concerned with statements of regularities of functional dependences that occur in the positive picture, and it is irrelevant to our argument whether one can justify such statements by pointing to the

the cities over the snow and over the mountains'. (Author's translation)

Here we have a striking case of re-shuffling. But the text fails to fascinate because there does not appear to have been a reshuffling in obedience to an inner compulsion, i.e. according to events in A.

fact that the stated regularities are inductive generalizations or whether one justifies them by saying that they are general hypotheses, the validity of which depends on whether the particular propositions that can be deduced from them are compatible or incompatible with any occurrences in the positive picture. But at the same time, it would appear that the hypothesis view of scientific theories is more in harmony with the general line of our argument than the induction view. For according to the induction view, scientists would have to busy themselves first with the preparation of the positive picture; and then, as a second step, proceed to inductive generalizations from that picture. It would seem, on the contrary, that the reverse is the case. Scientists begin with hypothetical theories; they then deduce from them particular propositions and look to see whether these particular propositions can be falsified. A single instance of mere verification would mean very little; it would mean in fact no more than that one particular instance of the alleged regularity is the case, but it would tell us nothing about the truth of the statement that the alleged regularity is of unlimited universality. If it is not falsified, or as long as it is not falsified, one will take the general hypothesis to be true; and once it is falsified, one will abandon it. The criterion as to whether the general theory or hypothesis refers to, or does not refer to, events in the positive picture, is constituted by the fact that one can indicate what event would have to occur for the theory to be falsified. If such an indication cannot be given, then the theory does not refer to the positive picture and may in fact refer possibly to the symbol picture. The criterion of what does and what does not constitute falsification is, in turn, provided by the criteria governing the composition of the positive picture. The occurrence of an event that is not functionally dependent on other events which are, themselves, not functionally dependent on further events, and so forth, is not a possible falsification of a scientific theory. This form of scientific procedure, first described by K. R. Popper, shows that what we have called the positive picture is really only a hypostatization. In the traditional inductive description of scientific procedure on the other hand, the positive picture precedes the formulation of scientific generalizations. In terms of the present argument, about the World and the various

appearances of the World, Popper's description seems preferable. For if the aim of science is the invention of generalizations about regularities, no purpose can be *gained by the laborious* construction of positive pictures. It is much preferable to see the positive picture only as a conceptual hypostatization that is postulated every time a theory has to be tested. But it has no 'existence' in our minds apart from such specific tests of general theories. Whereas, if one prefers the inductive description of the formulation of general theories, one will have to convince oneself that the positive picture really exists in the form of so many statistical tables and catalogues and dictionaries. And furthermore, one will easily fall prey to the idea that it is more than an appearance of the World. In short, Popper's account seems to suit the general Kantian framework we have used in this argument much better than the inductive account.

But let us return to our real purpose, to the problem of how metaphysical, as distinct from scientific, theories emerge. I would now like to argue that metaphysical theories are theories about the symbol picture, albeit, unlike scientific theories, not statements of any regularities in the symbol picture. They are theories about the symbol picture, because their truth and falsity can be tested by reference to the symbol picture. Speaking quite generally, they are abstract and conceptual descriptions of the symbol picture.

At this point in the argument it is as well to make a confession. I did not form the above view of the symbol picture and then discover that it would be possible to say that metaphysical theories are abstract and conceptual descriptions of it. I began the other way round. I began with the observation that there is a very striking and very obvious similarity between the themes of many great myths and many metaphysical doctrines. In fact, it would not be an exaggeration to say that there is no metaphysical doctrine, the theme of which is not also present in some myth or other. The theory that there are two substances in the world, mind and matter, is, thematically, very close to the biblical creation story; and the view that time is unreal is undoubtedly to be linked to those ancient creation myths in which it is said that at first there was undifferentiated chaos, or being; and that time began when this undifferentiated chaos

was rent asunder by some act or event. Time is thus only a mode of being (or perhaps only a mode of perception) and real being can be predicated only of the undifferentiated chaos that existed in the first place. There is no need to multiply examples.

Having made this observation, I then proceeded to formulate my view of the symbol picture. If I can now argue that metaphysical doctrines seem to be abstract descriptions of the symbol picture, this may appear like a stroke of good luck. It is in fact no such thing and one need not be surprised to find that we arrive at this conclusion when the whole of the preceding argument was built up in such a way as to lead to it. For it will be recalled that at the end of Chapter Two we had come to the point where it was necessary to discover the possible field of experience to which metaphysical propositions, considering that they did not refer to our ordinary experience, did refer. It is therefore not by good luck that the preceding argument should now yield the desired result. The whole idea of the symbol picture was conceived with a view to showing that it is, in fact, the field to which metaphysical doctrines are applicable.

The events and actions that serve as symbols have a quasi-mysterious quality. They seem to indicate more than they appear to be. It is often believed that this is due to the fact that they stand for unseen and unseeable realities. Their mysterious quality is often considered to be proof of the fact that there *must* be such realities – for otherwise, how is it that symbols seem so mysterious, so obviously beckoning towards something other than meets the eye?

The real explanation is, however, that they stand for feeling-states. Symbols freeze the tenuous and ghost-like quality of feeling-states into tangible form. But they are tangible witness to something that is *not* tangible and of which we are only conscious in so far as we can point to a symbol. It is from this that symbols obtain their mysterious quality and seem to be pregnant with something unexpressed; with something other than themselves.

A first attempt at symbolizing an event in field A will take a very primitive form: one will look around the whole field of B – or around that part of it with which one happens to be most familiar – and designate any natural event or happening,

or possibly an object, as a symbol. In this way a meal, a hunt, a sunset, a thunderstorm or a sexual act may be designated as a symbol. The choice of a natural event in B as a symbol is a very simple form of symbolization. And it is not to be wondered at that such a symbol which is barely distinguishable from a natural event (which might also be described in relationship to another natural event in B) is not a very accurate symbol. The meaning it bestows on the event in A will be diffuse. The most such symbolization is likely to achieve is to establish that the meaning of the event in A is not actually the opposite from what it is. But even when it is established that it is not the opposite of what it is there is still left a wide variety of possibilities of what it means.

The first and most striking observation to be made about the outcome of a simple reshuffling of the positive picture, is that the resulting symbol is almost completely unspecified. There is no clear distinction between subject and object, up and down, beginning and end. Consider, for example, the following lines:

> I knew that I hung on the wind-swept tree
> Nine nights through,
> Wounded by a spear, dedicated to Odin
> I myself to myself.

Or let us examine the state known as *algolagnia*. *Algolagnia* is the relation between pleasurable sexual excitation and the occurrence of terrifying events. This relation can either be deliberately contrived or come about by accident, and the events themselves (which may be real or imaginary) can be of various kinds. They may involve the death of human beings or animals, or at least the threat of death; or they may involve some threat to or destruction of health or property; or they may consist of the annihilation of inanimate objects. Moreover, the person who derives sexual pleasures from such events may perform the acts himself, may induce someone else to perform them, or may simply be a spectator. He may even be the voluntary or involuntary victim of attack. There is, in short, a very large variety of completely different events which can act as symbols for one and the same feeling-state, and this shows that any first attempt at symbolization is almost invariably ambiguous. In the verse quoted above it was a question of a

very diffuse image symbolizing a presumably equally diffuse feeling-state. In the case of *algolagnia* a series of completely incompatible events purports to symbolize one and the same feeling-state; and, because of these incompatibilities, each event symbolizes it in a slightly different way.

Hence there arises the need for a more precise form of symbolization. The symbol, in other words, must be made more specific, more unequivocal. The specification of the symbol, however, can be achieved only in one way. The natural event, originally chosen as a symbol, must be slightly altered. One of its features must be exaggerated for the sake of emphasis; another feature may be suppressed entirely. In this way, the natural event, the unspecified and inaccurate symbol, becomes a more specific symbol in the proportion to which it loses its purely natural shape. The resulting story can now no longer be related in terms of other events in B; and receives its truth-value entirely from its relation to events in A. We may, therefore, say that the specification of the symbol takes place through an increasing denaturalization of the original event chosen. The more non-naturalistic the event becomes, the greater its symbolic accuracy.

The specification of a symbol and the resulting increase of its symbolic accuracy can be carried on almost indefinitely. Step by step a symbol can become denaturalized until at the imaginary end of the series of symbols (which began with the choice of a natural event as a symbol) there stands a completely non-naturalistic story of an event. If the first symbol is the hunt, the second, more specified symbol, may be the hunt of a divine animal; the third symbol may be the sacrificial killing of an animal; the fourth, the sacrifice of the animal's soul; and in the fifth, the emphasis may be placed entirely on the spirit's sacrificial death; and so forth. The greater the denaturalization, the greater the specification; and the greater the specification, the more unequivocal the meaning that is bestowed upon the event in A.

The feature of this process that is most important for our purpose is the fact that every symbol in the series of progressively specified symbols stands in a certain relationship to every other symbol in that series. Every symbol in the series must exhibit the same basic pattern or rhythm of events. Every

single feature may be changed and be less and less like the original, natural feature. But the less specified symbol can become more specified only by a symbol which exhibits basically the same pattern. Thus, in our example, the basic pattern of the original, natural symbol (the hunt) is this: aggressiveness – killing – triumph. Or, in more abstract words: hatred – suffering – joy; and alternately: evil – surrender – goodness. In the next symbol of the series and in all the following ones, only single features and the emphasis may be altered. But the basic pattern must be preserved for the last symbol of the series to be a more highly specified and therefore more accurate symbol of the event in A in question.

It is a well-known fact that a very large number of myths do indeed stand in this particular relationship to each other. The ancient Church Fathers, for instance, were well aware that certain myths could be related to one another in this fashion, and they called this relation, very appropriately, a typological relation. The myths of the series, they said, were all of the same type or had the same figure. And the earlier, less specified ones, were the types; or prefigured the later, more specified ones which were said to be the anti-types. We are not concerned here with the fact that the Church Fathers, from their own peculiarly ecclesiastical standpoint, made a very narrow and special use of this discovery. The matter of greatest importance is that these typological relationships extend through the whole world of mythology, and that every single myth can be assigned a place in some such series. There are no myths and rituals (artificial events) that are not typologically related to natural events, i.e. to events that occur in the positive picture. Every sacrifice, every ἱερὸς γάμος, every baptism, is no more than an act, highly embroidered and containing features added to it for the sake of emphasis, that is the end of a chain, the beginning of which is to be found in such natural acts as killing, copulation, and ablution. None of these natural performances have a high symbolic value. They signify little or nothing in terms of events in field A. They assume symbolic quality when they cease to be natural and begin to be artifices; but no matter how artificial they are, they are typologically related to natural events. Every part of the symbol picture is typologically related to the positive picture.

Someone may well object that this contention remains to be proven; and that the only way of proving it is to list all known myths and investigate in every single case whether this is so or not. But in view of what has been said, this does not seem to me to be necessary. For originally, every single symbol must be chosen from the field of natural events the symbolizer is acquainted with. For where else *could* it be chosen from? And after this initial choice, there is only one way open for increasing the specificness of the original symbol, and that is the way of denaturalization. But such denaturalization would fail in its purpose if it were not carried out according to the principle that the more specified symbol must exhibit the same pattern as the less specified symbol. If this principle is not adhered to, then the more denaturalized symbol would stand in no relationship to the less denaturalized symbol and could therefore hardly be counted as an attempt to give more specific meaning to the event in A. There seems therefore no need for a general empirical investigation of all myths; for it seems wellnigh impossible to envisage an alternative to typological relationships.

It is now possible to state precisely the nature of the relationship between metaphysical doctrines and myths. A metaphysical doctrine is related to a myth in either of the following ways. It may be the explicit description of the principle according to which a symbol is turned into a more specific symbol – of the principle in accordance to which nature is transformed into a symbol. Or else, a metaphysical doctrine may be the last term in a series of typologically related symbols. The last symbol in the series is so minutely and definitely specified that it is, in actual fact, no longer a symbol but a conceptual statement. A metaphysical theory may emerge from a myth in either of these two ways. But it is of crucial importance to note that in both cases the relationship is not between any one myth and a metaphysical doctrine; but between a typologically ordered series of myths and the metaphysical doctrine.

Let us examine, in order to illustrate the first case, a well-known series of myths from the Bible. There is no need to explain the typological connection between the story of Abraham's sacrifice and the sacrificial death of Jesus. Our own knowledge can supply one further term at the lower end of the series, i.e. the sacrifice of the first-born, customary in those parts of

the world in which Abraham lived. The story of Abraham's sacrifice is itself already a more highly specified story than the story of the sacrifice of the first-born, but is typologically related to it. We now have a series of three typologically related symbols. If one observes closely the principle according to which the second story is a more special instance than the first, and the third a more special instance than the second, one will be able to formulate the principle according to which these specifications are carried out. One will be able to arrive at the doctrine that there is a love which gives infinitely more than is deserved by the object that is loved. This doctrine or some such doctrine is in fact a statement of the principle that determines the particular way in which the first symbol was specified to become the second symbol; and the way in which the second symbol was specified to become the third symbol. All three symbols exhibit the same basic pattern. But each step in specification was taken according to a certain principle, when it could well have been taken according to another principle. The principle itself, i.e. the metaphysical doctrine, could not have been culled from any of the symbols – but only from the specific way in which they are related to one another.

In order to illustrate the second case of the genesis of a metaphysical doctrine, let us examine an instance of a series of myths taken from an entirely different field. Professor Cornford in his posthumous *Principium Sapientiae* (London, 1952), has in fact provided a telling example. He has examined the series of myths about the origin of the world current in ancient Babylon. He found that these myths, the cosmogony of Hesiod and the metaphysics of Anaximander are, in our terminology, a series of typologically related stories. But Hesiod's cosmogony is more specified than the Babylonian myth; and Anaximander's metaphysics or all ancient Ionian metaphysics is even more specified. In fact, Ionian metaphysics is so minutely specified that it represents a system of abstract concepts. It is the end term of the series; a story in which the complete definition of mythical images, already fairly apparent in Hesiod, has almost imperceptibly given way to abstract concepts. As Professor Cornford says himself, Hesiod's cosmogony has 'advanced so far on the road to rationalization that only a very thin partition divides it from the early Ionian systems' (p. 198). The Ionian

systems, therefore, stand revealed as the end terms of the typologically related series; as the end term in which the almost imperceptible transition from a minutely defined image to an abstract concept has taken place.

Given the two examples of how metaphysical doctrines are related to symbol pictures, I have demonstrated the thesis I put forward at the beginning of this chapter, that metaphysical doctrines are synthetic *a posteriori* propositions. But the *a posteriori* refers to the symbol picture, not to the World of which that picture as well as the positive picture is an appearance. There is a very special and important sense in which metaphysical theories are applicable to the positive picture, even though their truth cannot be proved or disproved by a consideration of it. A discussion of the applicability will be postponed to the end of the last chapter of this book, where the relevance of such applicability will become apparent. As far as the World itself is concerned, metaphysical doctrines, like scientific theories about the positive picture, have clearly no relevance to it. For we said that the only evidence we have about the World is a tautology. And since a tautology is compatible with any proposition other than a self-contradictory one, we know nothing of the World that would not be compatible with any metaphysical theory. The same is true, of course, for scientific theories about the symbol picture.

It is a very common view that metaphysical doctrines are useless, because they are compatible with any evidence whatever and do not deny the possibility of the occurrence of anything. (They are said to be unfalsifiable.) But now we see that as far as the World is concerned, it is exactly the other way round. The evidence about the World is such that it is expressed as a tautology and that evidence is therefore compatible with any metaphysical theory. The metaphysical theories are quite specific and exclude the possibility of certain occurrences in the symbol picture. When held up against that picture, they can be falsified; and, in a sense, verified. But when held up against the one thing we know of the *noumenal* World, it turns out that all we 'know' (all we can say) about that World is compatible with any metaphysical theory. This is not the fault of metaphysics, but of the nature of our knowledge of the World – or ought we to say, of the nature of the World?

Since we can never form an idea or have a perception of any distinguishable feature or subject or event of the World other than as part of a picture or appearance of the World, we can never say that any such feature or object or event is an instance of a metaphysical theory. But since we have no idea or perception of such a feature, object or event, and since the only idea or perceptions we have are of appearances or pictures of the World, this fact is of no consequence, interest, or importance. Why *should* we bother whether something we know nothing of, is or is not an instance of a certain theory?

At the same time we can be quite sure that metaphysical theories are irrelevantly relevant to Reality – for they are relevant to the symbol picture as well as to the positive picture (even though they cannot be derived from the latter and their truth or falsity cannot become apparent in the latter). Both these pictures are of necessity appearances of Reality and, therefore, everything that is true of an appearance must also be relevant to the thing the appearance is an appearance of. If you wish: metaphysical theories are windows upon the World. Only they do not illuminate it because there is nothing distinguishable in it that could be illuminated by them. The window lets light into the World. But as there is nothing to reflect it, the light is of no avail.

We have established that metaphysical doctrines are sound doctrines about the symbol picture; and that the symbol picture is an appearance of the World. In a sense, then, I would say that metaphysical doctrines are descriptive – for they describe the symbol picture. But in another sense they are revisionary. Or perhaps it would be better to say that they encourage a revision of our view of the features of the world we live in. For their soundness can only be justified if we consider that apart from a positive picture there is a *symbol* picture, and that the latter has its own peculiar reality. The acceptance of metaphysical doctrines encourages us, therefore, to revise our vision of the world. They do this not by purporting to redraw our vision of the positive picture or to reveal the hidden features of the *noumenal* World; but by forcing upon us a new analysis of the phenomenal world in terms of a positive picture and of symbol pictures.

THE PRACTICE OF METAPHYSICS

The thesis that metaphysical speculation has always been speculation about a symbol picture will not be accepted without further explanation and proof, for it is a widely held belief that metaphysical propositions are the result of pure reasoning. Metaphysical propositions, moreover, are commonly considered to be necessarily true; and since necessary truth can never belong to empirical propositions, the necessary truth of metaphysical propositions is taken to be proof of the fact that they are not empirical. In this argument it is very difficult to distinguish the premiss from the conclusion. People sometimes say that metaphysical truths are necessary and therefore cannot be empirical; and sometimes they say that they are not empirical and therefore must be necessary truths.

There seems to me no ground at all for believing that metaphysical propositions such as 'time is unreal' are necessary truths, and that metaphysical propositions of this kind are due to pure reasoning. On the contrary, in my argument I am putting forward the idea that a proposition like 'time is unreal' is a proposition about a certain picture of the world. The adequacy of the picture itself has to be judged in terms of feeling-states; and the truth of the proposition itself has to be tested by reference to the picture. Not only is the metaphysical proposition itself not due to pure reasoning, but it can also very well be a false or partially inadequate proposition about the picture in question. In order to substantiate my thesis, I would like to begin with a brief survey of the history of metaphysical speculation. This survey is designed to show that philosophers have in the past either explicitly or implicitly been aware of the fact that metaphysical doctrines are doctrines about a symbol picture – rather than non-empirical, necessary truths.

The survey must be cursory, for a separate book would be required to do justice to this task.

It will be clear to the reader, however, that I am presenting metaphysical ideas in a 'new look'. My attempt to relate them to mythology and to consider them the rational end-product of the mythological vision of the world will not be easily welcomed. For both their supporters and their detractors believe that metaphysical ideas either are or are alleged to be more narrowly rational. In reply, I can do no better than to remind them of the opinions of two eminent modern metaphysicians, Bradley and McTaggart. Both philosophers believed that metaphysical ideas are really held by instinct and are not the result of laborious and minute processes of reasoning. Bradley believed that *the philosopher's job is to find bad reasons for them*; and McTaggart, that his job is to find good reasons for them. But both were agreed that when we are faced with metaphysical ideas we are not faced by something that we owe exclusively to our own rational cogitations. And although I am making an attempt to show how metaphysical ideas are generated by mythology and how mythology is almost compulsively generated by the occurrence of certain mental events that are not capable of a literal description, my 'new look' for metaphysics amounts to little more than what Bradley and McTaggart were both agreed upon.

It is of course true, and nobody the least bit acquainted with the history of philosophy could ever deny this, that all propounders of metaphysical ideas in the past have tried to support them by rational arguments and have not been content to consider them the abstract end-products of mythological speculation. This is true even for Bradley and McTaggart. My proposal, therefore, to disregard these rational efforts and to consider the end-products only and to relate them to mythology, may look decidedly odd. But though odd, it can be justified.

Let us look for a moment at the bewildering historical spectacle. We find, throughout history, a very limited number of metaphysical doctrines. They are supported at different times by different people by a large variety of allegedly rational arguments, none of which is really compelling and satisfying. Not one of these arguments has not been found wanting and

been plausibly criticized by someone at one time or another. And yet, nobody has ever been able to deny the fascination, the importance and the impact of the metaphysical doctrines these arguments had been designed to justify and support. In view of the impact of the doctrines themselves, the attempt to dismiss them as nonsense because the arguments that support them are always wanting, is both childish and superficial. And in view of the fact that innumerable arguments to support them have been tried by the best minds of mankind and have all been found wanting somewhere or other, all further efforts to discover an argument in their support that is not unsatisfactory cannot hope to have a great chance of success. It should therefore be little more than a dictate of common sense if one tries to re-examine the whole situation and to separate the doctrines from the allegedly rational arguments on which they have been commonly based. My proposal is in fact to cut the mass of the arguments away and to show that the doctrines, once they are dissociated from those arguments, recommend themselves on other grounds. In this way I will be able to explain why the doctrines themselves tenaciously persist even though one is impatient with the never very conclusive arguments that have been and in some quarters keep on being advanced to prove their truth. Far from being odd, I look upon my proposal as a historical hypothesis that can explain an array of bewildering phenomena. If I try to give metaphysics a new look it is only in order to explain an odd historical spectacle.

1. Metaphysical Practices

For the sake of argument, I would like to consider the history of philosophy in five phases. I would like to show how in the first three phases metaphysical speculation depended on the symbol picture, and how the failure to realize this dependence in the fourth and fifth phases has led first to serious misunderstandings and finally to an impasse. The phases I propose to consider are the Greek phase, the Patristic phase, the medieval phase, the modern phase and the contemporary phase.

The beginnings of Greek philosophy, as has long been recognized, are to be sought with the Ionian philosophers. The

speculations of these philosophers, as has now been shown in the posthumously published work of Professor Cornford, were not concerned with pure reasoning and the alleged emancipation of reason from mythical speculation. These efforts were concerned with the conceptual formulation of the mythical evidence about the origin and growth of the universe. A cosmogonic myth, initially, it would seem, of Babylonian origin, was taken by the Ionian philosophers as the evidence about which they reasoned; and their metaphysical theories were conceptual formulations about a symbol picture constituted by that myth.

The other important example in the Greek phase is, of course, Plato. Plato's writings are full of myths; but the significance of these myths has usually been misunderstood by scholars who were brought up in a philosophical environment in which metaphysics was considered to be the result of pure reasoning. Thus a large number of different views about these Platonic myths have been put forward. Some scholars have maintained that Plato could not get himself to express the deepest truths in profane language and therefore resorted to poetic expression when he touched matters that were holy to him (Willamowitz-Moellendorf). Others, under the influence of Hegel, have maintained that Plato resorted to myth when he realized that words and concepts would be inadequate for the expression of the truth (Zeller). The formulation of myth therefore proves the powerlessness of thought. Others again, have argued that the myth is the forerunner of the *logos* and that Plato expresses in myth tentatively what he manages to say later in clear concepts (Stöcklein). There is no need here to discuss these and other opinions in detail. They seem, however, all based upon the belief that Plato concocted these myths for his own purposes.

The truth is nevertheless emerging. For the most part, Plato did not invent these myths, but took them from a number of ancient, often oriental traditions. The form in which he received them, of course, was not their original symbolic form. He received them with a great deal of specification and differentiation.

Unfortunately scholars find it very hard to agree as to the source or sources of these myths. Bidez favours Iranian origins;

but Stewart is quite outspokenly in favour of Orphic origins and I would like to quote from him:

> He derived the main doctrine, together with most of the details, of his Eschatological myths – the doctrine of the pre-existence, penance, re-incarnation and final purification of the soul – directly, and through Pindar, from Orphic sources, the chief of which, if we accept the carefully formed view of Dieterich, was a popular Orphic Manual, the *Descent to Hades*, in which the vicissitudes endured by the immortal soul, till it frees itself, by penance, from the Cycle of Births, were described – a work which lay at the foundation of Pindar's theology, was ridiculed by Aristophanes in the *Frogs*, was the ultimate source of the *Visits to the Dead* of Plutarch and Virgil, and greatly influenced Neo-Platonic doctrine.*

It is doubtful whether the question of the origins of these myths can ever be settled beyond doubt. But the only thing that matters for our immediate purposes is the fact that Plato did not invent his myths in order to support his doctrines; but that it was the other way round. He obviously accepted the myths and attempted to provide abstract formulations for them. His metaphysical speculation must therefore be seen as speculation about these myths. They were the evidence he offered in so many words for the truth of his metaphysical speculation about the immortality of the soul, the theory of ideas, the notion that knowledge is remembrance, and so forth. The myths were not inserted because Plato felt powerless to speak in concepts or because he felt that the deepest truths ought to be clad in beautiful images or because he wanted to give interim intimations of what he hoped to be able to formulate rationally at a later stage. When the myth begins in the dialogue and when dialectical reasoning ends, this does not mean, as so many interpreters have taken it to mean, that Plato realized the inadequacy of reasoning and therefore continued with the help of poetical inspiration. It means very simply that the rational argument is at an end and that the evidence, on which it is based or of which it is a conceptual formulation, is being produced.

There are two views concerning the myths in Plato which seem to come fairly close to the view I have taken. It has been

* *The Myths of Plato*, London, 1960, pp. 91–92.

suggested that the myths were inserted into the argument for pedagogical reasons. They were supposed to serve as a help to understanding for those people whose powers of abstract reasoning were weak. This view is compatible with my version, provided one means by it that to produce the factual evidence for an argument is an aid to an understanding of the argument.

Secondly, it has been suggested (Frutiger) that Plato uses myths every time he wishes to propound *δόξαι* concerning becoming. For anything that is said about becoming cannot be *ἐπιστήμη* and, therefore, cannot be seized by dialectical reasoning. The opinions one can hold about becoming cannot be due to dialectical reasoning. If they were, they would not be *δόξαι* but *ἐπιστήμη*; but of becoming one cannot have *επιστήμη*. This view is compatible with my argument, provided one understands it in the following way: the symbol picture (myths) is a picture of the world, and if one draws a picture of the world one is not doing it with the help of dialectical reasoning, but through observation. But observation is a kind of opinion, for one could easily be mistaken in one's observation of the features of the world, for the world is in a state of becoming. Thus, when Plato wishes to give a part of the symbol picture of the world, he relates myths. One might say more adequately that the myths he gives *are* the symbol picture of the world he is talking about. His dialectical reasoning, on the other hand, is concerned with the elucidation of the symbol picture and with the formulation of conceptual truths about it.

The second phase I wish to consider is the Patristic phase which stretches roughly from Philo to St Augustine. To the Church Fathers there was never any doubt that their philosophizing would have to come to terms with a body of symbols, with a certain picture of the world, and more precisely with the picture and history of the world that was contained in the Old and New Testament. For their philosophy they had very largely the conclusions of the various Greek and Roman schools. Their problem was either to reconcile these conclusions, or some of them, with the symbol picture; or to provide reasons why these conclusions should be rejected on the ground that they were incompatible with the symbol picture. All this is fairly well known and scholars have never overlooked

the paramount importance of the symbol picture the Church Fathers speculated about. But again, basing their approach on the tacit assumption that metaphysics is pure reason, scholars have never rated the philosophical achievement of the Church Fathers very high. This is not the place to discuss its value. But I would like to stress that whatever the Church Fathers' conclusions in metaphysics, they have been more self-conscious in their attitude to the subject matter of metaphysics, the symbol picture, than Plato or other Greek philosophers were before them. As a result we find in them a greater preoccupation with metaphysical method. And it is possible for us to form a clearer idea of the initial stages of metaphysical thinking. Plato had been quite free to choose his symbol pictures and he had, therefore never been particularly preoccupied with the methods he employed in reaching his theory of the immortality of the soul from the myth that is recounted, for instance, in the *Phaedrus*. But neither Philo nor the Fathers enjoyed a similar freedom; and as a result they were much preoccupied with the methods they had to fashion in order to achieve some reconciliation between Greek philosophies and the revealed texts. For this reason we owe to them the first explicit statement of the allegorical and the typological methods of interpreting myths and rituals. The allegorical method, which eventually gave rise to the view that every passage in the Scriptures had a fourfold meaning, was used to cull from the revealed texts just those metaphysical theories which had been put forward, for different reasons, by Greek philosophers. The typological method, on the other hand, was used in order to establish series of symbols and to show up the logical connection between various parts of the symbol picture, such as, e.g. the Old and the New Testaments. There are even indications in some of the Fathers that they understood that symbols from a non-biblical picture could be typologically linked with symbols from the biblical picture. But owing to their ecclesiastical standpoint, they shunned the conclusions which this observation might have obliged them to reach.

In the third, the medieval phase, we find again a clear and profound preoccupation with a symbol picture and an open acknowledgement that metaphysical speculation is a

speculation about a symbol picture. Only now the symbol picture of the Old and the New Testament have come to be taken for granted and the possibility of other symbols, such as were provided by the background against which Greek speculation had taken place, had passed from memory. As a result we find once again little self-conscious preoccupation with metaphysical method as such. But the distinction between the symbolic subject matter and metaphysical speculation itself is by no means lost sight of, even though it is not presented in an unequivocal manner.

In the Middle Ages philosophers believed that the conclusions reached by ancient philosophers were the dictates of pure reason, forgetting thus the evidence much of this speculation had been about. The symbol picture which they themselves cultivated, the Old and New Testaments, was believed to be a series of first principles from which further knowledge could be deduced. This method of treating a symbol picture stands in sharp contrast with the method for treating a symbol picture which has been sketched in the present argument. But of this, more later. For the present it is enough to observe that the medieval philosophers distinguished clearly between rational philosophy, of which they had a weird and somewhat unhistorical appreciation; and theology, which was knowledge derived from the symbol picture. Some argued that philosophy is altogether superfluous provided one has theology; and others maintained that philosophy is very useful in that it can show us by pure reason what the evidence which is not always fully explicit obliges one to believe. Genuine philosophy, so the argument ran, cannot contradict theology but gives us information on those simple and very general features of the world we are living in, on which the knowledge derived from the symbol picture is silent.

This way of distinguishing between the information that can be culled from the symbol picture and the information that is to be had by the natural reasoning of philosophy, seems to be based upon a serious and fateful misconception of the nature of the symbol picture. The latter can, of course, be described by words and propositions. But it does not follow from this fact, as was so commonly believed by medieval philosophers, that such expressions as 'in the beginning was

the word' or 'I am that I am' are expressions describing a state of affairs in the same way in which the expression 'there is a table in my room' describes a state of affairs. The two former propositions are descriptions of parts of the symbol picture and should become the subject matter of metaphysical (or theological) speculation. But medieval philosophers, when they found that the truth or meaning of such propositions could not be established in the way in which the truth or meaning of the propositions 'there is a table in my room' could be established, failed to draw the proper conclusion from this observation. They argued instead that since 'in the beginning was the word' was obviously not a proposition about an event which we can observe with our senses, it must be a proposition about a different, supernatural event. They still believed it to be a proposition descriptive of a state of affairs. They only insisted that since the state of affairs could not be observed by natural means, it must be believed to exist supernaturally, removed by its supernaturalness from the reach of our senses. Hence they formed the opinion that the propositions contained in the Scriptures (at least on one of the levels of their four meanings) were descriptions of super-sensible events. They persuaded themselves that the Scriptures contained additional information about the World; and precisely the kind of information that was not to be had through our senses. They held that our ordinary knowledge left gaps and that these gaps were to be filled by the knowledge contained in the Scriptures. To make a complete picture of the universe, one simply had to add the two kinds of knowledge together like a sum.

I think it is of extreme importance that the genesis of the notion of supernature should be understood as the direct result of the juxtaposition of the body of Greek (so called, natural) philosophy and a body of revealed texts and of the failure to understand the proper logical relationship between such philosophy (or between those parts of it which are metaphysical) and scriptural texts. The proper logical relationship between the two is this: the scriptural texts are the subject matter of metaphysical speculation and are interpreted by it.

The fourth philosophical movement began shortly after the Renaissance and is characterized by an entirely new departure in methodology. For the first time in the history of philosophy,

philosophers tried to dispense with the subject matter of metaphysics and argued explicitly that whatever we could know of the soul, its immortality, of God, His providence, the origin of the world, the nature of time and space, etc., could, if such knowledge was to be trustworthy, only be known by the efforts of unaided reason. They rejected, in other words, the evidence for metaphysical speculation contained in the symbol picture as untrustworthy evidence. It is not difficult to see that they shared the medieval philosophers' belief that scriptural texts represented truths. They merely differed from them in forming a very low estimate of these truths. It seems a pity now that they did not reach back to the Patristic phase of philosophy and, instead of rejecting scriptural propositions as untrustworthy information about the world, did not begin to treat it once more as the subject matter of metaphysical speculation.

The reasons, however, for their refusal to make such a move are not difficult to understand. Philosophers had first become exasperated with the strange view, so popular in the Middle Ages, that what is really the symbol picture consisted of a series of first principles of knowledge. They found that these first principles, having as their sole authority the fact that they were contained in the Bible, were unreliable and ambiguous and that the argument that their truth depended on the fact that they had been revealed by God stood itself in need of rational justification if it was to be found worthy of acceptance.

The second reason had something to do with the development of scientific method to which many of the philosophers of the third phase themselves made important contributions. They all knew that it was customary for systems of knowledge to contain propositions about the soul, about God, about the origin of the world, etc. Hence they could not resign themselves in their scientific quest for knowledge to the idea that in future very little would be known, from scientific evidence, about such matters. They took it for granted that human knowledge had to reach the old 'heights'. They rejected the medieval idea that such heights could be reached by a belief in the scriptural texts, and therefore rejected the use of such texts altogether and failed to understand that metaphysical knowledge is knowledge *about* such texts or an interpretation of such texts.

They proceeded, therefore, to speculate about the traditional themes of knowledge on the basis of evidence which was sufficient for scientific theories but insufficient for metaphysics. This line of thought, though now more unpopular than in previous centuries, is still being followed: we find it in the writings of Jeans and Eddington, and, in a somewhat more cautious vein, in the whole body of literature known as natural theology.

Strangely enough, or perhaps not so strangely, the philosophers of the third phase traversed in their speculations very much the same ground as had been traversed before. There were arguments for the immortality of the soul, for the unreality of time, for the belief that God was *natura naturans*, that the Absolute thought itself, and so forth. Only now the arguments sounded a bit feeble and the conclusions themselves very unconvincing; for the evidence that could have supported them was disregarded. Nobody remembered that metaphysical speculation was speculation about the symbol picture, and that the truth of metaphysical propositions could not very well be supported by experience gathered for purposes other than the symbolization of feeling-states, e.g. by evidence collected for scientific purposes. In the fourth phase, people were invited to accept these conclusions either on scientific evidence (which was, for such purposes, mostly insufficient and hardly ever compelling) or on grounds of pure reason. The whole outcome of the movement would not have been quite so bad if philosophers could have reconciled themselves to the idea that if they speculated without the symbol picture and confined their speculation to the scientific picture, the kind of knowledge to be had would be different from the kind of knowledge which Plato or Philo had been able to reach as a result of their interpretations of symbol pictures. But they did not. They still expected the same kind of information on the soul, on God, on providence and so on. Only now they thought it could be culled from a different field and that, once obtained, it was knowledge all of a piece with ordinary scientific knowledge, i.e. knowledge about the same picture of the world of which scientific knowledge was knowledge.

For metaphysical speculation the intrusion of science was disastrous. That is to say, the disaster was due to the fact that with the abandonment of the symbol picture, i.e. of the subject

matter, philosophers did not also abandon the expectations that had been raised by metaphysical speculation. The disaster was neither due to science itself nor to the sceptical rejection of the wrong-headed medieval belief that the symbol picture contained first principles of knowledge. It was due to the fact that scepticism did not extend far enough, i.e. to the kind of results which people expected from science. But one can only suppose that in the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries people could not resign themselves to the idea that scientific knowledge would, in one respect, yield less than metaphysical speculation had yielded in the past.

It is difficult to say when the reaction against the fourth phase began. Hume's scepticism extended to both science and metaphysics. As far as science was concerned, it could do no more than make people cautious. Kant's justification of scientific method was meant to allay doubts and the spectacular results achieved by scientific method since the days of Hume have made his scepticism in regard to science the least important side of Hume's philosophy. As far as metaphysics were concerned, neither Hume's scepticism not Kant's treatment proved fatal, for the metaphysics of the fourth phase continued to flourish throughout the nineteenth century. It was, therefore, only at the beginning of the present century, with the coming of Logical Positivism on the Continent and with Moore and his disciples in England, that the fifth phase, which had been so long in preparation, finally began.

Logical Positivism and the heirs of Logical Positivism in England came to reject the metaphysics of the fourth phase on a variety of grounds. Basically these grounds do not differ from those of Hume or Kant, although a number of variations on their arguments were introduced. Some of these arguments will be examined in detail, in the last section of this chapter. It is, however, of the greatest importance to note that the criticism by contemporary philosophy of metaphysics is directed against the metaphysics of the fourth phase, as Kant's and Hume's was. It is only through a failure to understand the essential connection between metaphysical speculation and symbol pictures in the earlier phases of philosophy that the criticism is held to apply, *mutatis mutandis*, to metaphysics in general.

But even in regard to the fourth phase, one needs to exercise restraint. When Bradley, for instance, argued that time was unreal and yet refused to neglect train time-tables, he proved conclusively that he had not meant to say that time is unreal in the sense that time makes no difference in the world we are living in. Moore's criticism and all subsequent charges against Bradley are based on the observation that he was an inconsistent man, that he ought not to have worried about time-tables in view of the fact that he believed that time was unreal. But such criticism only made explicit in so many words what Bradley had always implied. For he had clearly tried to distinguish between two worlds, the world of appearances and the world of Reality. When he said that time was unreal, he was obviously speaking about Reality, not about the world as it appeared to us. It is true that the distinction between the world of appearances and the world of Reality seems untenable, and we cannot speak of a Reality behind appearances. Bradley may well have been guilty of a confusion in this respect. But there is one feature in his theory which ought to make us pause before we reject him altogether. It cannot be a pure accident that he asserted of Reality a large number of things which philosophers in the earlier phases had been inspired to assert by the contemplation of certain parts of the symbol picture. The denial of the reality of time is in fact a very old feature of metaphysics and one which can very easily be verified by reference to a large number of mythical images and ritual performances. If Bradley's conclusions are so similar to the traditional conclusions of metaphysics, is it not necessary to assume that his conclusions were correct and that his mistake is merely to be sought in his assertion that metaphysical propositions are about the Reality behind the appearances? He probably ought to have said that they are about the symbol picture, and left it at that. At any rate, it is very difficult to believe that the identity of his conclusions with those of previous metaphysics should be a mere coincidence. Similar reflections apply, of course, to Hegel, Schopenhauer, Spinoza, Leibniz, Descartes, and a host of minor writers.

One might say, therefore, that the analytical iconoclasts of the fifth phase have much less reason for priding themselves on having advanced philosophical thinking than they

commonly assume. The criticism that the proposition that time is unreal is not a proposition about the world we are living in, is a platitudinous observation, because nobody had ever maintained that it was. The conclusion that, since it is not about the world we are living in, it is about nothing and therefore meaningless or merely psychologically suggestive or an expression of emotions, etc., is perfectly gratuitous. For I have tried to show that even if one must reject Bradley's belief that the proposition is about the Reality behind the appearances, there is every reason for believing that the proposition, even though Bradley did not see this clearly, is about the traditional subject matter of metaphysics, about the symbol picture.

This cursory survey of the history of metaphysical speculation has shown that philosophers have been extremely liberal in their choice of methods for metaphysical speculation. This is in itself no cause for complaint, because sometimes the soundest speculations are innocent of methodological refinement, and one can often see that too great a preoccupation with methodological principles is as inhibiting a factor in speculation as in many other activities. Nevertheless, it is well to preserve one's critical spirit and to be able to point out where metaphysical speculation about the symbol picture has employed methods which are downright fallacious. It does not follow from the discovery of such fallacies that the conclusions of metaphysical speculation are untenable; for the explicit statement of the method by which the conclusions are justified may well be no more than a rationalization or an attempt to make overt what was in reality a fast, intuitive process.

If one surveys the field, one will find that the formal metaphysical methods practised in the past can be classified under two headings. But this does not mean that the most remarkable metaphysical doctrines have not been put forward without the slightest attention to the formal rules by which they might have been derived from the symbol picture. Furthermore, the formal rules, elaborated and practised by some philosophers, were disregarded by others whose speculations were bolder and of greater permanent interest. The most remarkable example is the method employed by Plato. Plato never seems to have reflected upon the nature of the relationship that

existed between his myths which he offered as evidence and his metaphysical abstractions about the immortality of the soul, the theory of 'remembering' and so forth. He set out his theories and described the symbol picture from which the theory was abstracted and which was the subject matter of the theory. But he does not appear to have been interested in the formal rules by which the former was derived from the latter. Another more explicit example of the way in which metaphysical theories are derived from the symbol picture, is furnished by the practice of St Thomas Aquinas. St Thomas believed that the scriptural statement *signatum est super nos lumen vultus tui, Domine* afforded 'proof' of the belief that human reason (the divine light impressed upon us) was able to discover certain principles both of existence and of conduct. It is not easy to see what strict rules he can have employed for culling this meaning from the scriptural passage. He seems to have employed a combination of at least two principles of interpretation. First, he seems to have taken the statement in a somewhat literal sense, believing that something had in fact been impressed by God upon man. And second, he seems to have had a notion that *lumen vultus tui* was an allegory of reason.

Or consider the following case. St Thomas believed that the statement *Dei sumus adiutores* could be taken as 'proof' of the theory that men exercise a secondary causal efficacy; and that while it is true that all primary causality is exercised by God, men can be held to be more than involuntary tools in the sense that God gave them certain powers to will and do things and that those powers are in an important sense their own. Here again there is a trace of a literal interpretation; and added to it, a typological interpretation: our secondary causality stands to God's causality, he seems to say, in the same relation in which a helper (*adiutor*) stands to God. The original statement therefore expresses the type; and the theory of man's secondary causality, the anti-type. It seems that St Thomas thought that all this was too obvious to need mentioning. But one may well wonder what exactly he would have said if someone had asked him for the formal rules by which he thought the scriptural passages quoted could justify his doctrines.

The most extraordinary case, however, is that of Spinoza. I have already alluded to it in the historical survey of metaphysical speculation. Spinoza was not only not interested in the formal rules, but went to great lengths to show that his metaphysical doctrines were in fact not derived from a symbol picture at all. Thus he put himself into a very oblique position, for he invited criticism of his doctrines both in terms of what the positive picture obliges one to believe and in terms of strict, formal logic. There is no doubt that he himself invited such largely irrelevant criticism. But it seems true, all the same, that he had very good reason for choosing this path. Spinoza reacted against the traditional biblical symbol picture, and found that he had reasons for rejecting it, much as Plato had found he had hard reasons for rejecting the traditional Homeric symbol picture. He found that the symbol picture contained in the Kabbalistic tradition was more to his satisfaction.

This should, of course, not be taken in too literal a sense. The matter has often been remarked upon and it seems fairly certain that, above all, he derived his completely unbiblical conception of the relation between God and the world from his excursions into Kabbalistic literature. As far as the relationship between God and the world is concerned, there can be no other plausible explanation: Spinoza must have contemplated the Kabbalistic image of *En-Sof* manifesting itself in a number of partial aspects or powers, each of which is the whole under a different self-limitation. This image stands in striking contrast to the biblical image of God, the creator of the world.

It would have been proper if Spinoza had raised the question as to whether the Kabbalistic picture ought to replace the traditional biblical one which had influenced and determined metaphysical speculation ever since the time of Philo. But Spinoza was a rationalist. He could get himself to advocate openly the rejection of a biblical symbol picture. But he found it impossible to reconcile his rationalism with an advocacy of a different symbol picture. And thus he preferred to pass it over in silence. In this way he arrived at what seems now a very oblique position. His speculation was controlled, up to a point, by a symbol picture, the existence of which he did not wish to admit. Not wishing to raise the question as to whether this symbol picture should be substituted for the traditional

biblical one, he decided to ignore the whole question of symbol pictures altogether. He drew many of the principles of his metaphysics from the Kabbalistic symbol picture. But he did not make this explicit, and thought a denial that these principles were drawn from the traditional biblical symbol picture and an affirmation that they had nothing to do with it, would be sufficient. So it is certainly true that, in regard to the traditional biblical symbol picture, his metaphysical speculation was 'free' and not derived from revealed texts or any other extraneous source. But it does not necessarily follow that his metaphysics did not have a different source of inspiration; i.e. a source which he preferred not to mention. One may well wonder whether the Jewish community which expelled Spinoza would have been less or more enraged had they known that he departed from accepted beliefs not, as they were told, because of his uncompromising rationalism and his impiety in regard to their Scriptures; but because of his preference for a symbol picture which was not the officially accepted one. I am not suggesting that there was any kind of duplicity in Spinoza in not referring openly to the symbol picture that had inspired his speculations. He himself thought that all that was required was a firm rejection of 'revelation', i.e. of the traditional biblical symbol picture, as a guide to the truth. And he was not troubled by the fact that his metaphysics were independent only in regard to the symbol picture of the Jewish and Christian official tradition; and not independent or purely rationalistic in regard to the other symbol picture. At any rate, this seems to be the explanation of the 'hybris' that presided over this particular chapter in this fourth phase of metaphysical speculation, a phase which, owing to the prevalent belief that metaphysical speculation was free, was particularly poor in its awareness of the formal rules of metaphysical speculation.

One should also consider the case of Schopenhauer in this connection. Schopenhauer, like Spinoza, set little store on the traditional biblical symbol picture. But, unlike Spinoza, he did not think that an open avowal of his debt to a symbol picture would detract from his rational integrity. The symbol picture present in the *Upanishads* plays a vital part in his metaphysical speculations. As he had no 'ecclesiastical' connection with any Indian group, he saw no reason why he should

present his speculations as interpretations of revealed texts. And for this reason he paid no attention to the formal principles by which he might have justified his metaphysics in terms of the *Upanishads*. He simply quoted the latter (together with Sankara's metaphysical doctrines about them) in order to support his own views, thinking presumably that such correspondence was likely to be counted as an argument in favour of the truth of his theories. Schopenhauer's lack of interest in the formal principles of metaphysical speculation should, however, not blind one to the great importance he himself attached to the symbol picture of the *Upanishads*.

As a final case I would like to mention Jean-Paul Sartre. Sartre's metaphysical theories about the non-existence of a transcendental ego and his view that existence is prior to essence, are based on the most skilful, but not always unexceptionable, dialectical reasoning. But it would be wrong to assess their truth entirely by the validity of such reasoning. Sartre is also the author of a large number of novels and plays in which he presents a certain picture of human beings and of the lives they lead. It seems that these plays and novels play in Sartre's philosophy the part which traditional symbol pictures of one kind or another play in the more traditional metaphysical systems. In these novels and plays, Sartre portrays his vision of human life. His metaphysical theories are attempts at an abstract interpretation of this vision. One could argue without much difficulty that in a specially sophisticated way he composes his vision of human life in the way in which such visions have been composed by the authors of earlier and more traditional symbol pictures. And as St Thomas's metaphysics is based upon the Bible and Plato's on the myths he recites, Sartre's is based upon the picture he paints in his novels and plays. Again, there is little or no attempt to formulate the principles by which Mathieu's life, as described in the *Roads to Freedom*, gives rise to Sartre's metaphysical doctrines. But I would certainly consider the picture there presented a more convincing argument in favour of Sartre's doctrines than the dialectical justifications that are to be found in *Being and Nothingness*. The validity of Sartre's doctrines ought to be tested by the picture he draws in his novels; and not by a linguistic (Ayer) or logical analysis.

The only really significant question that can arise in regard to Sartre's doctrines is whether or not they are valid summaries of, or abstractions from, the picture of life which he himself so skilfully presents to us.

2. Allegory

I would now like to discuss those formal principles of metaphysical speculation which have been explicitly stated, under the two headings of allegory and typology.

Allegorical interpretations of the symbol picture are very old and it would seem that they were practised first in Greece, long before Plato. The method of allegorical interpretation, however, reached its full development at the hands of Philo who believed that the texts of the Old Testament were allegorical statements of philosophical truths. Allegorical interpretations are based on the notion that if we are aware of an event that is invisible, such as an inner turmoil, there is a visible event that corresponds to it, such as a contest between two allegorical women, e.g. between *ira* and *patientia*. It is therefore possible to speak of the event in question either by making a verbal statement about it; or by allegorizing it. Conversely, when we are confronted with two women who are fighting and who seem to bear, respectively, the hallmarks of wrath and patience, we are forced to the conclusion that the combat is an allegorical one and that it can be described as signifying an inner turmoil.

In the Middle Ages poets and writers began to employ the allegorical method very arbitrarily. They usually began with the invisible event and then made up a visible allegory to describe it. This sort of thing is no more than a literary conceit, entertaining at times, but on the whole infinitely tedious. It is an artificially roundabout way of describing human life – artificial, because so unnecessary. If one is aware of the invisible event it is superfluous to invent an allegory for its description. The only reason for the wide popularity of the habit is that in the Middle Ages people were always at a loss as to how to entertain themselves and therefore applauded writers who indulged in such artfully contrived and roundabout descriptions.

To Philo and the early Fathers there was nothing roundabout and artificial in the allegorical method; for they started from

the other end. They did not begin with the visible events and then invented allegories for them. They started with the tales of the Bible and tried to cull from them more abstract and explicit statements which, incidentally, they believed to be the same as, or very similar to, the ones contained in certain Greek philosophies. Hence they believed that the biblical stories were allegorical stories and endeavoured to discover the invisible events which they signified. If one is not too demanding one can, of course, take any event as an allegory of an invisible event. Any combat can be an allegory of an inner turmoil; and any fusion, an allegory of love. Thus events of the positive picture could be taken to have an allegorical value. But if one is more particular, one will see that the events of the symbol picture are more explicitly allegorical. For in the symbol picture, one may well find a combat with very expressive features, e.g. a combat between a giant and a dwarf; or a combat between a man and an angel. And such combats, having more clearly specified characteristics, have a less general and a more particular allegorical value. They signify not just inner turmoil or any kind of turmoil, but various specific kinds of inner turmoil. And when events are very artfully elaborated, as they only could be in the symbol picture, allegorical interpretation of these events becomes more than a purely arbitrary discovery of certain structural similarities between the visible, allegorical event and the invisible, inner event.

One must nevertheless make a critical comment on the method. Allegorical interpretation is an attempt to short-circuit what we have called metaphysical theory. Metaphysical theories are abstractions from the symbol picture, theories about the symbol picture. They do not describe the 'inner' events of field A, but the visible events of field B, duly transposed and reshuffled in virtue of their relations to events in field A. Hence the interpretation of the symbol picture is and always remains an interpretation of the events in field B. But the allegorical method attempts to by-pass metaphysical theories and to state in so many words what is taking place in field A – considering certain events in field B as the necessary clues.

I have argued earlier that it is impossible to state in so

many clear words what is taking place in field A, except in the oblique manner of symbolization. Now the allegorical method tries to pretend that that is in fact not so; and that it is possible after all to describe directly what is taking place in field A. Let us assume that that is correct. It would follow then that the whole detour through field B, the whole attempt at symbolizing (rather than plainly describing) events in A, is superfluous, a wilful and unnecessary pastime. The practitioners of the allegorical method can, in that case, not give any very good reason why the allegories should have been invented in the first place. For if it is possible to describe events in A directly and literally, there can be no reason why anyone should ever have wasted his time and risk the introduction of equivocations and misunderstandings by first symbolizing 'inner' events and then spend hours in attempts to desymbolize them and discover the original meaning. The upholders of the evolutionary theory would no doubt believe that people in very primitive states of culture were unable to call a spade a spade and were thus forced to make the detour through B; and that it is incumbent upon the members of more advanced and intellectually sophisticated societies to retranslate these excursions into B and to discover the events in A which the allegories describe in a roundabout manner. This evolutionary view of the progress from less advanced to more advanced intellects is, however, of very doubtful value. Moreover it fails to do justice to the facts of life. For if our interpretation is accepted, it would appear that it is *in fact* not possible to give adequate literal descriptions of the events in field A. If primitive people are given to myth-making this is, therefore, not due to the fact that they are too unlogical to give literal desriptions of the events in A; but due to the fact that it is logically not possible for anyone, primitive *or* advanced, to give literal descriptions of events in A. The symbolization of events in A by events in B is, therefore, not due to a logical deficiency of the primitive mind (whatever deficiencies this mind *may* have), but due to the nature of the events in A. The practitioners of the allegorical method had, therefore, too facile a view of the 'inner' events in field A, and it is for that reason that the allegorical interpretations of the biblical stories by Philo seem to us heavy-handed and extremely

rough. For the literal descriptions of the 'inner' events of field A given by Philo and derived by him from the mythical tales of the Old Testament are very roughly hewn descriptions of 'inner' events and rarely come closer to what is going on in A than such statements as 'I am sad' or 'I am lonely'. I have admitted above that such descriptions are, in a sense, descriptions of states of consciousness; but I have also tried to show that they are not very accurate descriptions in that they say no more about my states of consciousness than what can be said about my states of consciousness by any other observer who has no more evidence for my states of consciousness than the outward signs of sadness or loneliness. From these signs an outside observer can infer *that* I am sad; but fails to see what it feels like to be sad. Such descriptions, therefore, do not get to the heart of the matter because they fail to make use of all the evidence there is and confine themselves to regarding as evidence for such descriptive statements certain outward signs or concomitants of, e.g. sadness. The symbolization of events in A by events in B is a device intended to enable us to refer to 'inner' events more accurately than is possible by purely literal description. This fact is overlooked by the practitioners of the allegorical method. To them the allegory itself, once it has been translated into a literal description of an 'inner' invisible event, becomes superfluous. The symbol, in other words, can be reabsorbed. But in our view no reabsorption or elimination of the symbol is either possible or desirable. The metaphysical theory is a theory about the symbol – and not a literal description of the 'inner' event symbolized. The enunciation of a metaphysical theory does not, therefore, obviate the need for the symbol. On the contrary: it is no more than an abstract formulation of the nature of the events in the symbol picture and therefore cannot replace the symbol picture. That picture, on the contrary, must remain before our eyes; for it, and it alone, affords the evidence for the truth of the metaphysical theory. In the allegorical method, on the other hand, once the retranslation has taken place, it is alleged that the events in A, the 'inner' events themselves, are the evidence for the truth of the literal description elicited from the allegory; and that, therefore, as soon as the retranslation is made, the allegory itself can be scrapped.

3. Typology

The paramount motive in metaphysical speculations is the desire to give greater precision to the meaning of unspecified and undifferentiated symbols. Both typological and parabolical thinking are successful methods for the classification of the meaning of such symbols. But neither method manages to take us out of the symbol picture itself and arrive at the formulation of an abstract metaphysical theory *about* the symbol picture. Strictly speaking, therefore, although this has not always been recognized, neither of these two methods are metaphysical methods. But within the framework of the symbol picture itself they constitute an invaluable aid both to the eventual formulation of metaphysical theories and to any attempt to test their truth.

Let us consider the parable first. If one is confronted with a symbolic event, undifferentiated and unspecified and therefore fairly obscure in meaning and open to a number of varying interpretations, one can endeavour to find a parable in order to explain it. A parable is a story about an event that has the same time-structure as the original event. That is, the various phases of the event follow one another in the same rhythm. But the parable must be more readily intelligible than the original story. This means that it must not be capable of more than one conceptual interpretation. This function is most readily fulfilled by a natural event, e.g. by such a story as the story of the *Prodigal Son*.

When the story of the *Prodigal Son* is put forward as a parable, it serves to give greater precision to the symbol that was to be explained. The parable itself is a natural story that could conceivably be located somewhere in the positive picture. It serves to explain a symbol, i.e. the symbolic story about the all-loving and all-forgiving Father-God. As a natural event, the story of the *Prodigal Son* has itself no great symbolic precision; i.e. its indicative value of an event in field A is, like that of all natural events, very small. But since the story has been designated as a parable, it stands in a firm relation to a symbolic event and through this relation some of the symbolic quality of the original symbol is transferred to the parable. That is to say that, though the parable is a natural

event, it can assume, through its relation to the symbol
was to be explained, a symbolic value.

It would be a mistake, however, to believe that one
start the other way round. One cannot tell a simple story
natural event and say that it is a parable and then seek
symbol it is a parable of. The speculation must always st
with the symbol. It begins by conceiving a certain mean
in the symbol (one discerns a certain structural pattern in
one reads a skeleton into it) and then seeks a natural eve
which has that same structure and designates it as a paral
so that the parable, being more readily intelligible than t
symbol, acts as a *definiens* to the symbol. Although the design
tion of a parable *is a return to the positive picture, this retur
is strictly conditioned by the need to define the meaning of
symbol in the symbol picture.* And without prior perception
of the symbol picture, there would be nothing specifically
parabolic about any event in the positive picture. If the parable,
the natural event in the positive picture, then assumes
for the listener some symbolic quality, i.e. if it is invested
with a certain emotional aura and is capable of drawing atten-
tion to a state of consciousness (to an event in field A), this is
simply due to a reflection. The parable, like a mirror, may be
capable of reflecting the symbolic quality of the symbol it
explains. But it does not become a symbol in its own right.
This is important, for if it did become a symbol in its own
right, it would then be possible to proceed from it, through the
typological specification described above, to further symbols
and finally to a metaphysical theory. But since the parable is
not itself a symbol but a natural event chosen only on account
of its structural similarities with the symbol, parabolic thought
must come to an end with the designation of a natural event
as a parable. It cannot proceed from the parable to further
symbols and finally to a metaphysical theory.

Typological speculation is fundamentally different. It too
is based upon the observation that a number of quite different
events (such as the crossing of the Red Sea by the children
of Israel and the act of baptism) have certain structural
similarities. But typological speculation operates in a com-
pletely different way. Let us consider, for example, the following
symbol. Certain people repent, because they know the Kingdom

is at hand. Such an act is a fairly specified symbol, even though it is still open to a small number of different interpretations. It can be used as an explanation of another, less specified symbol, e.g. of the story of a providential God, who cares for and loves His children. If it is used to explain the less specified symbol, it assumes the character of an anti-type; and the less specified symbol becomes the type. It is possible to construct such a typological series by beginning with a natural event. The natural event can act as a symbol for an event in A; and in order to give greater precision to the symbol, it can be chosen as a type and, by a process of denaturalization (i.e. by investing it with features that do not belong to it in the positive picture in which the original natural symbol was located, and by transposing to it features that occur in the positive picture in a different place) an anti-type can emerge which will serve as a *definiens* of the original symbol. Thus we see that in typological thinking a natural event, located in the positive picture, can play a rôle. But the natural event in question must be designated as a symbol in its own right; and as such it is fundamentally different from the natural event which can be designated, in order to act as a *definiens* of a symbol, as a parable. The natural event in typological thinking is a symbol in its own right. But the second element in the series, the first non-natural symbol, is the *definiens* of the first element in the series, of the natural event. In the example we have chosen about the coming of the Kingdom, the whole typological series could have been built up originally from the perception of a natural event as a symbol, e.g. the relationship between a father and his sons. From such a natural event, in order to get great symbolic precision (to improve the symbolic value of the event in regard to events in field A), one could have produced anti-types by progressive denaturalizations, until one arrived at the vision of the providential God and finally at the symbol of the Kingdom that is at hand and at the acts of repentance.

From there it is a small step to a metaphysical theory of redemption, of the unreality of the world, of the end of Time, etc. But no matter how small the step, typological thinking alone cannot take it. Typological thinking, like parabolic thinking, remains within the orbit of the symbol picture, even

though it ascends to the symbol picture from the positive picture. Parabolic thinking, on the other hand, descends from the symbol picture to the positive picture. Both forms of thinking are invaluable preparations for the formulation of metaphysical doctrines, but neither form yields metaphysical theories or can be a substitute for them. For we have seen that both methods of arriving at metaphysical theories (described in Chapter Three) depend on the presence of a very highly specified symbol picture. And the only way in which a symbol picture can become closely specified is by the use of parabolic and typological thinking.

It must be apparent that I have used the notion of typology both in a wider and in a more special sense than is customary. Customarily one speaks of typology only in a very limited sense, namely in the sense in which it is possible to understand a later historical event as the anti-type of an earlier event which foreshadowed the significance, no matter how vaguely, of the later event. The School of Antioch in the second and third centuries of our era confined the notion of typology to the strict meaning. In the eyes of the Alexandrian school, however, the notion of typological relationship was taken to cover almost all phenomena that were structurally related and which could throw a light on one another. The adherents of both schools considered typology to be based upon the notion of 'exemplary causality', and thought that the type stands in such 'exemplary causality' to the anti-type. I think it legitimate to see typological relations in phenomena other than historical ones; but I cannot consider that there is any justification for the theory of 'exemplary causality'. For this reason my idea of typology is much wider than that of either of these schools. And yet, it is narrower in that I believe that there is no point whatever in talking about typological relationships between events unless the anti-type can act as a *definiens* or partial *definiens* of the type. I would, therefore, substitute for the notion of 'exemplary causality', which was held to underlie typological relationships, the notion of typological definition. For typological definition, as I have tried to show, is invaluable in preparing the ground in the symbol picture for metaphysical speculation. Without typological definitions, and, to a lesser extent, without parabolic definitions, meta-

physical theories about the symbol picture could never be established.

4. A Consideration of Objections

It is now necessary to consider a number of possible and widely held objections to the thesis that metaphysical doctrines are synthetic, *a posteriori* statements about the symbol picture.

The first objection that might occur to one is an objection that is perhaps less favoured now than it was at the time of Sir James Frazer. It is based upon the belief in the progressive evolution of mankind. If there has been a mental or intellectual evolution, one might in fact object to my thesis that the symbol picture is the product of an early, pre-logical state of the human intellect, a vague and inefficient attempt to express truths about the world and about man. With the development of man's reasoning faculties, it became progressively possible to deal with the same problems in a more rational way, and thus gradually magic gave way to religion, and religion, finally, to science. We have little confidence now in the accuracy of this evolutionary pattern which Frazer had inherited from Comte. At the same time it is regrettable that we tend nowadays to have little confidence in those parts of Frazer's work that are quite unconnected with the belief in this kind of evolution. Even though we must abandon the evolutionary theory by which he interpreted so many of the myths and rituals, we owe him an immense debt for his systematic exploration of the uniformities in the symbol picture. And even if we cannot consider modern medical science that prolongs our lives and keeps us healthy as the rational version of the ancient ritual enacted at Nemi; that is, even if we cannot get ourselves to believe that the priests of Nemi tried ineffectively and irrationally to achieve what our doctors are now so much more competent to do, we must see that without Frazer's work it would not have been possible to come to a true understanding of myth and ritual in psychology, nor would it have been possible to discover that metaphysical doctrines are propositions about the symbol picture. So while we have long since been compelled, by our anthropological researches into the structure of primitive societies, to discard Frazer's evolutionary method of interpreting the data, we have greatly

benefited from his discovery of the uniformities in the symbol picture – a discovery which he made with the help of his faulty evolutionary hypothesis.

While there is little occasion nowadays to fear the objections of the evolutionists, there is very much more reason for meeting the possible objections of the functionalists in social theory. According to the functionalism that is widely practised by sociologists and anthropologists, it is impossible to consider myths and ritual, folklore and literature and all forms of art, both sacred and profane, apart from the social context from which they spring and of which their practice is an integral part. These pursuits, so the argument runs, have no value and no *raison d'être* apart from the society in which they are being practised. The reason for their practice is a social one; they help to smooth social tension, to ease the transition from one stage of life to another; they alleviate irrational fears or assist in the generation of social consciousness without which people would fail to co-operate. Myths, for instance, as stories about climatic phenomena, fulfil in many societies an important social function in that they help people to accept or resign themselves to certain phenomena whose persistent occurrence would otherwise be hard to bear. Similarly with rituals: they fulfil a social function, like the *rites de passage*, in smoothing the transition from one stage of life to another and thus help the individual to make the adjustment that is required at every transition. Scientific theories, it is maintained, can be divorced from their social context because, no matter how important a function they fulfil in keeping a certain society together, they have a truth-value of their own and are, therefore, capable of being assessed without regard to the place they happen to occupy in any certain society. But the same cannot be said of myths and ritual and of certain forms of literature and art.

The reply to such an objection is, however, already contained in my argument. Myths and ritual, literature and art, whatever social functions they may play in societies, are also symbols of feeling-states. And as such they can be taken away from their social context and considered in isolation, like scientific theories. The theory that polio can be prevented by a certain vaccine can be considered on its own merits without reference

to the customs of the society in which it was first propounded, even though it is clear that certain social habits of scientific discussion and research were initially responsible for the discovery of the vaccine. This is due to the fact that there is a way in which one can test the truth of that theory. But the same applies, for example, to the myth of Prometheus. Whatever social function it may have fulfilled among the people who first fashioned it, we can take it away from that society and consider it in isolation because it is an important symbol of feeling-states. The ability to symbolize feeling-states does for the myth or the ritual what the indication of a way in which its truth can be tested does for a scientific theory. It enables us to attribute to a myth and a ritual a significance in their own right, i.e. a significance other than the one they may happen to possess in virtue of their social function. Both the practice of medicine and that of certain rituals can be considered in a social context in a functional sense. A hospital, after all, is a social institution and it can be described in purely functional terms without the slightest reference to the truth or falsity of the methods employed for the treatment of the patients. But it does not follow from this observation that it is not also possible to consider the merit of those methods *without* reference to the hospital as a social institution and without reference to the social function of those methods. The same applies to rituals: they can be studied both as functions in a social context, and, in virtue of their symbolic value, as indications of states of consciousness occurring in field A.

The next objection we have to meet comes from a completely different direction. It is likely to be put forward not by anthropologists, but by theologians. They will argue that, even if it is granted that metaphysical theories about the unreality of time or the existence of absolute consciousness are derived from the symbol picture in the way I have argued that they are, it cannot be conceded that the same is true of theological propositions such as the one that God is triune. Theologians will readily admit that there is nothing in the positive picture that could justify the belief in the truth of such a theological doctrine. But they will reject both the claim that the proposition in question is an abstract formulation about certain features of the symbol picture, and the claim that the symbol

picture is symbolic of states of consciousness. They will maintain instead that the symbol picture is symbolic of transcendental realities, of which we could have no direct perceptual knowledge because they do in fact transcend our means of perception.

I think that their criticism of the first claim that theological propositions, like metaphysical ones, have the symbol picture for their subject matter, can be met more easily than their criticism of the second claim. If theologians believe that theological propositions are derived deductively from first principles and that those first principles are revealed, they do express after all only a very partial view of their own activities. A great deal of theological thinking has always been concerned with typology, with parable and allegory, i.e. with outspoken attempts at giving abstract formulations of the descriptions of the symbol picture. It seems to me that it was only at one particular point in the history of theology that the belief that theological reasoning is a deduction from revealed first principles gained ground and tended to crowd out other ways of approaching theology. When Christian philosophers had to face the fact that some metaphysical truths were derived from Aristotle and that those truths could not be said to owe anything to Christian revelation, they began to form the habit of distinguishing between theological reasoning from revealed first principles and metaphysical reasoning which coincided more or less with that of Aristotle. In this way they managed to preserve a number of theological truths as owing nothing to natural reason other than the fact that they were more or less mechanically deduced from revealed principles. Thus theology was marked off from metaphysics and an unsound theoretical distinction was made in order to preserve inviolate a number of theological doctrines. This medieval distinction which owes so much to St Thomas Aquinas was, however, no more than an *ad hoc* theory. It might have had a practical justification in an age in which many people might have been inclined to adhere too exclusively to the teachings of Aristotle if no such distinction had been made. But there can be no justification for it now that we have gained a much wider view of metaphysics. Now that we understand that it is perfectly possible for the formulation of such allegedly theological

propositions as 'God is triune' to be included in metaphysics, there is little justification for the artificial Thomistic distinction between theology and metaphysics. Only when it so happened that the discovered Aristotelian *corpus* of metaphysical doctrines excluded such propositions was it necessary to safeguard them by the postulation of a non-metaphysical, theological science. But now that our conception of metaphysics no longer obliges us to believe that the only metaphysical doctrines are those of Aristotle, this necessity has clearly vanished.

It is less easy to meet the theologian's second criticism, i.e. the contention that the symbol picture symbolizes transcendent realities. In fact, I do not think it possible to meet this criticism directly at all. For the contention that it symbolizes transcendent realities is based upon the belief that there *are* transcendent realities and that belief is by its very nature beyond the reach of criticism. All one can do is to reject the claim that the existence of these transcendental realities is *vouchsafed* by the existence of the symbols. For *this* claim to be valid, one would have to be able to show that the transcendental realities are also known of independently, i.e. by means other than those symbols. But this is, by the nature of the case (for they are admittedly 'transcendent') impossible. Hence one has no other proof of their existence than the symbols. The belief in transcendental realities boils down, therefore, to the belief that the symbols stand for transcendent realities since they must stand for something. These transcendental realities are therefore postulated as an *ignoratio elenchi*, that is, merely for want of something to be symbolized by the symbols. If anybody wishes to believe in transcendental realities, well and good. There is no argument against such a belief. There is only a valid argument against the belief that such a belief is a rational one.

At the same time, there is nothing in my thesis which precludes the existence of transcendental realities. The idea that the symbols stand for such realities is a very implausible one; because it seemed so much more convincing to say that the symbols stand for events in field A. But there is nothing to prevent anyone from believing that the fact that the events in field A exist and are such as they are and no other, *because* of certain transcendental realities. This means that if there *is* revelation of transcendental realities, such revelation is not

contained in the symbols of the symbol picture; but in the states of consciousness of field A which are symbolized by the symbol picture. This version is compatible with the view of St Thomas on the matter. The proximate causes of supernatural *prophetia*, he seems to have said, are invariably biological or physical in character. The proof that something is 'revealed' and not a natural manifestation must not, therefore, be sought in the degree of un-naturality of the manifestation in question (e.g. that it can only be seen by the sixth sense). We may conclude that our account of the 'natural' origin of non-natural symbols is completely neutral in regard to the question whether God reveals anything or not. It must merely be taken as proof that a non-natural phenomenon, such as a symbol, owes its existence to natural causes and cannot *by itself* be taken as proof of a transcendental reality.

Having attempted to reply to the various objections which anthropologists or sociologists and theologians may raise, it is now necessary to consider the objections of philosophers. These objections can readily be divided into two categories. There will be firstly the objections of the traditionalists, who will argue that metaphysical knowledge is knowledge of the World as it really is (as opposed to its appearance), and that metaphysical knowledge is therefore not *a posteriori*. These philosophers will admit that it is synthetic, i.e. that it really tells us something about the real World that exists behind the various appearances of the World. Secondly there will be the objections of those contemporary philosophers who argue that metaphysical doctrines are not synthetic; and that therefore the question as to whether they are *a priori* or *a posteriori* can never arise.

Let us consider the objections of the traditional philosophers first. The traditional philosopher will not attempt to argue that metaphysical doctrines are about the world we know in our ordinary experience, and he will concede that for our daily practical purposes they are irrelevant, if not downright unhelpful. But he will insist that this is merely proof of the fact that they do not refer to the world as it *appears* to us in our ordinary experience; and will insist that metaphysical knowledge is therefore knowledge of the World behind the world that appears to us, i.e. that it is knowledge of Reality.

With this argument, the traditional philosopher finds himself in a position that is very similar to that of the theologian who argued that symbols are symbols of a transcendent reality. Neither the theologian who argues in this way nor the philosopher who believes that metaphysical doctrines are doctrines about Reality, can produce any evidence (this is, of course, due to the nature of the case and to the alleged character of transcendent Reality or Reality behind appearances) for the existence of the world behind the world. The only indication that there is such a world behind the world is presented according to the theologian by the existence of symbols; and, according to the philosopher, by the existence of metaphysical doctrines. We will not discuss the former's difficulties again. But the latter must clearly admit that he has been compelled to postulate the existence of such a world because he was hard put to say, from the point of view of our ordinary experience, to which metaphysical doctrines clearly do *not* apply, to what kind of world they *do* apply. His argument would sound more convincing if there were any independent evidence of the existence of such a world behind the world. But all we know is that the World as it is in Itself cannot be known; and that all our knowledge is of various appearances of that world.

The philosopher may now turn round and assert that the statement that the World in Itself cannot be known, is false, and that if one employs special methods of knowledge and does not demand anything so absurd as to know what the World Itself will look like when no one is looking, one can indeed 'know' something about it, provided one does not mean by 'know' something that is connected with perception or with inferences from perception. Its existence, he will maintain, is vouchsafed by the admission that the various appearances are, and in fact must be, appearances of something. We do have, therefore, independent evidence, if not of the character or 'nature' of the World behind the appearances, at least of Its existence. And from this insight it is a short and plausible step to the belief that metaphysical doctrines, if they do not apply to the world as it appears in our ordinary experience, apply to the World behind those appearances. The argument is sound if one really takes it seriously, i.e. if one believes that whatever is to be known about the World behind the appearances

is incapable of being formulated in so many propositions. If one really believes in other forms of knowledge, such as, for example, the direct intuition of the flux of time (Bergson), and believes that metaphysical knowledge is of this direct intuitive character and can, therefore, not be formulated in propositions, the philosopher is right. But he is wrong when he thinks that the same argument can be used for the justification of metaphysical knowledge that is formulated in propositions such as 'time is unreal', 'consciousness is absolute', and such like. For such propositions are very clearly of an ordinary character: they employ ordinary concepts, like all other propositions and can, therefore, not be said to be due to a direct intuitive perception. If one says that time is unreal, one does not mean that one is able to seize by direct intuition the flux of time and perhaps identify oneself with it. One is making, on the contrary, an explicit statement about certain phenomena, i.e. about events perceived to have taken place or said to have taken place in the symbol picture; admittedly not in the positive picture. Now if these events are part of the World behind appearances, as our philosopher seems to maintain, then this argument amounts to saying that in that World there are events, but events that cannot be seen, heard, touched, or perceived in any way. And he seems now in fact to have returned to the absurd argument that the World, when no one is perceiving it, is perceived to be of such and such a character. His attempt to justify his belief that metaphysical propositions, as distinct from special intuitive insights that can be 'lived' but not formulated, are so many doctrines or propositions about a *transcendent* Reality and therefore not *a posteriori*, then *does* boil down to the paradoxical argument that we can know what the World is like when no one knows It.

I would prefer to put it this way. Direct intuitive insight is a state of mind, a state of consciousness. As such it is an event in field A; and as such we know about it only through symbolization. But such symbolization is achieved through certain transpositions of phenomena in the positive picture, i.e. through our perception of field B as a symbol picture. Therefore, when we are speaking with Bergson or with other mystics of a direct intuition, we are speaking of an event in A. We achieve some knowledge of the qualities of that event through symbols;

and we achieve some conceptual definition of these symbols by metaphysical speculation about these symbols. But in no case is there any justification for believing that the metaphysical statements themselves apply to a World behind the appearance of the symbol picture and that they convey a knowledge of the character or 'nature' of that World. Except, of course, in the very general and quite meaningless sense that all knowledge of the various appearances of the World must automatically be also a knowledge of the World of which the appearances (symbol picture as well as positive picture) are appearances. I must insist, however, that that sense is a quite general sense and meaningless, because the truth or falsity of any metaphysical doctrine cannot be decided by a look at that World; but only by a look at the one or the other of its appearances. And for this reason there is a specific sense in saying that metaphysical doctrines are doctrines about the one or the other of those appearances; but no specific sense at all in saying that it is about the World behind those appearances.

We can now turn to the objections of the contemporary philosopher. These objections are all based upon the contemporary philosopher's ontological preference for field B. Such ontological preference means, of course that the events which I have argued take place in field A either do not take place at all, or really take place in field B. These two alternatives amount to the same thing. For if one does not believe them to take place in A, one believes that they do not take place in the way in which I have said they take place. And to say that they take place in field B is again to say that they do not take place in the way in which I have said they take place.

The ontological preference for field B, therefore, implies that one believes that when someone says that he is sad, he is not making a statement about a state of consciousness which cannot be adequately described by a simple assertion. When someone says he is sad, he knows of his own sadness by the same symptoms or concomitants by which other people know of his sadness. Therefore, in the description of the sadness by the statement 'I am sad', there is no awareness, no feeling which is known to the person that is sad, but not to the person who is not sad. For this reason there is no justification in distinguishing between the two fields and in saying that the events

in field B can be described by propositions which state that something is the case; and that the events in field A cannot be so described but can only be symbolized. The ontological preference for B states, therefore, that all events are of a certain character; and that there are no mental events or acts of consciousness which are of a different character. There is nothing in sadness that cannot be described and talked about in the way in which we can talk about the functioning of engines, the climate, or any other non-mental event. The ontological preference for field B is therefore not a merely arbitrary decision not to consider the events in field A; but a genuine preference for the kind of events that are in field B. Its viability depends on whether one manages to regard the mental events which I have classed in A as really belonging to the same class as the non-mental events which I have classed in B.

If the argument depended on a proof or some other kind of demonstration that there are no events that would justify their inclusion in A and that *all* events take place in B, one could, of course, not speak of an ontological 'preference', but only of an ontological fact. But such a proof or demonstration cannot be given – by the nature of the case. Our real awareness of the events in A depends upon the symbol picture. But if one believes that all events there are, are events in B, then one will naturally come to the conclusion that the only way in which these events in B are ordered is the way of the positive picture, i.e. that they are best left in their natural order, in the order in which they stand to one another through their functional dependence upon one another. Hence the belief that all events are capable of inclusion in B implies that the only picture that will ever emerge in front of our eyes, is the positive picture. But since we could only gain an indication of the existence of events in A from the symbol picture, we have not really proved that there are no events that should be in A; we have merely brought down a shutter and prevented ourselves from seeing the symbols that indicate events in A by stating that the only proper order of events in B is the one that emerges from their mutual functional dependence.

The ontological preference for events in B can assume various forms. We have already seen how it leads straight to a

disregard for the symbol picture and how it establishes that the positive picture is the only one in which the World appears to us. If one is determined to consider only events in B, then the reshuffling of the positive picture into a symbol picture will be entirely superfluous and the mythical events and ritual activities of the symbol picture will be relegated to the world of fantasy and fairy-tale. Metaphysical theories, moreover, will be considered to have no meaning at all, for they are demonstrably not about the positive picture – and the existence of the other picture cannot be considered once the existence of events in A is denied. For then the reshuffling of the positive picture into mythical events and ritual actions is no more than a fanciful and purposeless distortion of the positive picture.

But the contemporary philosopher might equally well start with a denial that metaphysics makes sense. Such a denial is based upon the belief that everything that makes sense ought to make sense in terms of the positive picture; and this belief is the ontological preference for field B in a different shape. For if there is nothing but field B, there can be no picture other than the positive picture: for the positive picture, we have shown, is field B in its autarchic order. If metaphysics is dismissed because it makes no sense in regard to the positive picture, one implies that it is not about the symbol picture; for if one did not imply that, one would not dismiss it for not making sense in terms of the positive picture. And furthermore, the symbol picture being only a fanciful and childish distortion of the positive picture, so much the worse for metaphysics if it *is* a doctrine about the symbol picture. If everything that makes sense ought to be assessable in terms of the positive picture, neither metaphysics (for its sense depends on the symbol picture) nor the symbol picture (for its sense depends on the events in field A) makes sense.

Wherever the contemporary philosopher starts, whether he begins with a denial of the sense of metaphysical doctrines or whether he begins with the assertion that all events there are, are events in B or whether he begins with a critique of the symbol picture, he will always produce the same result: a rejection of the belief in the existence of events in field A, a rejection of the meaningfulness of metaphysics, and a rejection of the importance of the symbol picture. These three

things belong together, and if one rejects one, one rejects also the other two. But the interesting feature of this situation is that this interdependence of the three things makes it impossible to provide a valid argument against them. For if one rejects any one, one has rejected by implication the other two; but since the first is the only ground for one's belief in the existence of the other two, the rejection of the first has also destroyed the evidence that exists for a belief in the existence of the second and third. And hence such a rejection is like the perfect crime: nobody can tell afterwards that a crime has even been committed. The murder itself automatically removes all clues that could have led to the existence of the victim.

It is for this reason that I have continued to speak of an ontological preference for the events in field B. For I cannot see my way to considering the commission of a perfect crime a logically valid argument. The rejection of either metaphysics or the symbol picture or the events in A is such a perfect crime, and I consider it therefore to be based on nothing more than an arbitrary ontological preference. If it were more than that, it would have to provide arguments not only for the rejection of either the symbol picture or the events in A or metaphyiscs; but it would have to provide *independent* arguments for the rejection of at least two of these things and, preferably, independent arguments for the rejection of all three. But simply to reject one and then cash in on the fact that the rejection of any one makes for the disappearance of the other two and then conclude that owing to this disappearance there is no evidence to warrant belief in the existence of the first, is not a valid argument, but only a perfect crime. Hence I am justified in describing the argument as a mere arbitrary ontological preference.

If one now examines the exact nature of the preference, one will find that in every case it boils down to the statement that 'meaning' is to be defined entirely in terms of the positive picture. The preference amounts in fact to the assertion that any proposition which expresses something that cannot be assessed in terms of the positive picture, is a meaningless proposition. Such a definition of meaning involves first of all a strict confinement of all events to field B. For if there are events *other* than the ones in B, it might become necessary

to reshuffle the order that obtains spontaneously in B, an order which obtains only if B is considered to be autarchic. There are many possible orders of field B if one believes that there are events outside field B in terms of which the events in field B can be arranged. In this case the positive order of events in field B (the order that consists in the establishment of mutual functional dependences in field B) is only one of the many possible orders of field B. But if one believes that there are no events other than the events in field B, there can only be one proper order of events in field B, i.e. the order that results internally by the way in which the events in B are functionally dependent on one another. If meaning is denied to propositions other than propositions about the positive picture, it is implied that field B is autarchic. If all meaningful propositions are about the positive picture, the positive picture is the only one there can be. And it follows from this that field B is autarchic and that the positive order of field B is its only possible order. It furthermore implies that one should consider myths and ritual as so many arbitrary deviations from the natural order of the positive picture, and it assures that one should consider the order of the positive picture as somehow rooted in the nature of events – almost as divinely ordained. It also precludes one from entertaining the possibility of the existence of events that ought to be classed in field A, for the only evidence in favour of such events is afforded by the symbols of the symbol picture. And finally it compels one to an impatient dismissal of metaphysical doctrines as being doctrines that make no sense in terms of the positive picture.

For many years it was considered very proper to state one's ontological preference bluntly. But during the last two decades such a blunt and arbitrary preference has come to be considered unsophisticated and philosophers have therefore rejected the proposition that meaning is to be assessed in terms of the positive picture and have preferred to say that an analysis of linguistic usage shows that statements like 'time is unreal', 'the mind thinks itself', 'consciousness is absolute', etc., are forbidden by linguistic usage. In these statements, they say, words are made to do jobs which they are not supposed to do.

Now an analysis of the jobs which words are supposed to do

can be either lexicographical or legislative. But there is no third possibility. If it is purely lexicographical, it is not a philosophical activity at all. It will confine itself to producing examples of the many different ways in which words have been and are being used. The analysis becomes much more interesting if it is legislative. Then it will decree that a certain expression must do a certain job and no other. But in such a case, the legislative act must be based upon a non-linguistic insight, upon a philosophical principle. The only disadvantage of this procedure is that such a linguistic legislative enactment may so disguise the philosophical principle that people might mistake the legislation for an expression of the merest common sense. One might legislate, for instance, that the word 'mind' should not be used in the way in which it is used in the proposition 'the mind thinks itself'. But one should add that such a legislative proposal is based upon the belief that the proposition 'the mind thinks itself' makes no sense; that that belief is based upon a rejection of the symbol picture as the subject matter of the proposition 'the mind thinks itself'; and that the rejection is due to an ontological preference for field B which implies that the positive picture appearance of field B is the only genuine appearance of B. In other words, in this case, the legislative prescription is based on the contemporary philosopher's ontological preference and would, in fact, without such a preference be a totally arbitrary and tyrannical act.

I think there is a very simple explanation of the reason why so many contemporary philosophers prefer to express their ontological preference in this roundabout way. In the first place, the ontological preference for events in field B was emotionally prompted by the desire for unequivocal clarity and precision. This desire became such an overriding obsession, that all other counsel came to be disregarded. An ontological preference which justified one's belief that the positive picture was the genuine, because the only, appearance of the World, must have been an immense comfort in one's quest for clarity and precision. But before long it turned out that the formulation of the ontological preference itself, the statement that meaning must be assessed in terms of the positive picture, was itself not such a clear statement because it could not be tested by a mere

reference to the positive picture. Hence people suggested that, though they had eliminated all metaphysical statements, they had not been able to eliminate them fully enough. And since the reason that had guided their ontological preference in the first place was a desire for clarity and an aversion to all those statements that could not clearly be justified in terms of the positive picture, they began to grow uneasy about this way of stating their ontological preference. And thus they hit on the expedient of linguistic analysis: it enabled them to practise their ontological preference and enabled them at the same time to dispense with the need of justifying it by one last metaphysical (i.e. non-testable in terms of the positive picture) statement. From now on everything seemed plain sailing: the ontological preference was no longer in need of a metaphysical justification, for it needed no longer to be discussed. If anybody should ever be misguided enough to bring it up for discussion, one would no longer be compelled to discuss reasons for and reasons against it; one could simply subject it to a linguistic analysis by asking 'what do you mean by saying one has an ontological preference?' In this way any genuine discussion of the philosophical belief involved can be postponed indefinitely, and none of the practitioners of the method would ever be compelled to lose a single night's sleep over an uncomfortable question. They can proceed to legislate without ever having to discuss the fundamental law upon which the activities of the linguistic Parliament are based. Philosophy thus has become a commonsense practice, like British politics. One discusses and legislates without ever bothering one's head about the fundamental principles upon which the rules that guide the discussion and the legislation are based:

> For forms of government let fools contest;
> Whate'er is best administered is best.

But just as one would class the present British political system as some form of democracy and justify it, if called upon, by an appeal to certain fundamental democratic principles, even though the system could function without any of the people that are engaged in it having any clear understanding of the principles involved, we are free to class the habit of linguistic analysis as belonging to the general trend of

contemporary philosophy which has an ontological preference for the events in field B. And since we have argued that that preference is a genuinely arbitrary preference which finds its justification merely in the automatic disappearance of all the various pieces of evidence that would count against it, we are free not to share it. There are no compelling rational grounds for it; and one is quite justified in asserting the existence of events in A – one then sees a significance in the symbol picture and regards the positive picture as only one of the various possible appearances of the World; or in asserting that metaphysical doctrines are doctrines about the symbol picture and therefore meaningful since the latter exists in virtue of its relation to events in A. Wherever one starts with one's counter-assertion to the arbitrary ontological preference of so many contemporary philosophers, one will always come back to our three interdependent elements, to the events in A, to the symbol picture, and to metaphysical doctrines. Given these three elements, metaphysical doctrines are synthetic *a posteriori* doctrines about the symbol picture; and not, as contemporary philosophers are wont to believe, meaningless statements.

5. *Idealism*

As a summary of my argument I would like to state in what important respects my conception of the symbol picture is a form of idealism. And since the possibility of metaphysics depends on that conception, there is no denying that metaphysics is bound up with some form of idealism.

Traditional idealism, in one form or another, always boils down to the following three assertions.

1. There is a substantival or transcendental self which experiences the world and without which nothing is experienced.

2. This substantival self has experiences; but, by the nature of the case, is itself not the subject of an experience.

3. The substantival self is linked to a body which mediates through its senses all experiences of the world.

It is not difficult to see that in a modified form everyone of these propositions occurs in the course of the preceding argument. The first assertion presupposes but does not explicitly state the argument that there is one appearance of the world in which there is no perception by anybody of anything;

an appearance or picture which consists entirely of functional dependences and which is, therefore, no more and no less than a complicated system of inter-related relationships between events. Some of these events are measuring rods; others are plates sensitive to light or retinas. But none of these relations amounts to a perception or a consciousness as we ordinarily understand it. On the other hand, the world can *appear*, and this corresponds to what is explicitly stated by the first assertion, as a vast picture of symbols, symbolizing otherwise undescribable feeling-states or states of consciousness. This picture of the world is the world as we perceive it. It is a picture of the world seen through the screen of feeling-states.

The second assertion corresponds to the argument that the feeling-states or states of consciousness cannot be described as ordinary events can be described. They form the matrix or moulds of our experience of the world; but they cannot be described literally. They can only be symbolized. While I would hesitate to speak of a transcendental or a substantival self, I do not doubt that there occurs *something* which cannot be described as all other events can be described.

The third assertion corresponds to the argument that every symbol is composed of parts of the positive picture. Only those facts or events can be taken as symbols, the components of which can be located singly in the positive picture. This means that all symbols must be capable of sensuous perception.

Traditional idealism, as is well known, has always suffered from very considerable weaknesses. One of its greatest difficulties consisted in its apparent inability to account for the existence of a knowledge that is objective or inter-subjective, i.e. in which the perceiving substantival self plays no recognizable part. Another important difficulty has been caused by attempts to infer either the existence of an otherwise unobservable entity such as the substantival self, or the existence of the external world as the object of perception, from the purely epistemological considerations of which idealism does and should consist.

It seems to me that in my restatement of idealism, both these kinds of difficulties are avoided. The existence of objective or inter-subjective knowledge is very easily accounted for by the way in which the positive picture emerges. The presence

of the positive picture and its availability for testing scientific theories depend on the existence of the functional dependences and the relationships which they constitute. Whether one calls this picture the result of knowledge or not, it does not owe its existence to extraneous factors such as a substantival self or a subject who observes, for it is a perfectly self-contained system of relationships.

As to the idealistic difficulties involved in all attempts to infer the existence of the self or of the perceived objects from the epistemological considerations in question, they are completely avoided. All three elements in the situation, the events in field A, the events in field B, and the symbol picture, are known to exist independently of these or any epistemological considerations. Feeling-states are observed occurrences; the events in field B are, so to speak, self-supporting, for their existence is vouchsafed by their functional relation to each other; and the symbol picture's existence is accounted for by its relation to the events in field A on one side and by its relation to the events in field B on the other side.

At the same time, I would like to explain how my conception of the symbol picture solves a problem which all forms of idealism have tried to solve with varying degrees of success.

Idealists of all hues always complain that in our scientific picture of the world, mind is left out. They call this the 'bifurcation of nature' (Whitehead), and refuse to accept as valid a picture of the world in which the emotions and the consciousness of man are not an integral part:

> I am astonished that the scientific picture of the real world around me is deficient. . . . It is ghastly silent about all and sundry that is really near to our heart, that really matters to us. . . . It knows nothing of God and Eternity, good or bad, beautiful and ugly. Science sometimes pretends to answer questions in these domains, but the answers are very often so silly that we are not inclined to take them seriously.*

And the same author adds the finishing touches to this complaint when he lays his finger on the heart of the matter. He explains that the deficiency he complained of is linked to the fact that we have grown accustomed to regarding the world as existing objectively on its own:

* E. Schrödinger, *Nature and the Greeks*, Cambridge, 1954, pp. 93–96.

> It is convenient to regard the world as existing objectively on its own. But it does not become *manifest* by its mere existence. Its becoming manifest is conditional on very special goings-on in very special parts of this very world, namely on certain events that happen in a brain.*

It seems to me that the distinction between the positive picture and the symbol picture can take care of this complaint and answer it in a way which ought to be satisfactory both to the idealist and the naturalistically inclined scientist. If one distinguishes between positive picture and symbol picture, one will see that the world does not indeed become *manifest* by its mere existence; the mere existence can give rise to a description of it, for the occurrence of any event can be *described* by *relating* it to other events: and it so happens that *all* events are thus functionally relatable and hence functionally dependent on at least *some* other events. (We can relate anything to a measuring rod, for instance.) And most events can be related more or less indirectly to events in the human brain. But this does not mean that anything has thus become *manifest*. It does not matter whether we relate a colour to a photographic plate or to brain cells. No relation makes anything manifest or conscious.

The mere existence of the world gives rise to these relations; and the establishment of such relations is a kind of autarchy of nature.

If one understands this, the old problem of whether we can comprehend nature or whether nature can become manifest *without* the use or help of something *other* than nature (e.g. consciousness, spirit, etc.) or not, vanishes. We need neither the naturalist's contention that consciousness is not required; nor the spiritualist's or idealist's belief that it is required.

When, however, we speak of nature becoming *manifest*, much more happens than the establishment of functional relations between events. Consciousness is not just a mirror that reflects events. Consciousness has tone and colour, it is a feeling-state, a *Gemütszustand*. It reflects events in a very special way and precisely in the way in which its colour-tones demand: the special way is precisely the world that is reflected in consciousness. The world we are conscious of is a world in

* E. Schrödinger, *Mind and Matter*, Cambridge, 1958, p. 1.

which events stand in relations to one another that are *different* from the relations that emerge or obtain when events are functionally related to one another. The world we are conscious of is the symbol picture, for it symbolizes feeling-states.

If one understands this, the old problem of whether the fact that we are conscious of the world makes a difference to the world as it really is, or not, vanishes. Consciousness, of course, makes a difference; the symbol picture is *not* like the positive picture. If the world is *manifest*, it is manifest as symbols of consciousness. But 'being manifest' is not the only kind of knowledge of the world. The other kind of knowledge is that of *autarchy*, it is the knowledge of the positive picture.

The perceiving mind, the subjective state of awareness, is not among the objects included in the positive picture; it is not part of 'nature'. This is so; and, as we have seen, rightly so: for the substantival self *has* experiences, but is not itself an experience.

Whitehead and Schrödinger have wondered how we can speak of 'Nature' as being 'real', when we know that the substantival self *by which we know* of nature is not itself part of it. But the question is wrongly put. The positive picture is not a picture in the sense that it appears to a subject, a mind, or a substantival self. It is an *autarchic* system of relationships in which one series of events is related to another: a star . . . to events on certain measuring instruments; and the events on the measuring instruments to certain events in a brain – or conceivably, the other way round. In this picture we account for star movements by relating them to activities of our brains and we can conceivably relate events in our brains to star movements and account for them in that way. Nothing *appears* or is manifest or conscious. And if there is a flicker of consciousness, we prefer to omit it for the sake of precision, and relate one movement to another; one change to another, instead. As Sherrington has so aptly illustrated, one cannot possibly be surprised not to find anything one ought to call 'mind' on the paths of these relationships. But then, of course, we *do* have another picture, the symbol picture. In *that* picture everything is manifest, everything is being 'been conscious of'. And in *that* picture, mind or the substantival self *do* appear and nobody can complain that they have been excluded. Only,

they do not appear among the objects of perception, as so many more objects of perception. They appear instead as the referends of the objects that are in the symbol picture; i.e. as the referends of the symbols; as the things symbolized by the parts of the symbol picture. The symbol picture is thus a symbol of minds and the latter are manifest in it symbolically. The symbol picture bears witness to, or is a testimony of, mind or the substantival self. So when one considers the symbol picture, there is no ground for the complaint that it is a picture of the world from which the perceiving mind is excluded or of which it is not a part. If one searches the symbol picture, every single part of it will silently or overtly *point* to a feeling-state and thus to the substantival self.

The symbol picture, however, is not autarchic: events are related to one another in it according to a principle which is itself *outside* this or any picture, namely the substantival self or the mind. And the validity of these relationships depends upon the *relation* of these relations to the mind, of the symbols to the feeling-states they symbolize. For this reason we prefer *not* to call this picture of symbols 'nature'. We say instead that the autarchic picture has to be reshuffled in obedience to the exigencies of an extraneous criterion, in order that we may obtain the symbol picture. Such reshuffling destroys the existing natural relationships; but the new relationships that emerge are witnesses of, or pointers to, those events which could find no place in the first picture: mental events, feeling-states.

This view of the matter disposes of all the complaints by Schrödinger and Whitehead that Nature's picture is dead and colourless, when we *know* that there are events in Nature that are *not* dead and colourless, like Whitehead's sunset and Schrödinger's shining eyes of the child that has been given a new toy. This also disposes of the 'dilemma' of naturalism: how can we account naturally for 'accounting'? or: we can account naturally for all events except for the desire to account. Nature *presupposes* mind and intelligence. This dilemma disappears if my theory is accepted. There are two pictures: an autarchic one and a non-autarchic one. The former *is* dead, but then this is not surprising, for it does not appear in the mind and is not the object perceived by a subject. It is merely a self-contained system of relationships. The latter is alive and

suffused with feeling and emotions and bears witness to the perceiving subject to which it appears as so many meaningful symbols. But then it is not self-contained, and the validity of the relationships that obtain in it does not depend upon *their* one-to-one correspondence to other relationships (i.e. *there* are events in it which correspond to nothing on our *retina*), but upon whether they are or are not adequate symbols *of* feeling-states.

Unlike genuine idealists, I believe in some kind of bifurcation. Only I do not place this bifurcation in Nature itself. I consider it to be more in the form of a logical distinction between two possible appearances of the World. And I admit that with this distinction I am closer to traditional idealism than to any other kind of philosophy.

It is not easy to say whether, in the eyes of the reader, this connection of my arguments with idealism will prove a recommendation or a warning. But I would insist that my thesis about the nature of metaphysical knowledge is sufficiently independent of idealism to stand on its own feet. Its connection with idealism is not an essential one and the thesis can demand to be judged on its own merits by all those who are averse to idealism in any of its many possible forms.

THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF SYMBOLS

In the preceding chapter I have put forward a thesis about the nature of metaphysical thought and endeavoured to explain the general principles by which it operates. It is now time to consider in some detail the general nature of symbol pictures. We shall have to pay some attention to the way in which the positive or natural picture is transformed into a symbol picture; and attempt to give something like a phenomenology of symbol pictures. By a phenomenology of symbol pictures I understand a description of such pictures which leaves out all metaphysical theories about them and confines itself to an attempt to classify symbol pictures according to the broad and general features which they present to the observer. I hope to be able to show that in such a phenomenological study, no matter from which angle one approaches them, symbol pictures can roughly be classed in two categories. These two categories are not mutually exclusive; and in many cases one can find communities or even individuals cultivating a symbol picture that incorporates features from both kinds of pictures. But in such cases there will be corresponding difficulties in metaphysical theory, for metaphysical theory proceeds more smoothly when the features of its subject-matter, of the symbol picture, exhibit an inherent clarity and consistency. But we will postpone a discussion of the relationship between metaphysical theory and the symbol picture to the following chapter, and concern ourselves now with the phenomenology of symbol pictures.

The symbol picture has its origin in the reshuffling of the various terms of the positive picture. Through this reshuffling the relations that obtain between the various parts of the

positive picture are broken and new relations are established. These transpositions result in the emergence of a symbol picture which consists, the further it is removed from the positive picture, of denaturalized images of events that could not possibly have been part of the (natural) positive picture.

It would be wrong, however, to suppose that the historical progress coincides with the gradual emergence of denaturalized images or stories of denaturalized events. If it did coincide, one would be able to say that the more historically early an image is, the more closely it will correspond to the natural event in the positive picture. It may often be the case that one can trace such a coincidence, and that images that are historically early are also more naturalistic than images that are historically very late. But in ancient Greece and during the Renaissance, the historical development was the reverse: artists began quite early with non-naturalistic design and gradually groped forward to more and more naturalism. It is for the historian to decide in each case to what extent the logical evolution of nature images into denaturalized images corresponds with actual historical evolution. For us it is of greater interest to note the logical priority of the natural, positive picture, and we can leave it to the historian to investigate to what extent this logical priority corresponds to a historical priority.

The first act of symbolization, we have said, must seize upon a natural event. In the first flush of awareness of an inner event in field A, the mind has little time to choose an adequate symbol with care and to model it in such a way that it will become an adequate symbol, doing full justice to the specialities and peculiarities of the state of consciousness it is to symbolize. A feeling of gratitude may thus be symbolized by, e.g. an act of contentment. There are many symbols that are acts of contentment: a well-fed man, a flower in the sun, a sunset on a warm summer day, a big fire in a hut while it is storming outside, and so forth. All these symbols are natural events that occur in the positive picture. But they are very unspecified; and they fail to indicate with clarity whether the state of consciousness they symbolize is just a general state of contentment or whether it is shading off towards gratitude or rather towards pride at having achieved some kind of

equilibrium or pride at having achieved a triumph. If it is shading off towards a feeling of gratitude, the symbol again fails to show whether the gratitude is towards one's own efforts or whether it is a sense of dependence on forces one senses to be beyond one's control.* And if it is the case of the latter feeling, the symbol is silent as to whether one senses that one feels lucky because those forces have bestowed their gifts on one; or whether one senses some connection between one's contentment and something one has done to deserve it. In order to give greater precision to the state of consciousness of gratitude, and in order to show that it is neither just a feeling of contentment nor a feeling of pride, it is necessary for the original natural symbol to become more specified. This specification is best achieved by remodelling the original symbol.

The new symbol will retain its basic time-structure. Whatever features are added to it or taken away from it, the new symbol must stand in a typological relation to the first, natural symbol. If the original symbol was an act in which a man took food and then sat down to rest and enjoy the glow of a calm digestion, the new, more specific symbol, must show a sequence of events that has the same pattern in time: the glow of contentment must *follow* upon the act of taking something. If in the new symbol this order is reversed, then the time-structure of the new symbol has changed and the new symbol does not stand in a typological relation to the old symbol.

The new symbol manages to be more specific, by being less natural. Its indicative clarity is enhanced by the way in which certain features of the natural event are left out and other features, from completely different parts of the positive picture, are added to it. In this way the original symbol of the man taking food can become a picture of a Moloch, devouring

* Incidentally, this discussion shows that we cannot *speak* of feeling-states. If one says that the gratitude one feels is a gratitude to forces one senses to be beyond one's control, one is not speaking of a feeling-state and one is not describing literally its special quality – for 'sensing forces that are beyond one's control' is an expression that describes an image. It is not a literal description of a feeling-state. But in order to indicate even the slightest quality of a feeling-state, one must go *via* the symbol. One can only indicate such a quality by referring to a possible symbol such as 'sensing forces beyond one's control'.

untold quantities of children and resting fatly content in the end. Or else, the original symbol (and then its indicative value will have become something quite different) can become a picture of a mother-goddess feeding from innumerable breasts her children who rest content afterwards. Again this symbol can be further varied by insisting that the bountiful mother-goddess is a virgin and that her bounty, i.e. her children, are no ordinary children. Neither the Moloch nor the bountiful, virginal mother-goddess could ever appear in the *positive* picture. But it is not difficult to see that there is no single feature in either the Moloch or in the bountiful, virginal mother-goddess, which is not taken from some part of the positive picture and transposed to a place in which it was not originally (or should we say naturally?) found. For this reason it is always possible either to paint a picture on a canvas or on a wall of the new symbolic image – no matter how much reshuffling has taken place and how much denaturalized the symbol has become; or to enact the image or event in question in a suitable place. In order to paint a picture, one merely has to reproduce the way in which the natural features or parts that can be found in the positive picture have been reassembled. It is the easiest thing in the world to paint a woman with a thousand breasts; or a man with wings. All that has happened is that the wings have been transposed from a bird to a man and just as the wings are clearly visible in the positive picture on birds, so they can become clearly visible when transposed from the body of a bird to the body of a man. The painting of the symbolic angel is, as a painting, still part of the positive picture; for its existence can be ascertained by pointer-readings and the pointer-readings stand in a certain relation to our retina, and so forth. The same is true of an enactment of the symbol. A man can dress up, with the help of mask and feathers, as an angel. As such he will appear in the positive picture and his existence as an enactment of the symbol can be clearly ascertained in a positive way. But in so far as he, or the painting of an angel, is a symbol, they are part of the symbol picture and their 'truth' does not depend on their relation to the positive picture, but on the fact that they indicate events in field A.

In this context the researches of R. Pettazzoni can serve as

a good illustration. These researches show that the various attributes of a divinity are not *a priori* inherent in the image of a divinity. If one thinks of God as omniscient, one can trace the gradual construction of such a symbolic image. One finds at first that there are perfectly natural events such as astral bodies that are luminous. Then gradually these astral bodies, through denaturalization, are considered as various divinities and, because luminous, are considered as capable of seeing. Then the faculty of seeing is denaturalized and from ordinary seeing we get omnivoyance, the ability to see everything. And then, by further denaturalization, the attributes of various omnivoyant divinities are put together, and we obtain a divinity with a heightened faculty of omnivoyance, and thus finally a divinity that not only sees all but knows all – and from there it is a short step (and here we enter presumably already the realm of metaphysical speculation) to turning the image of an omniscient god into the concept of omniscience which not only knows what has happened or what is happening; but also what will happen in the future. Here we have a perfect example of how, first, symbols with a great degree of denaturalization are put together by the transposition and assembly of various parts of the positive picture in which they had not naturally been found together; and how finally progressive symbolization gives way to a metaphysical concept.

It is not difficult to supply examples from all ages and all corners of the earth. The earliest cave-dwellers chose as their symbols the bisons and various other animals with whom they were so well acquainted. But they felt that if they just looked at bisons roaming through the forests, the indicative value of such a bison-symbol would be very small indeed, and to look at a natural bison could, in fact, almost mean anything at all. So in order to give the symbol some specification, they decided to paint a natural bison on the walls of their caves. Such a pictorial presentation of the natural animal had a slightly greater symbolic force, for the bison on the cave wall was not quite like an ordinary bison and some of its features were a little exaggerated. But in order further to increase the symbolic specification of the original bison, they often drew their pictures on walls in specially inaccessible parts of the cave. Such a removal of the picture to a part of the

cave that could only be visited rarely and with the greatest of difficulties, invested the picture with a non-natural significance. And it would seem that such a removal of the picture to an inaccessible place was man's first effort at a definitely non-natural image, i.e. an attempt to conceive of a symbol that was clearly different from the natural object and therefore had a more specific indicative value.

The ancient Egyptians achieved a similar impression of the non-natural features of their symbolic images of various deities. They introduced the first degree of specification of the symbol by transplanting heads. They would put the head of an animal on the body of a man and thus denaturalize the original symbol which may have been either the animal or the man. Both the animal and the man had their place in the positive picture; but in order to give a more specific meaning to the symbol, a non-natural feature had to be introduced. And the transposition of heads was a first simple step towards such greater specification.

The ancient Romans were particularly prone to preserve the purely natural shape of symbols. And in so far as they resisted the temptation to specify symbols by investing them with non-natural qualities and features, the symbol picture which they cultivated shows an almost unique richness in natural symbols. They would look upon the hearth or the hearth flame as a symbol and treat it with a circumspection and care which they would not mete out to the hearth as a natural fact; and they would adopt attitudes towards it which had nothing to do with the purposeful tending of the fire. The hearth was to them a natural symbol. But they left it thus unspecified. And there is very little evidence to show that they tried to give that symbol a more specific meaning by associating it with personal attributes or by seeing it in any form other than its natural shape. Similarly, they regarded the boundary stone on their fields as a symbol but failed to make the natural stone the subject of a mythology. Mythical stories about the stone would have specified the original symbol and helped to indicate more clearly what the natural stone, as a symbol, indicates. But the Romans had a great tendency towards symbolic vagueness, and it seems that they proceeded towards a greater specification of their natural symbols only under foreign

influences. One might well surmise, therefore, that the Romans' lack of metaphysical interest is due to their initial failure to evolve a proper mythology, i.e. a suitable denaturalized symbol picture that would have lent precision to events in field A. Given this initial lack of interest in denaturalization, it is not surprising that they were never tempted into a metaphysical summing up of a symbol picture that was so similar to the positive picture as to be in parts almost indistinguishable from it.

The purpose of our argument, however, will be better served if we explore two basic instances of how natural events are used for symbolic purposes and how they are gradually denaturalized for the sake of greater symbolic precision. I would like, therefore, to consider the rôle played in the symbol picture by three important natural events, the rôle of woman in procreation; the rôle of man in procreation; and the phenomenon of change in general and of ageing in particular.

But first of all a word to justify this choice. Metaphysical theories are attempts to describe in the most general and abstract terms possible, the structural features of the symbol pictures. In this sense, metaphysical theories are essentially different from scientific theories. The latter endeavour to describe the regularities in the functional dependence of events in field B on one another. It would be true only in a metaphorical sense to say that scientific theories describe the general structure of the positive picture. But metaphysical theories describe the structure of the symbol picture in a perfectly literal sense.

The most important and basic structural feature of the symbol picture – or of any picture whatever – is that it exhibits differences. This is, of course, a truism, for if it did not exhibit differences there would be no picture, only an undifferentiated continuum, i.e. there would be nothing. But to say that there are differences, is not to say more than that there is something rather than nothing in the picture. Differences, it seems, appear under two guises: they appear as space and as time. If we take the notion of differences and add to it the notion of time, we can arrive at the notion of space by reflecting that differences at one and the same time must be said to be due to spatial extension. Conversely, we can arrive at the notion

of time by starting with the notion of differences and adding to it the notion of space: we can then say that differences in one and the same space show that there has been a lapse of time.

This formulation is so simple that it requires little comment or explanation. If we perceive an object and find that at any one moment it occupies more than a single, infinitesimally small point, we must conclude that the object must be extended in space. Conversely, if we find that there is an object which undergoes changes though it continues to occupy the same position in space, we must conclude that there has been a passage of time. It appears then that if we are aiming to describe the general structure of the symbol picture, we must aim at describing the time and the space which it exhibits. The most general description, true, would be a simple statement to the effect that there are differences in the symbol picture. But since such a statement amounts to no more than the statement that there is a symbol picture, such a general description would teach us nothing about its structure. For this reason we find that a description of its structure in general and abstract terms can be achieved by a description of the two guises in which differences actually appear in the symbol picture. Hence metaphysical theories are basically, though not exclusively, concerned with descriptions of the time and space in the symbol picture.

Metaphysical theories are essentially theories about the nature of time and space. And if one attempted a classification of metaphysical theories one would have to classify them according to their view of time and of space. If such theories deny that there is either time or space, then they imply that there are no real differences in the symbol picture, and that all those differences that appear in it, are, in one way or another, only apparent. There are other theories which deny only the reality of space, but accept the finality of differences in time; and there are theories that deny the finality of time, but accept the reality of differences in space. The denial of the reality of both time and space and, therefore, of the reality of all differences, is, of course, a well-known feature of the metaphysics that insist that all is one. If we follow the expositions of H. Frankfort, for example, the ancient Egyptians furnish

an example of the views that space alone is real, and that differences in time and all changes were mere ephemeral disturbances of the regularity of being. And the views of Bergson are a famous example of the belief that time alone is real; and that all differences in space are illusions of a very special kind.

In order to be able to study the various types of metaphysical theories about the symbol picture, it is first necessary to show the kinds of symbols that give rise to these differences of opinion about the structure of the symbol picture. The different metaphysical theories I have mentioned are descriptions of different symbol pictures, and any conflict of opinions between these theories is derived from conflicting and somewhat incompatible symbols. In order to understand these conflicting opinions, it is therefore necessary to give a description of the different symbol pictures which cause such conflicts of opinion.

I propose to proceed to a description of the various kinds of symbol pictures in the following way. In order to arrive at the reasons for the conflicting views on the nature of space, I will examine symbolic cosmogonies. By symbolic cosmogonies I mean those symbols which are stories of events of how the world originated, that is, of how it came to be extended in space. In order to arrive at the reasons for the conflicting views of time, I will examine symbolic sacrifices, i.e. symbols that are stories or performances of how time passes and how change takes place. In both cases, we shall start with a brief consideration of a natural event which is the type of the symbol, and of which all progressively specified symbols are anti-types. In this way I hope to be able to show that after some considerable specification the original natural event in question is turned into a denaturalized symbol; and that in each case we find indeed a bifurcation at one stage along the line of symbols. This bifurcation is such that at one stage each symbol in question is specified by *two* different symbols, each of which becomes the type of a new series of further symbols. This bifurcation of the series of symbols is the cause of the two different conceptions of time and of the two different conceptions of space which give rise to the conflicting metaphysical opinions we have discussed.

There is one series which begins with the natural phenomenon of change or the passage of time. In this series the bifurcation takes place at a comparatively late stage. The bifurcation will result in two different symbol pictures, and these two pictures can be shown to be the cause of the two conflicting metaphysical views about the nature of time. The other series begins with the natural phenomenon of procreation. Here the bifurcation takes place at the earliest stage – for the resulting series of symbols take as their types either the man's rôle in procreation or the woman's rôle. The symbols that emerge in the course of all further specification belong, therefore, from the very beginning to two different typological series; and these two series will account for the conflicting metaphysical views about the nature of space.

1. Space

The first symbol we must consider is the natural event of procreation. It cannot be surprising that a natural event of such importance and which arrests one's interest to such a degree should have been chosen as a symbol. But procreation can be looked at from two different standpoints. One can either see it basically as a female act of generation, that is as an act of birth in which something that is originally one splits into two. In such a case we speak of an emanation, for whatever is new is not so much created or made as it emanates from something that was there before. Or alternatively one can see it basically as a male act of generation, that is as an act of creation by which something new, something that was not there before, is brought into being. Both the man's and the woman's part in generation are natural phenomena. But if the natural event of generation is chosen as a symbol and as soon as a first attempt at specification is introduced and a real symbol is created, one will find that the natural event immediately gives rise to two different series of further symbols. For the one series the type will be the woman who gives birth; and for the other series, the type will be the man who creates.

The first stage in such specification is concerned with investing the two acts, emanation and creation, with some non-naturalistic features. At this stage we find all those myths and rituals that are concerned with the acts of emanation and

creation which clearly remove these acts from the positive picture. To give birth or to generate is a natural act. But to surround the act with ritual restrictions and to perform it in certain specially sanctified places under certain specially created conditions, is no longer a natural event but a symbolic event. A further stage is encountered when the two symbols of giving birth and of creating are further specified by being connected with the notion that the world's origin must have taken place through such acts. The thought process involved in such a connection – if one should call it a thought process at all – is not difficult to understand.

When one links the phenomenon of generation with the image of the beginning of the world, one is clearly lifting the natural event (generation) from the place in which it is originally located in the positive picture, and is associating it with an image that can, by the very nature of the case, never find a place in the positive picture, i.e. the image of the beginning of the world. This follows exactly from what we have said about the character of the positive picture. The positive picture is a picture that emerges when events are related to one another in their functional dependence, and it contains only those events that can be so related to one another. Now it is clear that no event purporting to be taking place 'at first' or 'at the beginning' could ever find a place in the positive picture; for it could only find a place if there were another event to which it could be functionally related. But since, by definition, there can be no other event conceived to be in existence at that very moment, the event 'in the beginning' cannot possibly find a place in the positive picture. The image of the world coming into being is, therefore, only to be found in the symbol picture. And if one wishes, one can analyse the way in which it got there. The symbol 'in the beginning' is composed of a number of pieces, each of which was originally located in the positive picture. In the positive picture we are familiar with the phenomenon of origin of this or that object. We are equally familiar with the notion of the sum total of all events and objects, loosely described as 'the world'. The image of the beginning of the world arises in the symbol picture when these two phenomena are prized loose from their respective positions in the positive picture and linked with one another. As we said

above, they cannot be linked together, by definition, in the positive picture. But they can certainly be linked together as a symbol; and in this way we obtain an event (in the symbol picture) that can be described as the origin of the world. And the very first appearance in the symbol picture of that event, at a state of very poor specification, shows that the event is either of one type or another. It is either the result of a composition of the generative act of emanation with the sum total of all events and objects; or the result of a composition of the generative act of creation with the sum total of all events and objects. We see, therefore, that with their first appearance in the symbol picture, there are really two different stories of how the world came into being. And as specification progresses, each story forming a type of further stories, we can clearly discern two series of symbols – each series converging to a different metaphysical summary.

We have then two versions of the origin of the world. The degree of specification in either is very low, and we are not very far removed from natural events: for birth and generation from a female angle is as natural as birth and generation is from a male angle. In the one case we have a story of the origins of the world with an emphasis on the pushing forth, on emanation and on unfolding. In the other case we have a story with the emphasis upon making, upon active creation, and upon fashioning and giving shape to something that was not there. Both versions are anti-types that specify the earlier, more general type, the story of generation. But in so far as they specify the earlier stories, they are also more removed from actually natural events. These two anti-types of a natural type become in turn the types of further, more specified and less natural anti-type events. And it is from these types that we should take up the story and follow the various anti-types which progressively specify the two basic versions of the male and female generation of the world.

We can find myths relating how a single male created the world through an active performance which may or may not be likened to direct sexual activity. Some of these myths show little specification and little denaturalization. The god is very much like a powerful man, and his activity is very much like that of an artisan. Only his powerfulness and his

artisanship are a little bit emphasized to reach super-human proportions. But that is all the denaturalization there is. Among some Australian tribes the story is told that in the beginning the Supreme Beings lived on the earth which they had made themselves. At times the artisanship of the creating deity is very much in evidence, for people thought rarely in terms of a creation *ex nihilo*. The Maoris of New Zealand believe that the act of creation amounted to no more than the reshaping of existing materials. They say that Maui 'fished up' the island from the ocean. And the Crow Indians of Montana say that Old Man caused the ducks to dive into the waters and to collect the mud in their webbed feet, from which he made the earth.

In other cosmogonic myths, the image of bi-sexual creation is more in evidence than the mere artisanship of the creating male god. In these stories the emphasis is upon the male activity of fertilization, rather than upon the passive female act of conception. The Indians of central California believed that in the beginning the Coyote and the Supreme Being appeared on the primeval waters; and some tribes on the west coast of southern Australia believe that in the beginning silence reigned over all mountains. Then the Great Spirit awoke the sun and whispered to her to animate the universe. But the most famous and most highly elaborated creation myth of this kind is to be found in Genesis. Here one may even think of a hint of a creation out of nothing, though the actual text makes one think rather that God made the world out of some primeval slime like an artisan. There is also a hint of a sexual act in the image of God's spirit moving over the primeval waters. But by the time the story came to be written down in the form in which it has come down to us, it was so highly specified and so highly denaturalized, that it contains nothing but the barest structural similarities to the original type. In Genesis the creating God is all-powerful, omniscient, all-purposeful and wisely planning the whole course of the universe and of mankind. The act of creation is related in detail and the creation itself is a totally unnatural event. The uniqueness of the story in Genesis lies almost entirely in its high degree of specification. The male activity of the creator is so clearly emphasized that he continues his fatherly care for the created world down to

every single detail and behaves very much like a real father. Only, since his powers and his wisdom are so infinitely much greater than those of an ordinary earthly father, his providential plans for mankind are so much more profound, and both his wrath and, in the end, his loving mercy, are infinitely greater than those of an earthly father. In short, in Genesis we are dealing with a very highly specified and very non-natural anti-type of the original type of male generation. But the general features of the story are equally present in the cosmogonic myth of the Yuki of California, where a High-God and a hero together stretch out the vault of the sky and mould man out of clay. In a myth told in Nebraska, the all-powerful sky-chief organized the other gods to create the universe. Finally, the song of four gods produced a cloud, into which the sky-chief dropped a pebble, and this act set the process of creation going. Here we have eventually a female form of generation. But since the all-powerful God first caused the cloud to be made, the female form of generation is secondary.

In the Genesis story, too, we find that once the world and men are made by God, the process of further multiplication is conceived to have taken place along the pattern of emanation. The bliss of the Garden of Eden represents the original oneness; and the eating of the apple and/or the first sexual act represents the rebellion against the prohibition to interfere with the primeval state of perfection, innocence, womblike existence or oneness. From this rebellion there proceeds the multiplication of the race. Nothing is made at this stage. Multiplication proceeds from emanation, from a breaking up of an original state of unity. The presence of the emanation pattern as a secondary theme ought not to mislead. The overall pattern is one of creation.

There is no need to multiply these examples. In all these stories we are told that differences at one and the same time, i.e. space, first came into being on the analogy of a male act of fertilization, the male act of generation is seized as a symbol and endowed with super-human, non-natural features transposed to it from other parts of the symbol picture, until the original natural event is blown up to fantastic and miraculous proportions. In all these stories, furthermore, we are not dealing with inquiries into the origins of spatial extension

and with attempts to satisfy man's curiosity about the actual (historical) origin of the universe. We are dealing with a set of symbols, blown up for special symbolic purposes from an original, natural fact: male generation. The fact that there is a male form of procreation was elaborated for symbolic purposes – since by itself it had a very low and negligible symbolic power. When this is done, the rest of the symbol picture fills itself out, in its general outlines, along certain principles.

Once a symbol picture is posited, it acquires a certain momentum of its own. Additional symbols are created and existing symbols are defined and specified in order to make it more consistent and to round it off. One can usually also find a certain amount of 'aetiological' thinking in the final elaboration of a symbol picture. Such thinking postulates the occurrence of events in order to explain certain symbols causally. Such causal explanations, of course, are not causal in the sense that they explain *how* a symbol came to be there in the first place, that is, how it was produced by an endeavour to symbolize a state of consciousness. Aetiological thinking of this kind takes the symbol picture for granted and adds to it stories that are themselves symbols, but symbols that are causal explanations of other symbols. We are, for instance, well acquainted with the fact that a number of aetiological myths have been invented in order to 'explain' the performance of certain rituals. According to some scholars, the whole of the Babylonian creation myth is an aetiological myth to explain the ritual performed at regular intervals on New Year's Day in ancient Babylon. An aetiological myth is thus not directly produced through symbolization; but is a logical accretion to the original symbol picture. It fills it out and elaborates it.

Whatever the precise form into which the creation symbol is elaborated, the general pattern will be as follows:

The deity will remain as the primary cause of all existence and remain always *vis-à-vis* the creation and especially *vis-à-vis* man as something other. The depth of the gulf and the nature of the gulf that separates creator and creature can be conceived in many different ways. It can be an insuperable gulf and the creator may actually disappear out of sight altogether as in the case of some primitive tribes, who have even ceased to worship the being that created them, and whose daily

religious routine is entirely concerned with their relations to inferior and derivative powers. Or else, the insuperability may be due to some form of alienation caused by man, especially by his refusal to obey the ethical precepts set down for him by the creator. If this is the case, the creator may either be thought of as extending from time to time a helping hand or as having decided to allow some creatures to cross the gulf and to refuse such crossing to others. But even those that are fortunate enough to cross the gulf by some method or other, do not become united with God or identical with God. The distinction between creatures and creator is, in every case, strictly preserved. The highest reward for obedience to the ethical commandments can be the permission or the ability to see God or to contemplate him, to be admitted to his presence. The basic feature in this kind of symbol picture is the relationship between creator and creature, a relationship which is governed by certain rules. Man's desire or ability to perform these rules can be very small, but the fact of relationship is absolutely basic: performance of rules, submission and obedience, make a sound relationship; and refusal or inability to perform cause the relationship to be disturbed. In a disturbed relationship all sorts of punishment and evil consequences will have to be shouldered. Whatever they are, they do not accrue from the fact of a relationship, from the mere fact that creator and creature are distinct, but from some other cause, such as a wilful refusal to abide by the rules or some other act of rebellion. The creation of man is an act of individuation, of the creation of individual differences. But this creation was a creation of a relationship and is not considered as such to be something evil or undesirable. Evil and undesirable features are not identical with the *existence* of the basic relationship between creator and creature, but are an accidental quality of the *nature* of this basic relationship. If one thinks of a 'fall' in this kind of symbol picture, this 'fall' succeeded individuation and the establishment of the relationship. And if one thinks of an annulment of such a 'fall' or of its consequences, one does not think of an end of the relationship or of individuation, but of an end to the act of rebellion and to the refusal to abide by the rules governing that relationship. An annulment of the 'fall' and of its consequences will,

therefore, be essentially bound up with ethical efforts, i.e. with efforts to abide by the rules; or, possibly, with the creator's grace that helps the creature to obey the rules or mercifully forgives the non-performance of the rules.

Such are the general outlines of the symbol picture that surrounds the various anti-types of the male generation myth. When faced with this kind of symbol picture, metaphysical theory must seize upon its foremost structural feature: the reality and irreducibility of space, of spatial extension.

We must now turn to an examination of the various stories in which the origin of the world is an anti-type of the female generation type. We said before that female generation is an unfolding, an emanation, a putting forth. We find such anti-types in all parts of the world. In their most unspecified form, these stories relate how the earth or the waters began to split and push forth the various parts of the world. In these stories we find an elaboration of the original, natural event: birth from the womb. But in order to show that we are here dealing not with the mere birth of babies, the womb assumes enormous proportions and is often seen as the whole of the earth or the whole of the ocean. This vast being is again seen in sharper outline when it is conceived as a mother-goddess of miraculous and unnatural powers, giving birth to all individual existences. The ancient Greeks often thought of this original being as a gigantic egg from which sprang the powers that cause the existence of the rest of the world. And in ancient India we have many stories of how the undifferentiated ground of all being, primeval consciousness, first stirred into existence by dividing itself into two. Then the two beings copulated and produced the rest of the world through further sub-divisions. With such creation stories we are a long way from the original natural image of birth through the womb. But it can be clearly seen that these stories are highly specified anti-types of the original types. For they have a very obvious structural similarity with the natural event of birth through the womb.

In many parts of the world, man's imagination travels a long way from the original symbol. So much so that the female figure involved in the original story is completely lost sight of and, in fact, replaced either by a man or by a couple consisting of a male and a female.

We have instances of the first version in India. Some Indian creation stories relate that the world came into being through the Lotus that blossomed from Vishnu's navel. This Lotus caused Brahma to emerge; and Brahma made the world. In other Indian stories we find that Siva is the cause of the world. But Siva is impassive and asleep. He acts by his Sakti, a female figure emerging from him and it is Sakti who causes the unfolding of the various forces that are contained in the sleeping deity. One might easily be misled into thinking that in these stories we have to deal with anti-types, of a very highly specified nature, of male generation. But this is not so. For the structure of the events related is like the structure of birth from the womb: things come into existence through emanation or unfolding. The original oneness splits and divides and all existences are caused through further subdivisions.

We find instances of the second version both in Greece and in Polynesia. In these stories we are told that in the beginning, before the world came into being, heaven and earth were one. They gave birth to children, like a couple procreating sexually. These children began to grow and eventually pushed mother and father, earth and sky, apart and thus created the space in which the universe arose. These stories are again anti-types of female generation. For their basic structure is emanation and unfolding; not the fashioning of objects through a creative act.

When we are face to face with stories of female generation in which such generation proceeds either from a male god (as in India), or through the sexual activity of a couple, we are, of course, very far removed from the original type. In these stories very little else except the barest structure of the original story is retained. The female goddess or even the image of something that bears similarities to a female has gone. In order to allow for high specification, the original natural event has completely disappeared and its features have been replaced by other features. But as long as the structural parallels are present, we are still dealing with symbols that are anti-types of the female generation type.

It is not difficult to see that, as a symbol, the story of the cosmic egg producing the world is much less specified than the story of Vishnu giving birth to the Lotus. The story of the cosmic egg is only a slight variation on the natural event of

birth through the womb and it does not really indicate many detailed aspects of an event in field A, a state of consciousness which could not also be indicated by a choice of the birth through the womb as a symbol. But when the story of the origin of the world contains such features as a sleeping male divinity and a flower sprouting from his navel, and so forth, we are dealing with a symbol which can indicate a large number of subtle aspects of the event in field A, the state of consciousness, which could not even be hinted at by the choice of the natural event of the birth through the womb.

Outside India the most highly differentiated anti-types of female generation are to be found among the so-called Gnostics and in the Kabbalistic *Zohar*. According to the Gnostic Valentinian there was at first only the all-father, the unbegotten abyss, and his consort, silence. The latter conceived and produced offspring of various kinds until a number of beings existed, all ineffable and perfect. These beings formed the *pleroma*. Through some act of rebellion or insubordination a confusion was introduced into the *pleroma*, and through that disorder the world, in varying degrees of materiality, came into being. In Valentinian's writings the process is much more complicated. But it is enough for our purposes to observe that in spite of the presence of both male and female beings the process of generation, both in the case of the *pleroma* and in the case of the nether world, is a process of unfolding or emanation, not a process of creation. Hence we are here again faced by an anti-type of female generation.

It would lead too far to give a full description of the doctrine of the origin of the world as it is related in the *Zohar*. Suffice it to say that according to that doctrine there is no God who creates the world in the way in which an artisan shapes his materials or in which a male fertilizes the female egg. To the *Zohar*, God is *En-Sof*, the all-in-all, the fullness of being. The world comes into being through an act of externalization of the *En-Sof*, which thus turns from repose into activity. The all-in-all thus turns from absorption in itself and repose to a gradual unfolding of those powers that are implicit in it, and so the ten *Sefiroth* come into being. This is an act of gradual unfolding. Finally, the world proceeds from the *Sefiroth* by further acts of explication and emanation.

We can now turn to an attempt at a brief characterization of the general features of the symbol picture which contains any one of these creation stories as its central symbol. For the story of the origin of the world is indeed a central symbol, around which the rest of the symbol picture always tends to group itself in a more or less consistent fashion. This consistency is elaborated in the way described above: the more specified the symbol, the more conscious the fashioning; the more conscious the fashioning, the greater the attempts at consistency.

The most striking feature of these stories is that the world, down to the last individual being, is an emanation from the dark ground of being, from Nothingness, from the all embracing mother, from earth, from the waters, from the cosmic egg, or from whatever the origin is taken to be. In none of these stories are we made to think of the world and of men as the creatures of a creator. The relationship that exists between the world and the origin of the world, the ground from which it emanated, is not a *basic* relation; but the result of some wilful disturbance or some other kind of disorder. But whatever the disorder that caused the unfolding, and no matter how great the eventual distance between the last emanated individual and the ground of all being, the individual existences must always, in one way or another, contain a last germ of the original substance. They must have a kernel which is not totally different from the ground of being from which they emanated. In these versions, therefore, the totality of all individuated existences is only a different aspect of the dark ground of being from which they came forth. Whether one thinks of God in repose and God in action, or whether one thinks of undifferentiated spirit and differentiated matter, there is nothing in this world which is not an externalized or explicated force or power or aspect of the original Being or the original Nothing.

It follows, therefore, that in these versions one does not look upon the act of individuation as an act of creation that proceeds from the goodness of God. An act of individuation is itself something evil; and in these versions the notion of a fall is *identified* with the very notion of the first unfolding. All goodness and all balance and harmony consist in the original

oneness, the original repose of Being or Nothing. The first splitting, the first disturbance, the first duality and the first individuation are also at the same time the first disturbance and the first evil. The fall is, therefore, not an act of rebellion which takes place more or less incidentally *after* the creation of the world and which could conceivably have been avoided, but an act which is identical with the first act of emanation or unfolding.

It follows further that in this symbol picture one cannot think of a restoration of goodness or harmony in terms of a restoration of a certain relationship between creator and creature. One can only think of the restoration of goodness as a reabsorption of the emanated world into the ground from which it had emanated. The restoration of goodness is, therefore, tantamount to the disappearance of all relationship between the ground and the world – and not to the establishment of a right (as opposed to a wrong) relationship. If one thinks of evil in this symbol picture, one cannot be thinking of a refusal to obey certain rules that govern the right relationship between creator and creature. In this symbol picture, there is no right relationship between the ground and the world that emanated from it; for *all* relationship is the result of an initial disturbance that caused the ground to split or multiply and hence bears witness to that initial disorder. In such a symbol picture, disorder can only cease when all relationship ceases, for the mere existence of relationship is a disturbance.

When faced with this kind of symbol picture, metaphysical theory must seize upon its foremost structural feature: in this picture, space is not an irreducible reality, but something that has emerged temporarily. Spatial extension in this picture is no more than a derivation from, or a secondary aspect of, the original oneness which preceded all extension in space and which one must presume will sooner or later reabsorb it.

2. Time

We must now turn to a consideration of the way in which another general feature of the positive picture, the natural phenomenon of the passage of time or of ageing is used in the symbol picture.

An event is a series of facts that follow one another in time.

One state gives way to another state and that to yet another state, and so forth. This is what we mean when we speak of the passage of time. In the positive picture this passage of time appears without any colourful tones or undertones. Men are born, grow up, grow old, and die. The seasons follow one another, night follows day, the sun is getting colder, and eventually, so we presume, the whole universe will run down as more and more free energy tends towards a minimum.

In the symbol picture the passage of time is chosen as a first symbol. If it is contemplated merely as such, as an unrelenting and uneluctable passage, it is a very unspecified symbol: but nevertheless highly indicative of the state of mind that pervaded, for example, Scipio when, leaning upon his sword, he watched the destruction of Carthage by his Roman soldiers and recited Homer's lines about the destruction of Troy; always thinking, of course, of Rome herself:

ἔσσεται ἦμαρ ὅτ' ἄν ποτ' ὀλώλῃ Ἴλιος ἱρὴ

Thus unspecified the phenomenon of time becomes the type of further, more specified, symbols. The anti-types of the phenomenon of time seen as a symbol are the vast multitude of acts of sacrifice.

This is due to the fact that the sacrifice is an event which has as the basic time-structure the passage of time itself. In one sense this is true of all events. For all events take place in time. But it is true of sacrifices in a very special and particular sense. A sacrifice is an event in which something is given up or destroyed in order to make room for a new condition or state. It is for this reason that the passage of time is the structure of the sacrifice. In all events, of course, time passes and one state gives way to another. But in the performance of a sacrifice, the phenomenon of one state succeeding another is the essential feature of the performance. In a sacrifice, something is given up, killed or forfeited, or surrendered *in order* to make room for the new state, a boon, a state of grace, a reward, an atonement, etc. In any ordinary performance, this passage of time is taken for granted. If I walk from one room into another, I supersede the state of being in the first room for the sake of the state of being in the second room. But in walking, my concern is not with the passage of time –

but with the reasons I have for moving from one room to another. In the performance of a sacrifice, however, my concern is with the passage of time: I am concerned with the passing of one state and not with the room. This passing makes for the next state. In walking from one room to another, time passes incidentally. But in a sacrifice, the passage of time is ritually enacted. The sacrifice is a spectacle of how time passes, of how one state gives way to another, of how one state is surrendered or given up for the sake of another state. For this reason a sacrifice is an anti-type of the passage of time (one might equally say, of time) in a sense in which other events are not. In the anti-type we must be able to find the same basic structure as in the type. Now this same structure, as far as time is concerned, is to be found in any event whatever. But we have also said that in an anti-type there must be a specification of the type. And such a specification of time is to be found only in a sacrificial act. For in a sacrificial act, a definite emphasis is given to the supersession of one state by another; and this supersession is broadly defined as an act of surrender, of forfeiture, of death. The act for the sake of which this surrender takes place, on the other hand, is broadly seen as a reward or a boon, in short as something desirable that results *because* the old state has been superseded.

There are three elements in the sacrifice which specify the passage of time: 1. the passing of one state is seen as a death; 2. the new state is brought about *through* the passing of the old state; and 3. the new state is something that is essentially more desirable than the old state. Because a sacrifice gives these three specifications to the mere passage of time, we are entitled to see it as an anti-type of the natural phenomenon, the passing of time.

Logically speaking (but not necessarily historically speaking), the first anti-types of time are sacrificial acts of a very broad nature. They are sacrifices in which something is killed and in which through that killing something new is obtained. But there is no clear indication in such general acts of sacrifice as to who the victim is, as to the reason for the killing, as to the reason why the killing results in a boon, and as to the nature of the boon. As time goes by, sacrificial acts are elaborated. And then we find that the killing is understood as a killing of

something that is prized; that this asset is surrendered with pain; and that the surrender takes place in order to appease a godhead. Alternately, the killing can be seen as an effort to release special powers that were inherent in the victim and which, once released, are thus made available to the people who perform the sacrifice. Again, it is possible to see in the object surrendered something essentially bad or harmful. In this case the surrender will not be accompanied by pain but by joy; and the new state is brought about by the elimination of something that was bad and undesirable, or, at least, not as good and desirable as the new state.

On this level we find then a number of sacrificial acts with a fair degree of specification, each one of which is an anti-type to the natural phenomenon of time. But in turn these anti-types become types calling for further specification. And on the following level we can discern a bifurcation of the new anti-types. On this level, the anti-types begin to assume some very marked characterization. The specification proceeds to a degree at which we find (on this third level) no longer one type, calling for yet further specification; but two types, each calling for its own kind of specification.

The first type which we find on the third level is a sacrificial act in which the accent is on the essential value of the object that is surrendered, and in which the pain of such surrender is brought out in striking relief. This accentuation of the pain and suffering in surrender also implies a corresponding emphasis upon the cessation of pain and suffering once the next state is obtained. In sacrifices of this kind the surrender, if there is further specification, is often not of a material object; for the loss of such an object, no matter how highly prized it is, is too mundane an event to emphasize real pain. The victim itself must be a human being; and possibly, in order to increase the sense of loss and of consequent pain, a super-human being. Again, in such acts, the impulse to the sacrifice may be conceived as coming from a God – for only a super-human command can justify the greatness of the pain involved in the surrender. If it is a voluntary act, it can at best be thought of as an act of propitiation; and as a voluntary act, it is improbable that one would wish to inflict unbearable suffering on oneself. In short: as soon as the accent falls on the greatness

of the pain involved in the surrender, the sacrifice assumes a shape and a setting of which the best known historical manifestation is the sacrifice of Abraham. By the historical manifestation of this sacrifice, I do not mean the actual act carried out by Abraham (for that act may have been very different from the one that is related in the Old Testament) but the act that is related in the Old Testament. For it is a historical fact that someone at a certain moment conceived of that act. By attributing it to Abraham he did no more than transform the legendary traditional tale of Abraham's sacrifice into a more highly specified symbol. The sacrifice carried out by the historical Abraham was almost certainly a much less specified sacrificial act: even if the historical victim was his own son, that son was offered as a propitiatory or fertility sacrifice of the first-born; and not as an act of surrender to an inscrutable deity.

There is no need to investigate here the further anti-types of Abraham's sacrifice. It is enough to remark that in any further anti-type the accent must fall on the suffering involved in the surrender, and all further specification must concern the explicitness of the divine (super-human) purpose of the sacrifice and the excellence (divinity, super-humanity) of the victim: for the less the suffering is *deserved*, the greater the understanding of the suffering that is involved.

In conclusion, I would like to observe that acts of sacrifice of this type fit in more readily with the creation symbol picture than with the emanation symbol picture. In the emanation picture any individual object which through its individuality is separated from the ground of being is only of very partial value; and an act of surrendering it or any of its parts cannot be accompanied by intolerable pain. But in the creation picture every individual existence is created by God and exercises all its faculties and functions by His Design. Now any surrender of such God-willed activity is like cutting one's own flesh; it is like cutting back a growth that was really created by God. It is, in fact, the surrender of something that is God-willed and therefore good. Hence the intolerable pain involved in the sacrifice; and, consequent upon the intolerable pain, the sense of immense relief in the attainment of the succeeding state. Both the pain and the immense relief

are commensurate with the enormity of any guilt that is felt at the thought that the creature may have offended the creator; with the enormity of a guilt that is incurred through a wilful disturbance of the proper relationship that God had willed to obtain between Himself and His creatures. In every respect, therefore, this type of sacrifice is compatible with the creation symbol picture and fits in with the other symbols employed. If ethical considerations and the notion of relationship is paramount in that symbol picture, the notion that the sacrifice is an expiation of the guilt incurred in the disturbance of a proper relationship is a fitting complement to that symbol picture.

In this picture, the very notion of creaturehood involves a contradiction, for a creature is created and is launched upon a course of self-aggrandizement, self-assertion and ego-building. It is destined for independence. But after it has pursued a certain path, everything it has built up in the pursuit of the very course on which it was launched has to be taken to pieces again. Hence the agony. There is real pain involved when one has to watch the decomposition of the things one has built or when one has to start upon folding up the work one has done in obedience to the faculties one's creator has endowed one with. The contradictoriness of creaturehood makes the mere passage of time a frequent occasion of agony.

Let us now turn to a consideration of the second type of sacrifice. (We are now again starting from the third level – the first being the level of the natural phenomenon of time; the second, the level of the undifferentiated sacrifice; and the third, the level where the bifurcation occurs and where we find *two* different anti-types to the sacrifice on the second level.) In the second type of sacrifice, the accent is not on the suffering involved in the surrender; although such suffering may well be incidental to it. The accent is, on the contrary, upon the liberation involved in the attainment of the new state. With the placing of this accent upon the liberation involved in the new state, there emerges a type of sacrifice that is very different from the first type. And if the first type of sacrifice is traditionally represented as the Passion of Christ on the Cross, the second type of sacrifice is traditionally represented by the state of the Buddha after the attainment of enlightenment.

Once the second type of sacrifice is fashioned, all further specifications will be concerned with the following points. They will emphasize the essential unreality and illusoriness of the things that are surrendered, i.e. their essential unworthiness. And in contrast they will emphasize that the new state that emerges from such surrender is a state of a high reality, something more fitting, more in the nature of things. Thus whatever pain is experienced in the surrender is unlikely to assume great proportions. And even if it is strong, it can be assuaged by an insistence that this pain is due to the fact that one has formed a *wrong* attachment to an object to which one should not have been attached. There is no virtue in the pain that accompanies the surrender; but a tremendous benefit is to be derived from the attainment of the new state.

Historically the most noteworthy examples of this kind of sacrifice are to be found in India. The series of third-level sacrifices begins in the *Upanishads*, where it is especially pointed out that the earlier *soma* sacrifice and such crucial sacrifices as the horse sacrifice that go back to Vedic times, have only one meaning. The imposition of a specific meaning upon these earlier and more undifferentiated forms of the sacrifice is a process that is comparable with the imposition of a certain meaning upon the legendary story of Abraham's sacrifice. Here also a second-level sacrifice is given a certain stamp which raises it to a third level of specification and marks it as the type of further anti-types. In the *Chāndogya Upanishad* it is explained that the sacrifice of *soma* means the sacrifice of man's life. The various parts of the sacrificial performance are equated to the various stages of life; the outpouring of the *soma* into the fire is equated with the outpouring of the semen in sexual intercourse and is thus specified as the beginning of regeneration. The individual's death at the end of life is equated with the final chant of the ritual. This way of defining the various parts of the sacrificial ritual indicates the rhythm of the act. The new state is emphatically the centre-piece, and neither the surrender nor the final chant are considered of vital importance. While the *soma* sacrifice of the *Rg Veda* is a second level sacrifice, unspecified and open to several forms of specification, this third level sacrifice from the *Chāndogya Upanishad* is clearly marked as the second of our two kinds

of sacrifice. From here, then, further speculation proceeded to further anti-types. And among the most striking of those further anti-types is the one which sees in the *soma* that flows into the fire (and presumably in the outpouring of the semen) the return of the individual's *ātman* into the *brahman*. In this highly specified version of the sacrifice, the desirable new state that is attained is taken to be a state in which the individual is either actively reunited with, or understood to be identical with, the ground of being. The act of surrender, done without suffering (or, if there is suffering, it is in itself not considered to be of any great significance), is an act of surrender of something undesirable; and it makes room for the emergence of the one state that is desirable, for the state in which all things are one, unseparated, un-individuated.

It is not difficult to see that this second way of looking upon the sacrifice is a fitting part of the second symbol picture, the emanation symbol picture. In that symbol picture the whole world is seen as a splitting away from the ground of being, from the undifferentiated one. The process of unfolding or of emanation is a *systole*, a breathing out; and must sooner or later give way to a breathing in, to a reabsorption, a return, a *diastole*. The sacrificial act is therefore seen as a fitting human contribution to, or participation in, the process of *diastole*. By a surrender of separateness or individuation, man speeds up a little, as it were, the process of reabsorption. The surrender itself is not painful; or if it is, no significance is attributed to the pain, for the pain consists in the elimination of a merely supposed self-hood, of the elimination of a mere disorder in the oneness of all being. Pain in the surrender is only due to the failure to understand that the self-hood that is surrendered is a disorder that ought to be overcome. For in this picture the establishment of individuality, with its desires and faculties and powers, is not a god-willed creation; but a mere departure from the primeval and eternal oneness. And the sacrificial surrender of self-hood does not establish the right relationship between creator and creature; but abolishes once more all relationship.

If creaturehood is contradictory and ambivalent, the same cannot be said of an emanated being. An emanated being has its experience of pain and loneliness in its sense of alienation

and distance from the ground of being or from the all embracing mother. It may feel the discomfort of being a stranger in a material world of multiple existences, a soul in the tomb of the body, and so forth. But in proportion to which its knowledge of this state of affairs increases, its desire to put an end to that state becomes stronger. And hence, as the result of growing knowledge, there comes a growing determination to achieve reunion or reabsorption. The state of individual existence is understood to be something 'unnatural'. It is not a state towards which a creator launched his handiwork; but a state of disturbance. A surrender of that state should, therefore, not be painful, for it should lie (provided it is preceded by a correct knowledge of the condition of emanation) in the natural path of the emanated being. To a creature, all decomposition must be painful. To an emanated being it is relaxing and joyful.

If one sees the relationship between the two symbol pictures and the two types of sacrificial acts in their proper light, it will now be possible to add a few further finishing touches to the outline of the features of the two symbol pictures.

In the creation picture, the super-human, divine power or agent that appears will tend to be seen as a personal deity, not only invested with personal qualities but also exercising personal and providential functions. This lies in the nature of the case. The very notion of creation is a personal function. But the matter goes further. If a sacrificial act involves the suffering of super-human pain (this is due to the fact that man with his powers and desires, most of which he is meant to surrender for the sake of re-establishing the right relationship with the creator), man is not in a position to achieve the act of sacrifice fully by his own efforts. He must, therefore, see God as a helper, as a source of grace. This notion of God as the source of unmerited grace, as loving man more than man deserves, must grow in the proportion in which the sacrifice is seen as a more specific act of surrendering all that man has become most attached to. For the more emphasis is laid on the pain, the more is it necessary to see God as giving man special grace. For the surrender is painful because the things that are surrendered are not in themselves evil, and the surrender of things that are not in themselves evil causes very *real* pain. And that extra pain, that undeserved pain, needs divine grace to be borne at

all. And at its very clearest, it is represented by the sacrificial death of God Himself, who is so obviously innocent and undeserving of agony. But since the accent is on the agony of surrender, that God must have become a man; for unless the subject of sacrifice were human, there would be no agony in the surrender.

One can also approach these connections from a different angle. One can say that in this symbol picture God needs to be seen as all-loving, i.e. as loving more than the object of His love deserves. For if God loved man only in so far as man has *not* wilfully destroyed the right relationship between creator and creature, or only in so far as man obeys the rules set down by God for him, He could not be conceived as extending the grace that makes the super-human suffering possible. And since it is only through super-human suffering that the enormity of guilt, incurred in the disturbance of the right relationship between creator and creature, can be wiped out, the notion of the sacrifice that re-established the right relationship by wiping out the guilt, involves the notion of the all-loving God. This notion must grow in the symbol picture in proportion to the increasing specification of the first notion of the sacrifice.

From whatever angle we look at it then, we will see the connection between the sacrifice and the cosmogonic myth in the symbol picture. And since the first is an anti-type of the natural phenomenon of ageing or of the passing of time; and the second an anti-type of the natural phenomenon of procreation, we come to the insight that the way in which time appears in the symbol picture is linked with the way in which space appears in the symbol picture.

This is equally true for the second symbol picture, the emanation symbol picture. In that picture God will not be invested with personal attributes and functions. For the act of creation is really an emanation or unfolding, not a making or fashioning. The ground of being itself is in repose until it begins to subdivide. The subdivision may be conceived to have taken place according to a variety of different principles. But, though it can alienate a number of individual existences from that ground, it cannot make explicit more than there was contained in it. The process of alienation or unfolding will eventually

be reversed and everything will return to its source. This will happen sooner or later, and nothing that happens in the meantime – no amount of evil deeds and no degree of alienation – can make any real difference to this fact. The human act of sacrifice is merely an act that shows the degree of human participation in the process of reabsorption. If the figures of deities are used in this symbol picture, they appear only in a secondary rôle, and their ability to interfere with the course of affairs is strictly limited. For they themselves can only be thought of as emanations – true, as emanations of a very high quality, with a low degree of alienation from the original ground, as beings with a higher 'spiritual' nature than men, beasts, and material objects, etc. – but eventually they, too, must pass away and become reabsorbed.

In the highly elaborated creation picture, the stress was on incommensurable love and grace. God is taken to be loving in this incommensurable way and His grace may at times help men to love in an equally incommensurable way and thus become capable of sacrifice. For this incommensurable love is needed to wipe out the guilt. With the notion of relationship between creator and creature we also found that ethical considerations were very much in the centre of the picture, for relationship is essentially an ethical matter. In the highly elaborated emanation symbol picture, the situation is different. There is no proper and adequate relationship between creator and creature. There is, in fact, no conception of creator and creature in that picture. For all existence of multiplicity is a departure from, or breach of, the one and only natural state. In this picture ethical considerations are, therefore, of very minor and secondary importance. There can be no question of an individual guilt, unless one means by it the original disturbance that resulted in the multiplication of the ground of being. But such guilt is not of an ethical or moral character. It is not incurred through the disturbance of a right relationship, for originally and properly there was no relationship at all. The disturbance *preceded* the existence of all relationships and can, therefore, not be a matter of individual responsibility. In this picture, therefore, the main emphasis does not fall upon love and grace; but upon knowledge, upon the insight that all beings emanated from the original ground of being; and that sooner

or later the *systole* will give way to a *diastole*. As the notion of sacrifice becomes more specified and is seen as a way of speeding the *diastole*, one will become in proportion more and more clearly aware of the central position of knowledge in this symbol picture. For human participation in the *diastole* is possible through the knowledge that everything has emanated from the ground of being. The sacrifice helps to convey this knowledge and helps man to assimilate that knowledge. But the effectiveness of the sacrifice, the degree to which the *diastole* is speeded by it, depends on how well this knowledge has been assimilated. In the creation picture, knowledge also plays a certain rôle. It will help us to understand the nature of the sacrifice. But it can itself not help us to perform it effectively. For an effective performance (which involves the surrender in suffering of many things which God Himself has created for us and in us) depends on grace, on God's incommensurable love with which He enables us to bear the suffering and thus atone for the guilt we incurred – or which someone incurred – when the original right relationship between creator and creature was disturbed. For this reason one could also decide to give suitable headings to the two symbol pictures by the words *grace* and *gnosis* (knowledge). The creation picture, when fully filled out and developed, is one in which grace is seen to operate as the primary power. And the emanation picture is one in which knowledge is said to operate as the primary force. But with this formulation we are entering upon the field of metaphysics. For to say that grace and knowledge (*gnosis*) are primary powers, is to make a metaphysical statement about a symbol picture; or rather, about two different symbol pictures. And, what is more, it is to make statements about highly specified symbol pictures. A mere contemplation of an unspecified symbol picture, in which we see nothing but very poorly specified cosmogonic stories and sacrifices, would never enable us to see that grace and *gnosis* are its primary forces.

Now that we have attempted a phenomenology, at least in outline, of symbol pictures, we must turn to metaphysical doctrines and examine more closely the relationship in which they stand to symbol pictures. But in conclusion I would like, to state again the corollary of my thesis that metaphysical doctrines are synthetic *a posteriori* theories about the structure

and quality of the symbol picture. This corollary says that all views about the unreality or reality of time and space, that is about the nature of differences or of individuation, are views about the symbol picture. We may often encounter such views as the alleged products of pure or applied reasoning on matters other than symbols. In all such cases, we must take it that the real subject matter of such views has been, for some reason or other, suppressed. Such views are demonstrably not views about the positive picture. The latter, even if it does not directly falsify them, proves them to be completely irrelevant to it. Bradley, for example, although he did not believe time to be real, adhered to train time-tables like everybody else; and Bergson, although he did not believe that space was real in the sense in which time was, took care to move when he wanted to get anywhere. Many positivists have concluded, therefore, that there was something wrong-headed in men like Bradley and Bergson. I would prefer to believe that they knew full well that their metaphysical views had no direct bearing on what we are wont to call the positive picture. If one is to criticize them, one should criticize them for being so little explicit about the symbol picture to which their views *were* relevant. And I am certain that, although neither Bergson nor Bradley, for instance, consciously believed that their views had something to do with that picture, their views owed a great deal to the relevant symbol pictures. Given the presence of the events in field A, the symbols that carry their meaning are inescapable, even if they are not consciously and explicitly contemplated all the time. Their presence is no more capable of being disregarded than the presence of the events in A themselves. And it is therefore not suprising that we should find metaphysical views held by people who are not manifestly given to the contemplation of symbol pictures.

METAPHYSICAL PRINCIPLES

In the third chapter I have put forward the general thesis that metaphysical doctrines are derived from the symbol picture and are abstract and conceptual statements about symbol pictures or certain features of such pictures. In the fifth chapter I have tried to give a phenomenology of symbol pictures and to show that there are two fundamentally distinct types of such pictures. It is now time to consider in detail how certain specific metaphysical doctrines are derived from symbol pictures.

Over the centuries a very large number of metaphysical doctrines have both been asserted and denied. There is no point in going into these many doctrines and the many discussions that have ensued about them. In almost all cases these discussions have been bedevilled by a failure to understand clearly that the doctrines in question were not like scientific doctrines and could therefore not be assessed in terms of observations made in the positive picture. And even when this was understood, the discussion was only further bedevilled by the strange notion that, if the doctrine was not about the positive picture, it was either a totally nonsensical doctrine, or a doctrine about some unfathomable and unknowable Reality. In view of the thesis I have put forward, the metaphysical discussions of the past are for the most part fairly unprofitable. But metaphysical doctrines themselves deserve the greatest attention. If my thesis is accepted, it will provide a new context in which these doctrines can be discussed.

It is not difficult to see that almost every metaphysical doctrine bears upon mythology, i.e. upon events related to take place or to have taken place in the symbol picture. Let us consider, for example, the doctrine that time is unreal. This doctrine expresses the view that the existence which alone can

be considered real, is not an existence in time. There can be no doubt that this doctrine is somehow concerned with the myth that all existences came into being through a primeval unfolding of the One. The One alone is seen as real; and all individual existences are seen as so many temporary and ephemeral subdivisions, or appearances *sub specie rationis*, of the original One. Or let us take the doctrine that all relations are internal. In one important sense, this is, of course, not a metaphysical doctrine at all, but a clever, perhaps too clever, way of stating the obvious. Every being is related in one way or another to every other being. If one finds it not too cumbersome to count every single relation in which every being stands to every other being as an essential part of that being, one can say that all the relations in which that being stands to all other beings are internal relations. But since it is perfectly well conceivable that not *all* of these relations are essential parts of the being in question, it would appear to be extremely cumbersome to speak of all relations as internal relations. If one does, one would, presumably, have to decide to introduce a distinction into the notion of 'essential'. One might say for instance that if a table is carried from one room to another, it is 'semi-essentially' still the same table, but essentially (since its relations to all other objects have been altered) no longer the same table. In this sense then, the doctrine of internal relations is not a metaphysical doctrine at all. But in another sense, it is a doctrine about the symbol picture. It says that since every individual being is derived, through a process of many subdivisions, from the original One, the position it occupies in time and in space, i.e. in relation to all other existences, is not something arbitrary or accidental but part of its nature. Looked at from this point of view, the doctrine of internal relations draws our attention to certain features of the world. That is to say, it shows us that, apart from the positive picture (appearance) of the World, the World can also appear in a different way, that is in such a way that all relations appear to be internal ones. Most genuine metaphysical doctrines are attempts to draw our attention to such possible appearances of the World. Only if one decides to let them stand or fall by their applicability to the positive picture (as the positivists do); or if one believes

that they describe that which cannot be seen or heard or sensed in any way (as so many traditional philosophers did and do), will one fail to notice this. Most metaphysicians do not explicitly refer their doctrines to the symbol picture and show in detail how their doctrines are derived from it. They frequently start at the other end and put forward their theories; and these theories then indicate to us what kind of symbol pictures (appearances) of the World there are. The metaphysical procedure, in other words, is frequently deductive. And our knowledge of the symbol picture in question is the result, not the precondition, of metaphysical doctrines.

It would be fruitful to make a systematic survey of the major metaphysical views that have been held at various times and to examine from which symbol picture they have been, consciously, derived. But even a cursory glance at them cannot fail to convince us of the correctness of this contention. Aristotle's conception of a chain of being that stretches from potency to act and from matter to form, owes its existence to a symbol picture of Reality along the patterns of the emanation of multiplicity from a primeval, undifferentiated oneness, which Aristotle conceived as purely material and purely potential. It would be rewarding to investigate what there was in his view of the symbol picture that made him think of the primeval oneness as matter in pure potency. For his Indo-European cousins in the Ganges valley tended to think of this primeval oneness as being pure and undifferentiated consciousness unfolding, for instance, under the pressure of *māyā* into a multiplicity of individual, more or less grossly material, objects or substances. St Thomas's doctrine of first and second causes, on the other hand, is very clearly an abstract summary of his vision of the symbol picture in which God creates substances and endows them, in His infinite goodness, with sufficient power to exercise causality by themselves. And when he preferred the Aristotelian version of the theory of ideas to the Platonic one, his choice must have been either determined or greatly influenced by his knowledge of the Old Testament symbol picture in which God had created the world and endowed man with natural faculties of understanding and action. This symbol picture can hardly have recommended to St Thomas an acceptance of the Platonic view that the

ideas we need for understanding and of which all finite and individual substances are only painfully inaccurate imitations repose in some transcendental realm to which we have access only by some special grace or some mysterious process of illumination. Moreover, Platonic metaphysical theory is dualistic because it sets up an unbridgeable gulf between the realm of ideas and the world of separate objects. With St Thomas such a theory could hardly find favour, for it was plainly contradicted by the evidence contained in the symbol picture of the origin of the world provided by Genesis. As a result he found Aristotelian metaphysical theory more acceptable, for the latter allowed for a gradual transition from matter to mind. It was much less dualistic than Platonic metaphysics and therefore more capable of doing justice to the creation story in Genesis according to which God had made the world and seen that it was good – i.e. according to which there was no built-in dualism in the universe. Hence we might conclude that St Thomas opted for Aristotle and against Plato (as far as the most basic issues were concerned) because he was committed to a symbol picture to which the un-dualistic Aristotelian metaphysics could do greater justice than the dualism of Plato. Descartes' conception of the soul encased in the body, on the other hand, clearly owes something to the time-honoured symbol picture in which a chip of the universal mind or primeval consciousness is imprisoned in a material body.

Looking at Marx, there is very little, if any, historical observation that would have compelled him to arrive at his conclusions about the proletarian revolution and the coming of the classless society. But the evidence for his theory must not be sought in history; but in biblical and more specially apocalyptic mythology. There is quite enough evidence there to provide the justification for Marx's view of history, in which the redemptive part was to be played by the Just (i.e. 'the elect', 'the anointed', 'the innocent', the proletariat). Their sufferings are invoked to change the condition of the world. The classless society and the disappearance of tension are the secular counterpart to the kingdom of heaven. There is even the final struggle between good and evil, Christ and Anti-Christ, ending in the victory of the former. Kant's conception

of the relationship between the *noumenal* World and the phenomena, on the other hand, must owe its general traits to a mythological picture in which the One is undifferentiated and therefore 'unknowable'; while the separate appearances result from the filter through which they are perceived. It contains Neo-Platonic and possibly Gnostic elements. No reader of Freud's later works can deny that the symbol picture, in which the forces of self-assertion and individuation are warring against the desire for annihilation and reabsorption into a womb of primeval oneness, exercised a tremendous spell upon their author. And Jung is almost alone among metaphysicians to have openly avowed that his conception of the integrated self, in which the two pairs of warring opposites, introversion-extraversion and male-female, are poised in perfect balance, was inspired by Indian and Gnostic mythology. There is no point in lengthening this catalogue.

In pure metaphysical thinking, therefore, the symbol picture plays the rôle, on one side, of a general inspiration, often of an unconscious one; and, on the other side, it is the evidence in terms of which the truth of the metaphysical doctrines can be discussed, once they have been put forward.

But our concern is not with metaphysical doctrines in general; but with two particular metaphysical doctrines. In Chapter Two we arrived at the conclusion that the doctrines that love is absolute and that consciousness is absolute are metaphysical doctrines. And the argument has now proceeded far enough for us to show that these doctrines are true doctrines and to indicate their relations to symbol pictures.

I will argue that the doctrine that love is absolute is a metaphysical doctrine about the creation symbol picture; and that the doctrine that consciousness is absolute, is a doctrine about the emanation symbol picture. But a word of caution is needed. It is not terribly difficult, as we have seen, to find appropriate historical examples of the two kinds of symbol pictures. But in most cases, on examination, the symbol picture is not fully developed; and in many cases, in fact, it is, owing to the social and economic conditions of the society that cultivates it, very poorly developed. Among the Indians of North America, we can find little more than the barest outline of creation myths; and the ancient Greeks did not develop

the symbol picture in which the relationship between men and divine beings plays such a prominent part beyond the stage of Homer's theology. In other words, we will be hard put for examples in which the symbol picture is so fully developed that the transition from highly specified symbols to a metaphysical theory will appear as a historical fact. And even in a case where the symbol picture itself is fully elaborated, it is not always easy to point to an actual historical example of how it is crystallized into a metaphysical doctrine. In fact, there is only one example I know of where a description of a highly elaborated symbol picture, the *Brahma Sūtra*, crystallizes into metaphysical doctrine. In India it was customary to write commentaries on the *Brahma Sūtra*. And we can therefore find many instances of the points at which descriptions of highly specified symbols pass into metaphysical doctrine. There is nothing quite comparable in the West. I will therefore confine myself to two particular examples and try to show how the doctrine that love is absolute is a doctrine about the symbol picture that is contained (among other things) in the Old and the New Testament; and how the doctrine that consciousness is absolute is a metaphysical doctrine about the symbol picture that is contained in the *Vedas*, the *Brāhmaṇas*, and the *Upanishads*. When this has been done, it will remain, as the last part of the argument, to show the mutual interdependence of the two metaphysical doctrines. This interdependence we found to be an essential part of their significance; and it remains therefore to show how the symbol pictures from which the doctrines emerge stand in an interdependent relationship to one another. Of such interdependence we can provide a large number of actual historical examples.

1. Absolute Love

The doctrine that love is absolute has been put forward, from the days of St Paul onward, by innumerable Christian writers, right down to the present century, in which it was made again the corner stone of a metaphysical system by McTaggart. The doctrine can assume many different meanings and appear in many different guises. But the core of the doctrine is in every case that the right relationship between man and man is a relationship of love; and furthermore, that such love must

be unconditional. For if it is conditional or present only to the degree to which the loved person is deserving of love, it is not absolute.

It would take us too far to examine in detail the exact formulation and justification of the doctrine in a number of writers. Some, like McTaggart, even believed that the doctrine could be based upon purely logical reasoning. He thought he had proved that only spirits really exist and that they perceive one another and that they love what they perceive with a love which is perfect passion as well as perfect understanding. I think we must accept Broad's demonstration that McTaggart had not really managed to prove this logically at all; and that Lowes-Dickinson was right when he believed – as E. M. Forster reports – that McTaggart had had the basic intuition that the universe is held together by love and spent the rest of his life in a vain effort to prove it by logic.

Dante, on the other hand, asserted the doctrine as a fact he seemed to have experienced:

> ma già volgeva il mio desio e 'l velle,
> sì come ruota ch'igualmente è mossa,
> l'amor che move il sole e l'altre stelle.
> (Paradiso, XXXIII, 143-5)*

And other writers stated explicitly that the knowledge of the absoluteness of love had come to them from 'revelation' in Jesus Christ and reported accordingly in the Gospels that 'if you are without charity . . .'; that faith and hope will pass away, but charity will last for ever and that, where there is perfect love, fear is driven out. These formulations were the first metaphysical statements about the symbol picture in which they had seen the Incarnation and Passion of the Son of God.

It must be clear, however, that the mere vision of the Incarnation of the Son of God and of the promise of the Kingdom of God was only part of the symbol picture which caused these metaphysical insights. The other part of the picture is provided by the Old Testament. If Jesus is seen without the

* But like to a wheel whose circling nothing jars
Already on my desire and my will prevailed
The Love that moves the sun and the other stars.
(L. Binyon's translation)

Old Testament symbol picture (which is a picture of the creation type), and placed instead into a picture of the emanation type, no metaphysic of absolute love would have suggested itself.

If the appearance of the Son of God is seen against the background of an emanation symbol picture, he will appear as the divine emissary who has been sent in order to rescue the souls that are encased in material bodies and lead them back to a reunion with, or reabsorption in, the divine ground of all being. The sacrificial death and the Passion will be played down or slurred over, and the Incarnation itself, the Word made flesh, will be thought of as a mere illusion, as a temporary appearance of the divine messenger in human form. We are well familiar with such symbol pictures and we know that they give the lie to the doctrine of absolute love. For in these pictures the purpose of the divine coming is not the re-establishment of right relationship, but the eventual abolition of all relationships and the annulment of all existences.

If the story of Jesus is, however, fitted into the creation symbol picture provided by the Old Testament, the accent will fall heavily both upon the Incarnation and the Passion. In this symbol picture we see that God created man and launched him upon a path that was to lead to further human creations. Moral growth, the building of societies, the acquisition of material wealth and the use of reason and understanding are given to man as natural impulses. But all these impulses, while part of creation, tend to obscure both the love between man and man and the love of man for God. They introduce darker tones into relationship, for they tend to become ends in themselves. Hence God makes Himself man in order to restore the right relationship in which love is paramount and no longer crowded out by all the other desires and impulses. The whole story of Jesus is one tremendous sacrifice in extreme agony, for it is a surrender of what God Himself had created – a sacrificial dismantling of the universe and of everything it contains. The accent is first on the Incarnation; for the sacrificial surrender is of something that is eminently real. The second accent is on the agony of surrender; for in view of the effort that has gone into human growth and in view of the strength of the attachments that have resulted from it, the surrender

is painfully unnatural. The third accent is on the Resurrection; for it holds out the promise of a re-establishment of right relationships. This self-sacrifice of God Himself is at the same time a proof of absolute love. In this self-sacrifice God reveals Himself as being absolute love. For He gives more than is deserved and in that love all other impulses are crowded out. He made the world in the first place; and as too many of the created impulses interfered with the one and only order of reality, with the absoluteness of love, His next move is a total self-sacrifice in which His own creation is surrendered and dismantled with heart-breaking pain. In this way room is made for the love, the spread and operation of which had been interfered with to the point of almost total suppression.

This description of the symbol picture, of the myth and ritual cultivated in Christian churches, is of necessity deficient. If it could be fully and adequately described, there would be no need of myth and ritual. But I had to make an attempt to outline its general features in order to show how, for centuries, it has proved an inspiration to the metaphysical doctrine that love is absolute. The mere presence of that symbol picture provides the evidence for the doctrine; and the doctrine is no more and no less than an abstract summary of that symbol picture. The summary is not another concrete image that could itself be placed in the picture; but a conceptual formulation of a truth that is borne out by the existence of the picture.

We have seen that the truth of the metaphysical doctrine in question depends upon the connexion of the Old Testament picture with the New Testament picture. If the latter is linked instead with an emanation symbol picture, the metaphysical doctrine of absolute love would have to be considered false. And it may be worth mentioning that the Old Testament picture by itself, even though it is of the creation type, would make it extremely difficult for us to arrive at the doctrine of absolute love. That picture is not incompatible with it. But the evidence is not complete enough for this doctrine to be derived from it. It is only through the addition of the New Testament that the symbol picture becomes full enough for a more or less smooth transition to a metaphysical formulation to become possible.

2. Absolute Consciousness

In the writings of the Indian philosopher Sankara we find the fullest and clearest exposition of the metaphysical theory of absolute consciousness. Whatever is, he taught, is in reality one. The universal being is called *Brahman* and is of a homogeneous nature: it is pure consciousness, destitute of any qualities. *Brahman* is associated with a certain power called *māyā* to which the appearance of the world is due. With the help of the power of *māyā*, *Brahman* projects the material world comprehending distinct individual existences. In all those individual existences, no matter under how many forms, names and guises they appear, *Brahman* is present, broken up as it were into a multiplicity of individual souls. These individual kernels are also known as *ātmān*. The only element that is real in each soul is the kernel, *Brahman*. The rest, together with all the bodily organs and the mental functions by which, in ordinary experience, we distinguish one individual being from another, is due to the power of *māyā*; it is unreal, a mere appearance, an illusion.

From a psychological point of view, the power of *māyā* continues and affirms its hold through *avidyā*, through ignorance. The individual soul is unable to see through the power of *māyā*. Instead of recognizing itself as identical with *Brahman* it identifies itself with the individual existence which the power of *māyā* has caused to appear. Through ignorance of the real state of affairs, every individual existent soul is thus cut off from the real ground of being. If ignorance can be destroyed, the individual will first recognize the real conditions of his existence and finally come to the point where he sees the identity between his own soul and the universal consciousness – or rather, one should say that he comes to the point at which he no longer sees that identity (for seeing it would presuppose a continuation of the separation between the individual that sees and the universal consciousness that is seen to be identical with the soul that sees), but at which there *is* nothing but that identity, i.e. at which there is nothing but *Brahman*. Knowledge thus destroys the power of *māyā*.

Sankara made some efforts to base this view of man's nature upon logical reasoning. But the great treatise in which he

propounded his views is written in the form of a commentary upon the *Brahma Sūtra*. He was therefore quite aware of the fact that his own views were no more than a discursive and explicit statement of the views contained (or supposed by him to be contained) in the *Brahma Sūtra*. The *Brahma Sūtra* are a collection of aphoristic summaries of the doctrine that is contained, or believed to be contained, in the *Upanishads*. The *Upanishads* themselves are a vast collection of teachings, sometimes in an abstract and conceptual (metaphysical) form, and sometimes in the form of highly specified symbols. In the *Upanishads* we have a stage of the development of a symbol picture in which the symbols are so highly specified that at times they are indistinguishable from metaphysical doctrines *about* symbols. The final abstract formulation of these symbols takes place, however, only in the *Brahma Sūtra*. The symbol picture of the *Upanishads* is, however, itself merely a continuation of earlier and less highly specified symbols. The earliest Indian record of a symbol picture is contained in the *Rg Veda*. And from the *Rg Veda* there is an easy transition to the *Brāhmaṇas*, to those hymns which are specifically concerned with an elaboration of the science of sacrifice of the *Veda*. And from the *Brāhmaṇas* we pass on to the *Upanishads* in which the science of sacrifice is further elaborated almost to the point of pure metaphysical theory. We are therefore in a position, in the case of Sankara, to trace the emergence of metaphysics from a symbol picture and to follow the evolution of that symbol picture from the earliest, unspecified stages to the latest, fully specified stages. Even so it is worth noting that the emergence of Sankara's metaphysical doctrines was by no means a superfluous afterthought. It is well known that the same symbol picture, though highly specified, allowed Ramanuja to offer a somewhat different metaphysical doctrine about it. The degree of specification contained in the *Upanishads* and the aphoristic character of the *Brahma Sūtra* still allowed for differences of opinion as to the metaphysical doctrine that was to be put forward about the symbol picture. Sankara's metaphysics is therefore not a mere refinement of what people could have known anyway; but a theory about certain events as to the precise meaning of which there was room for considerable doubt.

But we can not only trace the purely mechanical way in which symbols became more and more specified and finally resulted in the formulation of metaphysical doctrines that explain their meaning. We can trace, step by step, the development towards higher specification in the symbol of the sacrifice. Oldenberg was able to trace the early history of sacrifice in the *Rg Veda*. In India, as in so many other places, it is probable that the earliest form of the sacrifice (one may even wonder whether it is appropriate to refer to this performance already as a sacrifice) was the killing of the totemic animal and a sacramental meal at which it was eaten. We have here little more than a purely natural event, the killing of an animal for food. But the event is lifted from the sphere of the purely natural by a certain ceremonial emphasis that is given to the killing as well as to the eating. In the *Rg Veda* itself we find the sacrifice at a further stage of denaturalization. There is now no doubt that the victim is a gift for the god; and that the sacrifice is supposed to please the deity. This degree of denaturalization, the belief that the offering is made to a deity, results in the greater specification of the sacrifice. The performance is now of a certain type and it precludes a number of meanings (and anti-types) which could have been given to the mere killing and to the sacramental meal. But now that the eating is done by the god or on behalf of the god, the sacrifice assumes the meaning of a bridge between this world and something unseen – even though this unseen world is not yet *very* unseen: the god is presumed, e.g. to be Indra, walking about with the sacrificed cake in his hands, looking with pleasure and benignity upon the person who gave him the cake. This is not yet a very unnatural image.

From here it is possible to follow step by step the progress of denaturalization of the object towards which the sacrifice is directed. The images of a large number of gods tend to give way to the image of one deity; and then the one deity is seen as the author and sustainer of the universe and finally as *Brahman*, the force that sustains the universe, as an impersonal substance. With this stage of *Upanishadic* symbolism we are on the threshold of metaphysical abstraction, for the notion of a substance under-lying all material and psychic individual manifestations is a metaphysical concept.

A similar development can be traced in another symbol, the *ātman*. When man dies, says an early text, his eyes go to the sun and his *ātman* to the wind. Here we have a slightly denaturalized image. Step by step the denaturalization grows. *Ātman* is seen next as a little *homunculus*, a duplicate man inside man, who supports life. Eventually it becomes something like the soul, the director of all other vital functions; and finally the *ātman* becomes the Self and is seen as the spiritual substratum that underlies both the subtle (mental) and the gross (material) functions of man. Owing to the prevailing emanation symbol picture in India this spiritual substratum is equated with the substance of the universe, the *Brahman*.

Hence the temptation to think of the sacrifice no longer as an offering by a man to a god. The act of sacrifice is seen rather as the destruction of the ignorance which causes every individual soul to see itself as separate from *Brahman*. The sacrifice concerns the elimination of ignorance and of the supposed self-hood and individuality of mental acts and of organic feelings which result from ignorance. The end of all sacrifice is the knowledge of the identity of *Brahman* and *ātman*. The sacrifice is therefore an act of surrender in favour of the only substance there is. It does not consist in the assimilation by the divine substance of an alien substance. It is seen as an act of worship of the self by the self. So gradually, with the elaboration of symbols, we come to the point where the sacrificial act is described no longer as an image but in purely conceptual terms: 'thou art that'.

When the meaning of the symbol has been pinned down so precisely, we are at the point where any further elaboration of detailed meanings passes into metaphysical thought. And so we get the metaphysical doctrine of the identity of the self and the spirit; of *ātman* and *Brahman*. There is the corollary that all those human activities that are not of a purely spiritual character are more or less gross material appearances of the one spiritual substance. The spiritual substance itself is absolute consciousness, a consciousness without the slightest trace of any content. Any content that appears in it, as well as any identity that appears as a possible object of consciousness, is like a muddy patch in clear and calm water. The most powerful method of avoiding such muddy patches is to have

knowledge of the absoluteness of consciousness. Such knowledge assures that there *is* nothing but complete and clear consciousness and will therefore prevent the appearance of muddy patches. One might formulate this in the following way: when one thinks of nothing but nothing, one will indeed be thinking of nothing.

So far we have only considered one kind of symbol, acts of sacrifice. But there can be no doubt that the ancient Indian texts contained another kind of symbol which was a powerful agent in the promotion of this way of thinking. I am referring to the symbols concerned with the origin of the world. The ancient scriptures contain a large variety of versions of such symbols; but without exception they are all emanation versions. Now if one recalls the remarks about the general features of emanation symbol pictures made above, it is not difficult to see how these symbols lent the strongest possible support to the metaphysical doctrine of absolute consciousness. For absolute consciousness is, after all, no more than a conceptual formulation of the original ground of being or nothing, from which the whole world of individual existences was gradually unfolded. The doctrine that the universal spirit (consciousness) and the Self are identical is, therefore, no more and no less than an invitation to see that all that exists is the original ground of being (or nothing), and that all individual existences are so many temporary variations on the one theme, that they are so many different shapes which the one substance has temporarily adopted. In fact, it would be hard to decide which of the two symbols, the sacrifice or the origin symbol, played a more decisive part in the shaping of Sankara's metaphysical doctrine.

In this way, Sankara evolved his metaphysics of absolute consciousness from the symbol picture of the ancient scriptures. He received his cue from a tendency inherent in that picture itself, the tendency towards greater and greater specification and more and more detailed elaboration of some symbols. Owing to this tendency he was able to present his metaphysics as a commentary on the most highly elaborated version of these symbols, the *Brahma Sūtra*. But these aphorisms themselves describe symbolic images – highly, but not completely specified. For we know that Ramanuja and a host of

other writers thought them capable of a different metaphysical formulation. But in each case the step from the highly elaborate and specified symbols of the *Brahma Sūtra* to the clearly defined concepts of a metaphysical doctrine is a very small step.

The early interpreters of the Bible were very outspoken about their methods of interpretation and about the way in which the various symbols of the scriptures were related to one another in a typological way. Even the allegorical method of interpretation is based in the last analysis on the fact of typology; for the outer, allegorical event must stand in a typological relation to the inner event, of which it is said to be an allegory. The term 'typology' itself is not customarily used in regard to Indian scriptures. But it is important to note that the ancient Indians were quite aware of the fact of typology. Again and again with reference to a symbol we come across the expression: 'he who knows that . . . '. This means that he who knows that such and such an event has such and such a meaning, will be no longer prey to ignorance. We are given to understand that he who knows that the *soma* that is poured into the fire, is the invididual self, and that the fire is the universal consciousness, will be able to celebrate the *soma* sacrifice more effectively, i.e. he will derive from it the benefit of a heightened realization of the eventual, highly desirable reunion of his real self with the universal spiritual substance. Or again we read that he who knows that a man's life cycle is like the various stages of a sacrificial performance need no longer enact the sacrificial performance itself. Instead of contemplating the sacrificial ritual, he only needs to contemplate his own life and he will derive the same benefit from such contemplation. The formula: 'He who knows that . . .' therefore explicitly draws attention to a typological relationship. One says 'this means that', if there is a typological relation between this and that. Now the failure to see such typological relations is due to ignorance. To an ignorant man, a *soma* sacrifice is simply a *soma* sacrifice. And he will fail to see that it is the type of the sacrifice of the empirical *ego* to the universal spirit, and that the elimination of all individual objects and all personal desires from his consciousness is the anti-type of the *soma* sacrifice. But the person who *knows*, will derive the corresponding benefit from this or any sacrifice. This knowledge

of typological relationships will help him to see in every sacrifice a type of the final anti-type, the identity of *ātman* and *Brahman*, of the individual self with the universal Self; an identity which is absolute consciousness without content. If there is anything less than absolute consciousness in our minds, if we are thinking of individual objects or existences or if we see ourselves as striving for any particular satisfaction of any particular bodily or psychic desire, this is due to ignorance, i.e. to the failure to understand typological relationships. If one does not know for example that every sacrifice is a life-cycle and every life-cycle a type of sacrifice in which the individual self is stripped of all those qualities that are individual and therefore stand in the way of its identity with the universal spirit, such ignorance will indeed prevent awareness of absolute consciousness. But knowledge, on the other hand, is knowledge that 'this means that', knowledge that a simple sacrifice is a type of the surrender of that which stands in the way of the identity of *ātman* and *Brahman*; and such knowledge is necessary to absolute consciousness.

In this symbol picture, then, knowledge is primarily knowledge of typological relationships. In this respect it plays a part analogous to the one played by it in the other symbol picture. But it lies in the nature of the case that in this symbol picture knowledge does more than assist in the elaboration and specification of symbols and more than help thus the emergence of abstract metaphysical thought. In this symbol picture, knowledge is not only a tool for the greater specification of symbols and for the formulation of metaphysical doctrines. It also plays that rôle which was played by love in the other picture. In the other picture we are taught by metaphysics that love is absolute, and the appearance of the picture vouchsafes the truth of the doctrine. But this knowledge by itself does not help us to love absolutely. We can only love absolutely by grace. And this itself is again a metaphysical insight into the character of the symbol picture. But in the second picture, metaphysics teaches us that consciousness is absolute. This is a piece of knowledge about the symbol picture; but this *knowledge itself will promote* absolute consciousness because it tells us that every act of sacrifice is a type of the identity of *ātman* and *Brahman*. In this way mere metaphysical knowledge

about the symbols is a powerful aid to experiencing the truth of the metaphysical doctrine that consciousness is absolute. Whereas in the other symbol picture, the mere knowledge that love is absolute, does not lead in any way to the experience of absolute love. In the case of the metaphysics of absolute love, knowledge of that metaphysics will not promote the experience; but knowledge will serve to identify and label the experience when it comes. But in the case of the metaphysics of absolute consciousness, knowledge will not only help to identify the experience and label it, it will also help to promote it. It is, in fact, its precondition as well as its *only* precondition.

3. The Interdependence of Relationship and Solitude

We come now to the last stage of the argument of this chapter. When we examined the metaphysical doctrines about Relationship and Solitude in an abstract way, we found that Relationship and Solitude stand in a vital and important relationship to one another and seem, in fact, to be interdependent. We can give no better proof of this contention than to show that the two doctrines in question are never found to be very far apart from one another: they co-exist in the sense that where the one is held, the other is held too. Not necessarily by the same person, of course. But we find that they frequently compete for support in the same community.

But there is more than a mere co-existence of the two metaphysical doctrines. Metaphysical doctrines, we have argued all along, are doctrines about symbol pictures. If we find a co-existence of two different doctrines we must also be able to find a co-existence of symbol pictures. In fact, as I shall try to show, it is much easier to find such co-existence of symbol pictures than to give concrete historical examples of the co-existence of the specific metaphysical doctrines in question. Similar symbol pictures do not necessarily give rise to similar metaphysical doctrines, and in many communities symbol pictures are cultivated without being summed up as metaphysical doctrines. In many cases metaphysical speculation is completely absent, and it happens often that the degree to which a symbol picture is specified depends not on metaphysical considerations but on political, social, and economic circumstances prevailing in the community in which a symbol picture

is cultivated. It is, therefore, not surprising to find that it is often not possible to show that the existence of a certain symbol picture is not accompanied by metaphysical thought, and that its existence does not necessarily involve a degree of specification of its various symbols sufficient to warrant much metaphysical abstraction. We must, therefore, content ourselves with the proof that the two kinds of symbol pictures which we have shown to have given rise to the two doctrines in question, tend to co-exist; even though we cannot always show that the final metaphysical abstractions performed on them are identical with the doctrines of Relationship and Solitude. The phenomenological study undertaken in the fourth chapter has revealed two basic kinds of symbol pictures. It must suffice for our argument that we are able to show the co-existence of the two kinds of symbol pictures. Even if the two pictures are not always summed up by the doctrines of Relationship and Solitude respectively, such co-existence will help us to understand the interdependence of the two metaphysical doctrines which could conceivably be derived from them.

Before we begin an exposition of the co-existence of the two kinds of symbol picture – a co-existence from which we will be entitled to infer the interdependence of the two metaphysical doctrines – we must specify what exactly we mean by co-existence. If the one symbol picture is cultivated in China and the other at the same time in North America, we can hardly speak of co-existence. Similarly, when the one is cultivated in Greece in the tenth century B.C. and the other in Greece in the twentieth century A.D., we are also not entitled to think of co-existence. The greatest proof of co-existence and therefore of the interdependence of the two metaphysical doctrines in question would be afforded by a demonstration that the two symbol pictures were being cultivated by one and the same person at one and the same time.

The most striking example of such co-existence in the same person at the same time (or more or less at the same time) of the two symbol pictures, is the case of Goethe's *Faust*. A careful reading of the two parts of the play will reveal that Mephistopheles is a completely ambivalent character. As the devil, he is opposed to God, the creator and sustainer of the universe.

But this devil opposes now one thing and now another, and the reader is therefore obliged to think that Goethe was also in two minds about God, for God is what the devil opposes. In the *Prologue*, the devil objects to the fact of man's existence, to the whole spectacle of creation. We are here clearly in a picture of the creation type. Later on, in the study, the devil again reveals himself as the force of negation, aiming at an annihilation of all created existences. But upon his re-appearance the following day, the devil changes his tune. He now ridicules Faust's reluctance to die and instead of welcoming Faust's curse upon property, wife and children and all attachments to the created world, he promises him a life of the wildest and most exotic pleasures and satisfactions. One would have expected a devil who is the son of chaos and the spirit of negation to rejoice in Faust's bitterness about God's creation. Mephistopheles, however, has now completely changed his character. He is now the spirit that encourages multiplication and who advances the splitting up of the original goodness and oneness into a myriad of senseless and momentary pleasures. We cannot but conclude that we are here in the midst of an emanation type picture where the devil encourages multiplication and God stands for oneness. And when we finally come to the pact where Faust promises to be enslaved to the devil in perpetuity if he should ever find complete satisfaction in any momentary pleasure, we have the final proof that by now Goethe has reversed his scheme of things.

In the end of the second part, however, Goethe quite consciously exploits this ambivalence of his picture. Faust finds the moment of complete satisfaction – and according to the emanation picture the devil has won his bet; for Faust is irretrievably and unredeemably anchored in the enjoyment of a moment of individuated existence, alienated therefore from the ground of being and oneness. But if one switches back to the first picture, the creation picture, one finds that whether Faust can be forgiven or not, depends on whether he has found complete satisfaction in the *right* sort of thing. It so happens that this satisfaction was found in fruitful work. Faust, by building dams and opening new living space to millions, has become a fellow worker with God. In terms of the creation picture he has, through his striving, done the very

thing the devil hates. He has, in fact, overcome the devilish tendency to deny, to dismantle and to re-establish chaos. Hence he is saved.

Another striking example of a similar kind of co-existence is the catholic Christian symbol picture. That picture is traditionally of the creation type – with a male god as creator and incarnate as a man. But the image of a female goddess has always managed to intrude itself into it. Already in the Old Testament literature one can detect traces of a female image, of 'divine wisdom'. And with the story of Jesus' birth, there was an opportunity for the growth of the worship of Mary, the virgin. Theological reasoning and the demands of consistency and logic have tried to keep her in the background. But the need for symbolization proved stronger and stronger. And from the earliest times of the cultivation of a specifically 'Christian' symbol picture one can detect the growing importance of that female figure, the Mother of God. Slowly at first and cautiously, but quite openly later on, the Church authorities had to concede not only the inclusion of this symbol in the picture, but also had to provide theological reasons for exalting her place in that picture more and more. It is very improbable that the demands of logical consistency in a symbol picture can ever be played down sufficiently for the mother image to be placed right into the centre of a creation type symbol picture. But the importance of the Virgin in that symbol picture is undeniable and therefore proof of a certain degree of what we have called co-existence. It is vain to expect more. We must, therefore, be reasonable and willing to accept as a proof something less than complete co-existence.

I think we are entitled to speak of co-existence when a variety of different conditions are fulfilled. We can certainly speak of co-existence when one and the same text, describing or purporting to describe more or less the same picture, is subject or can be subjected, to two different interpretations, one interpretation belonging to the metaphysics of Relationship and the other to the metaphysics of Solitude. We can also speak of co-existence when the two different symbol pictures compete with one another in one and the same community at more or less the same time. If such competition runs parallel to a class struggle, this is no proof of co-existence.

But when, for instance, one writer campaigns for the rejection of a traditional picture and wishes to supplant it by another one, we are entitled to call this a kind of inverted co-existence. This is proof that one picture has become too exclusive, and that the other one, by way of reaction, has come to the fore. This sort of thing still shows the interdependence of the two pictures.

Co-existence, then, in this context does not only mean a peaceful connection between the two trends in close spatial and temporal proximity, but also that the one trend sooner or later provokes the emergence of the other and that a significant tension ensues between the two. I would now like to examine five examples of such co-existence.

In the course of this examination we will find that the conflict between the two symbol pictures can manifest itself in a variety of ways. We will find, for instance, that it can take the shape of an outright conflict between two different symbol pictures. This, for example, was the case when Plato rejected the traditional Homeric mythologies. In other cases we will find, as for instance in medieval India, that the conflict concerns the symbol picture itself only to a lesser degree and is fought out most clearly over the different interpretations put upon it. Both Ramanuja and Sankara believed that their different metaphysical doctrines were abstracted more or less from the same symbol picture. In fact, their opposing metaphysical views were expressed as commentaries on the same aphorisms, known as the *Brahma Sūtra*. And again, among the early Christians we will find that the conflict took yet a different form. The two opposing groups, the gnostics and the 'orthodox' Christians, agreed in their acceptance of one part of the symbol picture, the story of Jesus, though the gnostics reported that story in a number of texts that differed slightly from, and were not included among, the stories that came to form the New Testament. The conflict resulted from the fact that the gnostics rejected the symbol picture contained in the Old Testament, and attempted to replace it by a picture of the emanation type. The orthodox Christians, on the other hand, insisted upon linking the story of Jesus to the symbol picture of the Old Testament, thus providing a back-drop for it which was of the creation type. And finally we have the case of the

emergence of Kabbalism in medieval Judaism. The Kabbalists sought to maintain the old Jewish symbol picture in all respects. But they developed a new method of interpretation through which the traditional picture began to appear in an altogether new shape. Whatever the form of the conflict, we find that in each of these cases there is a kind of vital co-existence. The protagonists of the two symbol pictures take cognisance of each other, and in each case the emergence of the one symbol picture represents a reaction against the one-sided cultivation of the other. And this fact proves that the two symbol pictures are vitally relevant to each other.

The first example I wish to consider is taken from ancient Greece. There we can observe the co-existence of two different types of cult. There is firstly the cult of well-defined and circumscribed deities, which tended to be systematized by the more or less unified theology of the Homeric poems. All the various deities worshipped in various places came gradually to be assimilated to, and identified with, the Homeric deities. The symbol picture which was thus developed showed unmistakable signs of belonging to the 'creation' type. The gods presided over men and their lives; and human endeavour was directed towards the establishment of right relationships with these deities. It is true that there were echoes of a different symbol picture; even the Homeric theology's various origin myths show unmistakable signs of being of the emanation kind; and the fact that the deities in Homer occupy subordinate positions, and are by no means all-powerful and are themselves subject to certain 'destinies', proves that the other symbols had not been completely crowded out. But for the rest, Homeric theology considers life on earth a desirable destiny and stresses the need for man to find the right relationship, in due humility, to the gods.

Side by side with the Homeric picture and its piety, there emerged the Orphic and/or Dionysian picture and its form of piety. I will not go into the vexed question of origin and of the relationship between the two kinds of cults, Orphic and Dionysian. It suffices for our purposes to observe that in every respect the Dionysian and Orphic cults are parts of the emanation symbol picture. In Homeric theology, the body of man had been man's ornament, and his natural domicile. In the

other cult, it becomes the soul's tomb. Life on earth is now an exile, a separation from the real form of the soul's existence; and the various cultic performances and ecstatic dances have as their purpose the reabsorption of the individual into an original oneness, rather than the cultivation of a right relationship with the gods. It has been rightly observed that the emergence of the Orphic and Dionysian cults represents a reversal of values in ancient Greece. This reversal is nowhere better illustrated than in the report of Herodotus (V, 4) that the inhabitants of Thrace had a strange custom: they greeted their new-born infants with tears and joyously took leave of their dead. This is, of course, in complete contrast to the Homeric evaluation of life and death, and eventually found its expression on a more sophisticated level in the verses of Sophocles:

> The best thing is not ever to have been born. But once a man has been born, by far the next best thing for him is to return as fast as possible to the place from which he came.*

Similarly Euripides doubted whether to live is not to die; and to die is not to live.

We have here clear evidence of the way in which a symbol picture of the emanation type, in which all individual existence appeared as a departure from the blissful norm, emerged side by side with the symbol picture that came close to the creation type. In the latter, individual existences were the purpose of creation and essentially joyful, provided they did not incur the wrath of divine powers through failure to observe the laws proper to their station.

The best known instance of a purely intellectual conflict between these two symbol pictures is Plato's polemic against Homer. Plato argued that Homer presented the gods in too human a fashion; that he was lacking in respect for the gods, etc. But there is no doubt that what he really meant to do was to campaign against the valuations enshrined in Homeric symbol pictures and in favour of the Orphic cults. Whether the myths which Plato himself accepted belong, historically speaking, to Orphism or not, is a much debated question. But

* *Oedipus at Colonus*, 1225 sqq.

it is fairly clear that they are of a type that *could* well belong to the Orphic symbol picture. Plato's conception of the exile of the soul on earth and its longing for an ascent to the realm of the pure Idea in which there are no individual differences of any kind, must be classified as an emanation picture; and the whole image of the cave belongs to the same type.

In ancient Greece, then, we find a genuine conflict between two symbol pictures. But as time went on, attempts were made to bridge that conflict and to interpret, for instance, the Homeric symbols in terms of the metaphysics developed by Plato about the Orphic symbol picture. The most striking instance of this development is the view of Porphyry and various other, later Neo-Platonists, who believed that Homer's grotto was a kind of Platonic cave and should be interpreted accordingly.

The grotto of the Nymphs was placed by Homer in the vicinity of Phorkys. It was there that Ulysses hid the presents of the Phaeacians. Porphyry argued that both the nymphs and the bees in that grotto, which represents the material world, are souls. The bees take pleasure in producing honey and in surrounding themselves thus with a material body – but equally take pleasure in ridding themselves of these carnal adjuncts and in returning to their true fatherland. As F. Buffiere in his long study of the fortunes of Homeric myths has observed, Plato himself had refused to use Homeric tales. But his followers, while remaining more or less directly true to his metaphysical conception, prefer to illustrate these conceptions by, or derive them from, older and more traditionally acceptable lore. It is here, then, that we find not a rejection of the Homeric picture, but a reinterpretation of it in conformity with a metaphysics that was originally derived from, or inspired by, a totally different symbol picture.

The second example concerns the well known difference of opinion between Sankara and Ramanuja as to what is the correct metaphysical import of the picture described in the *Brahma Sūtra*. As the latter was a summary of doctrines and images, contained in the *Upanishads*, we must conclude that the difference of opinion did not only concern the *Brahma Sūtra*, but the whole symbol picture traditionally cultivated in ancient and medieval India.

We have already given a description of Sankara's metaphysics, and have argued that it is an example of the metaphysics of pure and absolute consciousness. Ramanuja, on the other hand, came forward with a different metaphysics which stressed that the individual self is never fully absorbed by *Brahman*, but even in the state of complete enlightenment, in which all ignorance is dispelled, remains other than *Brahman*. In this metaphysics, relationship remains basic, and great stress is laid on the devotional and loving nature of that relationship.

According to Ramanuja, Sankara was quite right when he insisted against earlier doctrines that the ground of all being is only one – not a confluence of two totally different principles like *prakṛiti* and the *purusha*. *Brahman* emits the world in its multiplicity, rules it and retracts it. The various parts of the symbol picture were quite outspoken on this and did not allow of an interpretation other than that. It would have been quite wrong to maintain that *Brahman* creates the world for a providential purpose. To Ramanuja, as for Sankara, the origin of the world is God's play or sport.

But here the similarities end. To Ramanuja, *Brahman* is not a homogeneous nature, so that all multiplicity that comes into being is purely illusory and due to *māyā* and *avidyā* respectively. *Brahman* contains within himself the germs of all existent beings. Hence the individual soul that sprouts forth is really individual and separate from the Godhead. To Sankara, the Godhead itself, being something separate, is an illusion and therefore unreal. Not so to Ramanuja. When everything has sprouted, he seems to be saying, there is still left at the centre, God. And since none of the individual existences are illusions or mere individual appearances of the primeval oneness of pure and undifferentiated consciousness, they stand essentially in a relationship to God Who has remained at the centre. The soul enjoys an individual and separate existence. When the final release comes, the soul is merged, according to Sankara, into absolute consciousness, there being left no trace of relationship. According to Ramanuja, such release means the soul's transfer from a state on earth to a state of bliss where it is inside *Brahman*, and yet distinct – perhaps like an embryo in a womb.

With this metaphysical summary, Ramanuja clearly establishes the importance of Relationship, for he conceives the proper relation between God and the individual soul to be one of love, of devotion, of *bhakti*. And just as the devotee loves God, so God loves the devotee and extends a helping hand to him. From time to time, and here Ramanuja leans heavily upon the Krishna cult, God becomes incarnate in order to restore the right relationships among men and between God and men, thus extending His grace to mankind.

At the risk of digressing, I would like to state at this point why I have not seen fit to choose this metaphysics as an example of the way in which the metaphysics of Relationship can be justified. On the face of it, we have here a much neater example of how the metaphysics of Relationship emerges from a symbol picture than the one provided above. For Ramanuja, like Sankara, draws these metaphysical summaries from the highly specified symbol picture, described in the *Brahma Sūtra* – so much so that the points of transition from symbol to doctrine are almost imperceptible. But there is a very weighty reason why I have not chosen Ramanuja as an illustration of the metaphysics of Relationship. Working on a traditional Indian symbol picture, Ramanuja was forced to leave out two doctrines that are quite essential to a proper metaphysics of Relationship. He had to leave them out, because there simply is not the remotest trace of any evidence for them in that symbol picture. The first concerns symbols of origin and the second symbols of sacrifice. Even Ramanuja who held that God is distinct from individual souls, could not really say that the latter were created by God. He had to remain true to the symbol picture, and concluded that they emanated. As a result, he could not form a conception of divine providence, launching men upon a path on which they were associated with God in further creation and in building up the universe and, always following God's plan, multiplying their seeds. To Ramanuja who was tied to the various images of emanation provided by Indian myth, the world of separate, though real, individual existences, emanated as God's play (*līlā*). For the same reason, he failed to reach a genuine understanding of the enormity of the sacrifice (and of the agony it caused) that was involved in the process of ordering the created world towards God.

He realized, insisting on the reality of separateness of soul from God, the necessity for grace and the necessity of the devotee's love. But as the world had emanated and as it was therefore quite natural for it to be retracted by, or reabsorbed into, *Brahman*, the sacrificial act could not be one that involved agony. For a return to the ground of being, even it if meant a return in which separateness and relationship would be safeguarded, was nothing 'unnatural', nothing that would involve the dismantling of impulses that had purposefully been created and that were as much part of God's handiwork as absolute love itself.

Returning to our proper theme, the question must then *inevitably* arise why Ramanuja strove to provide such a *different interpretation* of the same texts. In answer we can point to the fact that during the centuries preceding the age of Ramanuja there had developed in India a mythology and a a cult in which the accent had been on God's love and man's devotion to God. That mythology and that cult were well known to Sankara; but he did not care to cultivate it. On the contrary, through his metaphysics he helped to discredit it. And the position that ensued is not altogether dissimilar to the position that had developed in Greece many centuries before. The mythology and cult in question were those of the *Bhāgavatas*, the worshippers of *Vāsudeva*, who was identified with Vishnu and Krishna. This mythology and cult go back at least to the first century before Christ. It probably owed something to later Buddhism, for the conception of the *Bodhisattva*, who out of love and compassion refuses enlightenment for himself until he has extended a helping hand to save others, is a true figure of love and compassion. The new form of devotion seems to have spread from the Tamil country where it originated. Before long it affected not only the devotees of Vishnu, but also those of Siva. The form of worship propagated by these sects was theistic and founded upon *bhakti*, the loving devotion of the worshipper to the deity. There is no point in giving a detailed description of this cult and its mythology. But it seems clear that Ramanuja was deeply indebted to it and brought his attachment to it to bear upon his interpretation of the *Brahma Sūtra*. But since he endeavoured to see the whole of the traditional symbol picture in terms of

his insights, we are entitled to regard his reaction against *Sankara as an example of co-existence. For the whole historical* situation from which Ramanuja developed was a clear case of reaction against the one-sided metaphysics of absolute consciousness propounded by Sankara. The gradual emergence of the *bhakti* cults and Ramanuja's metaphysics of Relationship must, therefore, not be seen as a separate phenomenon, but as a conscious attempt at restoring the balance; as a conscious product of an awareness of the interdependence of Relationship and Solitude.

The next example is taken from the first centuries of our era. When one is perusing the documents relating to the early history of Christianity, one will be struck very clearly by the fact that, apart from all minor controversies among Christians, there was one basic controversy. And this controversy concerned the symbol picture that was to be cultivated in a Christian community. On one side there were those who wanted to accept the Old Testament and add to it the Gospels in one form or another; and on the other side there were those who wanted the story of Jesus, but not the Old Testament, or if so, only in a very modified form. The conflict between the two symbol pictures was precisely a conflict between a symbol picture of the creation type and a symbol picture of the emanation type. The Old Testament belonged without doubt to the first kind. And all those people who preferred a symbol picture of the second kind were compelled to work for its rejection. And they not only rejected the Old Testament but provided a large number of often quite extravagant mythologies in order to replace the creation story of the Old Testament by an emanation story. They drew on a wide variety of sources for their emanation mythology, which ranges from the fundamental alterations introduced by Marcion into Genesis to the fully fledged, totally unbiblical myths of a Valentinian. Historians have debated whether these people all ought to be called Gnostics and whether Gnosticism is in fact a pre-Christian or a post-Christian phenomenon. We do not mean to take part in these debates. But I think there is some justification for giving a common label to all those that accepted the stories about Jesus, but rejected the creation myth of the Old Testament.

The story of Jesus set in an Old Testament creation symbol picture tends towards one meaning, i.e. towards a metaphysics of Relationship and of absolute love. The same story, set against a background of a Gnostic emanation picture, acquires a completely different meaning and tends towards the evolution of a metaphysics of Solitude though not necessarily towards one of absolute consciousness. Seen against the background of an emanation picture, Jesus becomes an emissary of light, an emissary from the divine ground of being into the world of darkness and matter. His task is to assist in the disentanglement of the sparks of light that have lost their way into the world of matter and have become imprisoned there. The purpose of his mission is to promote more quickly than could otherwise have been the case the reabsorption of light into the centre from which it had originally departed. In such a symbol picture we find the unmistakable characteristics of the emanation picture, that is the identification of the origin of the world and of all individuation with the fall, with the subdivisions that take the place, in one way or another, of the full oneness of God. In the other symbol picture, in which the story of Jesus is linked to the Old Testament, we find an equally unmistakable feature of the creation picture: the creation of the world and the origin of individual beings is *not* identified with the origin of the world itself, but is considered as something good. Hence Jesus is not seen as the emissary sent to abolish relationship; but as the act of all-forgiving love that helps men to re-establish the right relationship between Creator and creature.

The traces of this conflict are clearly to be seen in the composition of the four Gospels as they have eventually been canonically established and come down to us. The conflict itself was never fully ironed out within the Christian communities themselves. And the canonically received Gospel stories bear witness to this lack of a final clear-cut decision in favour of the one or the other symbol picture. Broadly speaking, the creation symbol picture prevailed, as is proved by the acceptance of the Old Testament; but the reception of St John's story, for example, shows that people had just sufficient sympathy with the other symbol picture not to wish to exclude it altogether. Hence the canonically established symbol picture of the Christian Church is not an unequivocal one: basically it

belongs to the creation type. But there are some features in it which one might class more conveniently with the emanation type. And this is one of the reasons why metaphysical speculation (or should we say, in deference to conventional terminology, theological speculation?) among Christians is on the whole tending towards the metaphysics of Relationship; but can also show tendencies towards the metaphysics of Solitude, in which the ultimate reality is seen as a unification of the individual soul with God.

The next example is taken from the history of Islam. The Muslim symbol picture is not very different from that of the Old Testament. And the highly specified symbols that were added to it at the time of Mahomed are little more than very specific definitions of the broader, earlier symbols. The picture belongs clearly to the creation type: God made men; and the right relationship between Creator and creature is to be found in an unconditional and complete surrender to the inscrutable divine will. Mahomed's elaboration of the Old Testament picture was designed to define beyond the slightest possibility of doubt the transcendence of God and the unbridgeable gulf that separates man from Him. In consequence, Mahomed also removed the very last traces of expiation and supplication from the sacrificial ritual. To the Muslim, sacrifice is prayer; and prayer is a complete surrender to the will of God. These specifications of the symbols are of an unbelievably sophisticated simplicity.

But it did not take long for some people to grope for the other symbol picture. Within the bosom of Muslim communities there emerged the Sufis. The Sufis were practising mystics. If one examines the images which they put forward and in terms of which they explained their practices one finds that they belong to the emanation picture. For the Sufi did not seek to surrender his will to that of God and live in humble acceptance of the preordained destiny, but sought a reunification of the individual soul with God. He would not abide by the relationship and merely seek to make it a right one, but endeavoured to abolish the relationship. This imagery was so incompatible with that received among the Muslim communities that Sufism met with much hostility. Nevertheless, in Islam, Sufism is the emergence of a symbol picture which Mahomed and his followers had taken great care to exclude. The

Muslim picture was so highly specified that the Sufis had to go to considerable lengths in order to turn it into an emanation picture. They insisted, for instance, that Mahomed was not God's prophet, but was identical with God's creative word 'through whom all things are made'. Keeping little but the names, and borrowing heavily from Neo-Platonism, they saw the soul as a splinter of the divine world, lost in the world and yearning to be reassembled to the divine oneness.

The last example I wish to discuss is taken from the history of medieval Judaism. The Jews had cultivated until the Middle Ages a very exclusively creation symbol picture. Their rejection of the story of Jesus was, in so far as it was not based upon political and social vicissitudes, due to their suspicion that the story of Jesus incorporated too many symbols that could easily be taken to belong to the other kind of symbol picture. For if God appeared in this world, the world could not be wholly other than Him. The image of the Incarnation was to them the thin end of the wedge. It could never really be reconciled and made to cohere with the images of God's transcendence and those of the incontestable relationship between Creator and creature. If it were introduced into the picture, the transcendentality of God would become weakened to the point where it might be made to look like an immanence – and from that image to an emanation picture is only a short step. There was only one Jewish community, so it would seem, who interested themselves in the story of Jesus, the Ebionites. They saw in Jesus a supreme kind of *saddiq*, who fulfilled the law to perfection and reformed it in those respects that had already been indicated as standing in need of reform by the prophets. Jesus was a human being, equipped through baptism by God with special powers, but he was in no sense a divine being himself. They expected an early return of Jesus who would inaugurate the last judgement upon the living and the dead. Those communities that had seen Jesus as the Son of God, when they were disappointed in their *parousia* expectation, persuaded themselves without difficulty that the supernatural grace that had flown into the world through His sacrificial death would still be available. Not so the Ebionites. Having refused to see in Jesus the Son of God, their faith began to flag when the *parousia* came to be further and further

delayed. And therefore the Ebionite community disappeared during the fourth and fifth centuries.

Having successfully resisted the intrusion into their symbol pictures of images likely to weaken the creation pattern, the Jews experienced during the Middle Ages a full reaction against that creation picture which their resistance to Jesus Christ had so fully preserved. For this is exactly what the emergence of the Kabbalistic tradition was. The symbol picture of the Kabbalah, no matter in which of its many varieties one considers it, was clearly a picture of the emanation type. And in this reaction against the creation picture we have one of the most perfect examples of co-existence. For, firstly, there is no doubt that the two symbol pictures competed for attention in one and the same community at one and the same time. And, secondly, it is equally clear that the Kabbalists strained their intellectual ingenuity to the very utmost in order to be able to prove that the symbol picture they cultivated was not of their invention, but had been hidden all along under the superficial cover of the traditionally cultivated Jewish symbols. They insisted, for instance, that the Torah had many different meanings and that the traditional meaning, according to which it was a set of commandments issued by the God who had created the world, was only a temporary assembly of the words and letters of which it was composed. This temporary assembly had been necessitated by the fall and would cease to have relevance after redemption. In the meantime it behoved philosophers to probe beneath that meaning and to discover that a suitable rearrangement of these letters and words would reveal the true nature of God. Having established this, they proceeded to develop a symbol picture which was beyond shadow of doubt an emanation picture. In this picture God is the Hidden Root, the *En-Sof*, of which nothing can be said. But the Hidden Root manifests itself in a variety of creative powers, each one representing a different stage in the unfolding of the divine being and being traceable or visible as the many events and objects of the world.

G. Scholem, to whom we are indebted for the first purely objective history of the development of these ideas, has argued that they represent a re-emergence of the mythical in Judaism. He considers that the emanation picture is mythical in a sense

in which the creation picture is not. The emanation picture is certainly distinct from the creation picture. And the re-emergence of the former among medieval Jews is certainly a reaction against the exclusive cultivation of the latter. But since we have, all along, contrasted both the creation and the emanation picture to the positive picture, the acceptance of Scholem's terminology at this stage of the argument would be seriously misleading. We should, therefore, content ourselves with the observation that in medieval Judaism two different mythologies were in competition with one another. The competition did not really abate until the beginning of the Enlightenment when the growth of liberal Judaism began to regard the old creation picture as well as the Kabbalistic emanation picture with outspoken scepticism, as figments of the superstitious fantasy of man.

It is worth noting, however, that there is one important distinction between the Kabbalistic emanation picture and almost all other emanation pictures we have discussed. Since the Kabbalists were determined to prove that their picture resulted from a re-reading and re-interpretation of the traditional Jewish symbol picture, they found that there was one image that proved stubborn. In the traditional picture, God had made the world and saw that it was good. If the process of creation could be remodelled to be a process of emanation, it was not possible to identify this emanation with a fall. In almost all other emanation pictures, we have observed, the beginning of multiplication is seen as the beginning of a disturbance, and evil is therefore equated with the mere process of multiplication. Not so in the Kabbalistic emanation picture. In that picture the beginning of subdivision and multiplication could not itself be seen as something evil. And hence we find that the Kabbalists always tend to present the very process of emanation as a process due to the fullness and goodness of God. They see, therefore, the various individual manifestations not as something that flees from or strives away from the godhead or as something inferior to it. Every partial and limited existence is a partial and limited manifestation of God. He manifests himself in a variety of limited existences; but nothing can be alienated from Him and no individual existence is other than the *En-Sof*. All multiplication is, therefore, nothing

else than an oblique way of the revelation of the One. For the One itself cannot be seen or grasped. But the totality of individual existences and processes, provided they are properly classified and related to one another, can be surveyed.

It is important to stress this difference between the Kabbalistic and the, say, Gnostic, emanation pictures. For the metaphysical summaries of the one must necessarily differ from the metaphysical summaries of the other, even though it is true that traces of the Gnostic conception that multiplication is essentially an alienation from the godhead can be found among Kabbalists.

The fact of co-existence both in mythology and in doctrine has, of course, often been remarked upon. But too frequently it is subject to what seems to me a wrong interpretation. Many writers (e.g. R. Guénon, F. Shuon, A. Coomaraswamy, A. Huxley, A. W. Watts) maintain that the only genuine mythology and the only genuine doctrine is that of the emanation picture, where there is no final dualism between Creator and creature; where there is no ultimate premium on morality and where there is recognition of the illusoriness of all individual existence. They argue that this picture and the doctrine that pertains to it is genuinely esoteric. They admit, however, that the other picture, the creation picture and the doctrines that pertain to it, exist. They maintain that that picture and its doctrines are exoteric. By this they mean that for vulgar and uneducated people the whole truth of non-individuality and oneness cannot be made comprehensible and that such people have and must content themselves with a very relative half-truth, that is with the relative half-truth that is contained in the creation picture and its metaphysics. This arbitrary distinction is unfortunately today a comparatively popular practice – if it is not paradoxical to describe an esoteric doctrine as popular. I find it impossible to see any grounds for its justification. In view of what we have said above about the need for Relationship in Solitude; and for Solitude in Relationship, it is imperative to understand that the two pictures and their metaphysical interpretations are genuinely co-existent and of genuinely equal importance. The attempt to consider one the real truth and the other a cheap vulgarization cannot but have disastrous consequences in ethics. For if such an attempt leaves Solitude as the only ultimate ethical value it will prove self-defeating (see pp. 28–31 above).

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ETHICS

It remains for us to show the connection between the conclusions arrived at in Chapters Three to Six and the arguments with which we have dealt in Chapters One and Two. In the earlier chapters I have argued that the science of ethics is a knowledge of good and evil, and that we need such knowledge in order to be able to distinguish what is good, i.e. what we ought to do, from what is evil, i.e. from what we ought not to do. If ethical judgements have no such cognitive value, we will be in a position in which we will have to concede everybody the right to do anything at all. It is true that not even the cognitive value of ethical judgements enables us to find a suitable reply to the man who says that he knows what is good but that he chooses not to do it. But if ethical judgements have a cognitive value, we can at least insist that such a man acts against his knowledge; whereas, if ethical judgements have no such cognitive value, we cannot even claim that his actions are not in keeping with his knowledge.

We have then seen that a knowledge of the good cannot be derived from the mere observation of what people are doing. People do both good and evil, and the mere observation that most people do a certain thing or want a certain thing does not in any way establish that that thing is good. This insight has led us to the conclusion that when we speak of ethical knowledge we must mean a knowledge of human nature, but of a human nature that is revealed to us in a special way. For if we mean by a knowledge of human nature merely a knowledge of what men do and how they behave, such knowledge of human nature would not include a knowledge of what is good. We require, therefore, a picture of human nature that is not simply a positive picture of how people act and behave. We require a picture of human nature that will include values, i.e. that

will include features that are becoming and fitting, and in which certain acts will bear the unmistakable stamp of being right.

It appears, therefore, that knowledge of what is good is not knowledge about the positive picture of human nature, but a knowledge about a different picture of human nature. And since such knowledge is not about the positive picture, I have called such knowledge metaphysical knowledge. But metaphysical knowledge is not necessary or *a priori* knowledge. It is a very ordinary, empirical, *a posteriori* knowledge of the symbol picture, i.e. of those human acts and that behaviour that appears when field B is seen as a function of events in field A; when the events of nature are ordered not in a natural way, but in a symbolic way; when nature becomes a system of symbols that indicate states of consciousness. We found then that many metaphysical doctrines, including the one about goodness, are doctrines about the symbol picture. And in conclusion we are entitled to say that the judgements that absolute love is good and that absolute consciousness is good, are metaphysical doctrines about the symbol picture – or about two different symbol pictures which we saw always to stand in a vital relationship to one another.

In these symbol pictures, Relationship and Solitude appear not only as facts, but also in such a position that they are clearly marked as values. They appear as values because the symbol pictures show that all behaviour directed to them as goals is fitting and natural behaviour. We term it good because absolute love and absolute consciousness are in such a place in the picture that it is fitting and appropriate that all behaviour should be directed to them as goals – towards Relationship in the creation picture, and towards Solitude in the emanation picture. Hence we can, by observing the symbol pictures, not only form the judgement that love and consciousness can be absolute, but also that absolute love and absolute consciousness are good. Both statements are statements of fact. And as the latter statement is at the same time an ethical judgement we are now in a position to say that we have an ethical judgement with a cognitive value. A man may well refuse to do what we know to be the good. But he cannot now maintain that he may do anything he likes because one thing is as good

as any other. He may, if he chooses, refuse to do what he ought to do. But we can point out to him that in such a case he refuses to avail himself of the best knowledge that is available. The discovery of a picture of the world that exhibits value has at least assured us that only the decision whether we do good or evil is arbitrary; but that the knowledge of the good itself (i.e. of what we ought to do) is not arbitrary.

We must now turn to the question whether we have found a naturalistic basis for ethics and whether, in doing so, we have committed the naturalistic fallacy. It will be recalled that the naturalistic fallacy is committed whenever values are inferred from facts, whenever something is designated as good *because* people actually desire it or tend to aim at it. When we are looking at the symbol picture, we find agents that perform acts of sacrifice and other forms of ritual that are directed towards the attainment of absolute love and absolute consciousness. But it is not for *that* reason that we term love and consciousness to be good. Hence we are not committing the naturalistic fallacy. The reason why we call love and consciousness good is that we find them in a certain central position in the symbol pictures; and we see, as a matter of fact and not as a matter of preference, that that position makes all behaviour aimed at their attainment fitting and natural behaviour.

It is nevertheless true that in this argument we are inferring values from facts, for we are designating certain facts as valuable. But there is nothing fallacious in this argument because the facts themselves are value-charged. The value judgements are, after all, not about the positive picture, that is about a picture which is compiled by statistical enumeration and an observation in which everything finds a place provided it can be seen as functionally dependent on something else. The value judgements, on the contrary, are about the symbol picture. And that picture is not compiled according to the neutral criterion that all those events, and only those events, that are functionally dependent on other events, find a place in it. In other words, in the compilation of the symbol picture the naturalistic method has been abandoned. We have, therefore, obtained in the symbol picture a somewhat non-naturalistic picture. And therefore we are not guilty of the naturalistic

fallacy when we see in the symbol picture certain facts as values. For we have argued in the first chapter that the naturalistic fallacy is committed in an inference from facts to values *only* to the extent to which the facts in question are natural facts. If they are, as is the case in the symbol picture, partly or wholly non-natural facts, an inference from them to values is not a fallacy.

It is indeed possible to state with precision the reasons why the facts that appear in the symbol picture are value-charged. I have argued above, and it is impossible to overstress the importance of that argument, that facts of the origin and of the end of the world cannot possibly find a place in the positive picture. Since only those facts that are functionally related to other facts can find a place in the positive picture, it is true by definition that neither the beginning nor the end of the world can be part of a positive picture. In the symbol picture, however, stories relating both the beginning and the end can be found with the greatest frequency. As a result, all processes, events and developments in the symbol picture can be, and in fact are, related both to the beginning and to the end of things. In this sense they all acquire a purposiveness and fittingness which no fact that appears in the positive picture can ever have. As far as man himself is concerned, he will appear in the symbol picture as a being to whom certain actions are becoming and to whom certain other actions are not becoming. If one looks at him in the symbol picture, one will, in other words, be able to assess his potentialities by taking one's bearings both from the beginning of the world and from the end of the world. And if these potentialities are established, one will be able to state under what conditions he departs from his true path. And if one can state *that*, one has formed a value judgement which has a clear cognitive value.

It is only fair to mention that for a long time it has been considered perfectly feasible to ascertain man's (or, for that matter, any other being's) potentialities in terms of the positive picture. It was then considered possible to make judgements as to the true and proper path of man according as to whether he realized or failed to realize these potentialities. But logical analysis shows that it is not really feasible to make statements about man's potentialities in terms of the positive

picture. In the positive picture we can only ascertain at any one moment what is actually the case. If we ascertain that a newborn baby has certain possibilities, we do no more than say that since all babies in the past have been known to develop along certain paths, this baby will develop along the same paths. If it then should turn out that that baby does not, we will have no other choice than to conclude that that baby was not a baby. We will, however, not be able to say that that baby ought to have developed along the paths laid down and that its failure to do so was a moral failure. In other words, in the positive picture every statement of potentialities of certain beings is no more than an attempt to define them. If we say that a baby has certain potentialities, we do no more than declare that we will call a certain being a baby *if* it develops along certain lines. If it fails to develop along those lines, we have simply to confess that we have made an error of judgement. What we thought was a baby was, in fact, *not* a baby. But there the matter must rest. In the symbol picture, on the other hand, where we can determine potentialities in relation to the beginning and the end of the world and hence according to the purpose of the existence of the being in question, a statement of potentialities will indeed be a statement of what is fit and proper; and not merely a definition. But in the symbol picture we know of the purpose of space by the manner in which it came into being and the manner by which it ceases to exist; and we know equally of the purpose of time by the manner in which the sacrifices are performed.

It is, therefore, possible, when surveying the two kinds of symbol pictures we have described, to arrive at a proper system of ethics that has cognitive value. In the creation picture, it is fit and becoming to man to be the fellow worker of God and to exercise those faculties with which God has endowed him. But since the ultimate reality of the cosmic order is perfect love, man must break and surrender all those impulses, even though they form part of creation, which stand in the way of perfect love or are likely to cloud it. It is proper that such surrender should be sacrificial and painful, and that he should learn to love others with a completely self-denying and self-less love.

In the emanation picture it is becoming to man to seek

a complete reabsorption in the primeval ground of being. This reabsorption must reach the point where all relationship, all identity, and all individuality is completely wiped out. All creativeness and all individuation are so many accretions to the ground of being or so many alienations from that ground. The only proper form of existence is one of complete detachment and solitude – but of a solitude that has ceased to be a state of loneliness. For as long as it is loneliness, it is bound up with an awareness of other beings to whom one is attached and for whom one is longing. This state of solitude must be reached by a gradual dismantling of all attachments and of all consciousness of individual beings and objects. Such dismantling, although it involves a surrender, ought not to involve pain. For if one has the right knowledge that the only reality is an undifferentiated state of being and oneness, one would be foolish if one derived pleasure from any personal attachment to a finite object or an individual desire. Hence the surrender of attachment, if accompanied by the right knowledge of the proper condition of being, should not be painful, but lead to an experience of blissful solitude.

It may seem surprising that one should find that, symbolically, the world can appear in two such completely different guises. For the creation picture, in a sense, is centrifugal; and the emanation picture, centripetal. One might well ask oneself how it is possible that the world should appear in two such diametrically opposite forms. As we have seen, there is no comparable incompatibility between the positive picture and any one of the two possible symbol pictures. But there is a clear incompatibility between the two symbol pictures.

I do not think it possible to give a satisfactory ontological answer to this peculiar problem, except in a very roundabout way. If one starts at the other end and compares the ethical values that are derived from the two symbol pictures, one will discover a clear sense in this incompatibility. If one seeks Relationship, we found, one must pursue Solitude; and if one seeks Solitude, one must pursue Relationship. One can never get away from this psychological paradox, for the pursuit of any one of these values is self-defeating unless it is based upon the cultivation of the other. From this observation we are forced to the conclusion that the two respective symbol

pictures, though apparently incompatible appearances of the world, sustain one another. And they sustain one another precisely in the sense in which the corresponding feeling-states which they symbolize sustain one another. For if they did not sustain one another, there would be no reason why the pursuit of the one value should have to be grounded upon the pursuit of the other – and the other way round. Ontologically speaking, we can therefore only say this: the two symbol pictures look indeed like two incompatible appearances of the World. But they symbolize two sets of feeling-states (i.e. two sets of events in A) which, though contradictory, sustain one another. The one set, so to speak, pushes forth the other; and vice versa. The incompatibility must therefore be traced into field A. In that field it simply is an incompatibility, but not one of the kind that is logically inconceivable; or one of which one would say that of two contradictory sets of feeling-states only one can be the case; and of the two corresponding propositions, only one can be true. In fact, the question of truth does not even arise. We are simply faced here with events that occur and whose quality is such that they are symbolized in two different ways that are incompatible appearances of the World. If one understands the psychology of the situation, one need not be puzzled by the fact that the two possible symbol pictures contradict one another.

If one looks at man as he appears in the positive picture, one will find that he is always subject to a certain compulsion. If someone hits him, he can either hit back or report the offender to the police or run as fast as he can. Any of these actions would be considered appropriate. But if he should kneel down and extend his other cheek, one would conclude that he was prey to a certain irrationality. In the terms of the positive picture in which one is looking at him, such an act would be as 'inadequate' a response to being hit as whistling or eating soup. In the positive picture every action is considered to have certain consequences. In this way, an offender is put into jail – and there are various 'adequate' ways in which such a jail sentence can be interpreted. On the lowest and most direct level, it is an act of vengeance. The offender has inflicted pain on someone and the person who has suffered is entitled to a compensation, to a joy that will make up for the hurt. Hence

he takes vengeance on the offender by hurting him back. On a slightly more refined level, the jail sentence is a simple retribution. It is not meant to compensate the person who has been hurt by inflicting pain on the offender. But the offender is exposed to the direct and automatic consequences of his act. On a higher level we find that the sentence is an attempt at prevention. If the offender is frightened by the consequences, he might control himself in future, and in the meantime people will be protected from his uncontrolled temper. On a still higher level of sophistication, we find that a jail term is imposed for the sake of reform. The convict is supposed to be educated in jail and to be returned to society with better habits. No matter on which level one reacts to being hit, there is a certain rationality on every level. Only the exercise of complete forgiveness is lacking in such rationality. In terms of the positive picture, to forgive is to pretend that actions have no consequences.

As we have seen, the ethics of the symbol picture require precisely such acts of forgiving. In terms of the symbol pictures we have discussed, goodness or adequacy of action consists exactly in the refusal to abide by the iron chain of consequences and to substitute instead a reaction designed to break it. Whether forgiveness is done by love or by detachment, it is essentially an act of freedom. And we may therefore conclude that the highest ethical value enshrined in both pictures is the exercise of freedom; and more precisely, of a freedom which in terms of the positive picture would look both foolish and inadequate.

The ethics taught by the symbol picture are, therefore, ethics of freedom. But I would like to insist that the freedom in question has nothing to do with the so frequently and so uselessly debated question as to the freedom of the will or the freedom of our actions. All such questions are concerned with one's ability to do what one wills or to will what one wants to will. The question that is instead of *real* interest to ethics is how we can learn to will what we would *ordinarily* not will. In other words, how can we learn to seek and desire a freedom which, in terms of the positive and natural picture of man, is inadequate and foolish?

To begin with, I would like to state my reasons for believing

that the time-honoured debate about the freedom of the will is not of interest to ethics. I would like to urge two considerations that supplement one another. A psychological and a logical one.

By the time we approach the moment of action, we do not appear to be free at all. The several alternatives that were in front of us have by that time disappeared from our vision. Just before the moment of action there is something like an inner compulsion to pursue the course we will pursue, for the simple and only reason that by that time the other alternatives have disappeared because they look by now less reasonable or less desirable. I would, therefore, be inclined to say that the further one is away from action, the freer one seems, for at a distance from the action, the number of possible alternatives seems indeed great. The closer we are to the point of action, the less free we appear to ourselves, for the closer we come to action, the more alternatives that had still seemed feasible ten minutes ago, have disappeared. But since the alternatives tend to disappear as we approach the moment of decision, we will not actually feel that we are acting under constraint at the moment of decision. Although we are actually less free at the moment of decision than we were ten minutes ago, we cannot feel any constraint (since the alternatives have disappeared from our vision) and we imagine that we are acting freely.

The second, logical argument begins with Popper's refutation of determinism. Popper insists that in order to predict an action we would need to have all the information of all the events that preceded it until the very moment of the action. Hence it is practically impossible to predict an action before it actually happens. But it seems to me that this argument not only leads to a refutation of determinism and the feasibility of prediction which is linked to determinism. It also shows that for all practical purposes freedom and determinism are in fact as indistinguishable as our psychological reflection in the preceding paragraph led us to expect.

To be free is not to be able to predict what one will do or will. If one is a long time away from the act, the act appears to be free, for one cannot predict it without knowing what will happen between the point at which one is and the point

at which the action will take place. When one comes very close to the point at which the act takes place, one might well be able to predict it and thus conclude that it was indeed determined. It will turn out that against all prior appearances, one was *not* free. But this discovery will be made *only* at a point so close to the point at which the action takes place that it is in fact indistinguishable from the action itself. And therefore it seems silly to claim that one was able to 'predict' the act, when in fact such 'prediction' did not precede it in time. Therefore we must conclude once more that the action was free after all; and as it had originally appeared to be. But one might say with equal plausibility that one *did* predict the act and that it was determined. However one looks at it, the conclusion is inevitable: freedom and determination are indistinguishable.

We can now return to our proper argument. The freedom we are concerned with is the freedom to will what we would not ordinarily will. Ordinarily we would wish that a man who has hit us should be locked up, either for vengeance, or for retribution, or for prevention, or for reform. But we have found that we ought to will that he be forgiven. This means that we ought to will that the response to the offender be not an ordinary response in that it ought to be free of all conceivable ordinary consequences.

The lack of this kind of freedom which we discover in the positive picture must not necessarily be equated with evil. There is certainly a certain amount of evil in that lack of freedom. For if the offender is locked up for the sake of vengeance, there is evil. For he is now being used by the person he offended against in that the latter derives joy from the suffering he can inflict on the former. When it comes to retribution, there need not be much evil. And when we come to prevention and reform, we are not entitled to speak of evil at all. Similarly, whenever we find an instance of genuine symbiosis in the positive picture, e.g. of the cohabitation of a sadist with a masochist, we are not entitled to speak of evil. Such an association, lacking the freedom required by our ethics, cannot be good. But in view of the fact that neither of the partners' interests are sacrificed the association cannot properly be described as evil. But whether evil or not, the positive picture

is not one in which we can find acts of freedom in the sense required – even though I do not doubt that it contains acts of which upholders of determinism can say that they are determined; and of which upholders of free will can say that they are not determined. If we find genuinely free acts, in our sense, in the positive picture, they must appear gratuitous, foolish and irrational.

Acts of freedom, acts in which something that is not ordinarily willed is willed, are, however, fully adequate in the symbol picture. There they appear neither foolish nor inadequate. In the symbol picture, one might almost say, there is a certain compulsion, if action is to be adequate, to act freely – to love, to detach oneself, to forgive – and to make sure that actions do not have their ordinary consequences.

Given the nature of the positive picture, it is very difficult to resign oneself to act freely. For such action would appear irrational and inadequate and, in face of the circumstances prevailing there, foolish.

One can use a quite practical example to illustrate this. People who are given to the contemplation of the positive picture and to nothing else, will often argue that they can only love people in proportion in which those people are lovable. They mean that they can love them in return for certain services or pleasures. If one points out to them that they ought to love them more and that they ought to love them in complete disregard of their lovableness and their deserts, one will receive the reply that this would be an unnatural thing to do. When people are always contemplating the positive picture, they are considering a natural ethic as the final ethic. This natural ethic is in reality not much of an ethic at all. For it operates almost entirely by compulsion. It is based on the acknowledgement that we are all caught in a causal chain; and that, if someone renders us a service or appears to us attractive and thus provides a pleasure, we cannot but love him. This love comes in the natural course of events, and its quantity and quality are exactly proportionate to the stimulus that is exercised by the person loved.

In such a case the invitation or exhortation to love *more* than the loved person deserves is considered an invitation to rid oneself of the natural causal chain. It must be considered an

invitation to be free – i.e. to do as one chooses rather than to do that which comes naturally and necessarily. But if one always contemplates the positive picture, one will find oneself faced by so many examples of such strictly causal correspondences, that the invitation to be free will appear as an invitation to do the impossible. For one will judge what is possible and what is impossible by the examples one is contemplating.

But let us consider the man who is given to contemplating the symbol picture. The symbol picture is full of acts in which more love than is deserved by the recipient is meted out. And the man who contemplates the symbol picture will, therefore, no longer think that the invitation to be free of the causal chain that generates love in proportion to the stimulus received, is an invitation to do the impossible. Through the contemplation of the symbol picture he will become used to the notion that freedom can in fact be obtained; and that it is possible to love more than is deserved by the loved object. And, to consider a different case, he will also understand that it is possible to be conscious without being conscious of something. Such unintentional consciousness requires freedom. When one is contemplating the positive picture, one will be acquainted only with events that stand in a functional dependence to one another. And one will only be able to conceive of consciousness as a reaction to a stimulus, i.e. as a consciousness of a certain object or a certain event. Only through the contemplation of the symbol picture can one become familiar with the notion that there can be consciousness other than in response to certain objects.

We find, therefore, that the contemplation of the positive picture acquaints us with the notion of necessity and compulsion. The contemplation of the symbol picture, on the other hand, acquaints us with the notion of freedom. But it is important to note that the symbol picture not only *acquaints* us with the notion of freedom. The events of which it consists are images and actions composed in the way we have described. These actions consist in the celebration of sacrifices and in other ritual performances. The myths are presented pictorially or enacted on a stage. The sum total of all these observances is called religion. The contemplation of these observances acquaints us with the notion of freedom; but the actual

performance of them is a training ground of freedom. A man who has spent his whole life in religious observances and who has been given the right instruction as to their meaning (who has had the right metaphysical doctrine as to their meaning) will be very much more adept in the exercise of freedom than a person who has either merely contemplated them without metaphysical understanding or never contemplated them at all. It is probable, however, that a person who has performed or contemplated them without genuine understanding will be less at sea in ultimate ethical matters than a person who has never contemplated them at all. It is only that a right understanding of their significance makes for a more efficient and more effective application of freedom. But the person who has been accustomed to religious observances all his life, even though he fails to see their significance, is likely to be less at a loss when confronted with an ethical judgement or with the need of making one, than the person who has remained a complete foreigner to the symbol picture. Hence we could say that the contemplation of a myth or the performance of a rite have an efficacy *ex opere operato*. But that efficacy is very low when compared with the efficacy that stems from a full understanding and which can be described as *ex opere operantis*. (I am adopting these terms with apologies to ecclesiastical usage.) A man who is habitually given to the celebration of a sacrifice and who knows that the metaphysical explanation of the sacrifice is that something is surrendered not for a gain in proportion to the value of the thing that is surrendered, but for the sake of men that do not deserve the sacrifice, will have real experience of freedom. And when he comes to be confronted with a situation in which he is to love a neighbour who does not deserve his love, or an enemy who does not deserve to be forgiven, he will be able to act freely: he will not react in proportion to the neighbour's or enemy's deserts, but he will react freely and respond by loving and forgiving. And unlike the man who has spent his life in the contemplation of the positive picture, he will not consider it 'unnatural' to exercise such freedom.

Similarly with the man who is given to celebrating the other kind of sacrifice. If he is well versed in the performance of a sacrificial act that means the surrender of a temporary and

possibly illusory self-hood, and of the attachments and desires formed by that self-hood, for the sake, not of something that is desirable in proportion to the value of the things surrendered, but for the sake of a totally undifferentiated consciousness or a state of 'deep, dreamless sleep', he will be well versed in the exercise of freedom. And when he is faced by a situation in which he must act, he will be able to act freely. That is, he will be able to consider the situation on its merits and act in such a way as is required by the situation; and not in the way his own selfish aims and needs would oblige him to.

When the world, from which we draw the experience that informs our judgements and in terms of which we assess the wisdom and adequacy of our actions, is co-extensive with the positive picture, we will be likely to want to act in such a way that the response is in proportion to the stimulus. We will calculate carefully, if we are hit, whether we ought to seek retribution, punishment or vengeance, or whether we ought to set up a deterrent. We might even consider the possibility of forgiving the offender on the ground that such generosity will eventually pay handsome dividends; for any other response might cause the offender to resent us and will occasion further 'adequate' responses on his part. But the forgiving which thus breaks the chain of events will require an enormous strength of mind and an unusual depth of conviction and of insight if one has no more to go by than the positive picture. For it is not the sort of response one is familiar with when one focuses one's attention exclusively on the positive picture; and to do the unexpected must appear risky. But if one enlarges one's experience to take in the events of the symbol picture as well, then one will be familiar with occurrences of freedom. In that case, forgiving will appear as much more natural; and one will be able to do it much more as a matter of course than if one's attention is confined to the positive picture.

Our minds have a certain elasticity. But if they become familiarized with a certain pattern of events, e.g. with the pattern of events as they appear in the positive picture, they will eventually find it very difficult to contemplate the possibility of an action other than one that would fit into the familiar pattern of experience. In this way an all too exclusive focusing upon the positive picture coarsens the human mind, for it

restricts it to familiarity with a single pattern of events. It is much more desirable that we should avail ourselves of the mind's elasticity and train it to take in the symbol picture as well, in order that it may thus become familiarized with patterns of occurrences other than the one that obtains in the positive picture. A mind that is too familiar with the natural sequences of events and the purely functional dependences that are to be found in the positive picture, must eventually become insensitive to the possibility of other patterns: a man who operates a vibrating pneumatic drill on the road, is not likely to be able to play the violin. There are two ways in which one can enlarge one's vision so as to include the symbol picture. One can, first, thoroughly acquaint oneself with mythology; and, second, one can oneself perform ceremonies and rites, that is, actions over and above those that are dictated by the conventional exigencies of society, economics and biology – and which in terms of these three would indeed appear both as pointless and superfluous.

We have thus far seen, therefore, that the science of ethics consists in the proposition that the good is to act in freedom – where an act of freedom is either absolute love or absolute consciousness. But we not only know that the good is to act in freedom; we also seek the freedom (from the compulsive and natural responses of the positive picture) to do the good. It is important that we should be able to distinguish between the two notions of freedom involved in these propositions:

A: We seek the freedom to do good.
B: The good is to act in freedom.

A is achieved by the contemplation of the symbol picture. Such contemplation teaches us that natural responses ('to love according to the loved one's deserts'; 'to be conscious of something') are not the only possible responses. It shows us that it is equally 'natural' to respond out of proportion to the stimulus received, i.e. to respond freely. Furthermore, it so happens that it teaches us that not any response is adequate provided that it is out of proportion; but that of all the responses out of proportion, only two kinds are adequate, namely Relationship and Solitude.

B is a piece of knowledge derived from the contemplation

of the symbol picture in which acts of Relationship and Solitude are *both* good *and* facts. In that picture the judgement that they are good has cognitive value and is not the expression of an arbitrary preference or the acceptance of a social convention.

The first of the two propositions is concerned with our potentialities, with our assessment of what is feasible and adequate and with what we can do without appearing both to ourselves and to others as unnatural. The enlargement of our experience that results from the addition of the symbol picture to the positive picture enables us to entertain the possibility of the freedom to do the good as something natural, for its occurrence is thus moved within the field of our vision. The second of the two propositions is a straight factual judgement. It states that a certain type of action is good. And the truth of that judgement must be tested by the observation of the symbol picture, i.e. by the observation whether Relationship and Solitude in that picture appear as good or not.

We see thus that the symbol picture is, as it were, a training ground for the acquisition of freedom; to contemplate it helps us to become acquainted with the notion of freedom and to enact the symbols ritually is an actual training in the exercise of freedom. The question which must invariably arise now is whether the freedom one thus becomes acquainted with can have any application in real life. In other words and in quite general terms: what application has the symbol picture (and the truths pertaining to it) to the positive picture? Ethical judgements have a cognitive value because they can be said to be either true or false in relation to the symbol picture. And since we have further argued that they have no cognitive value in regard to the positive picture – to which they were said to be irrelevant – one might legitimately ask whether these ethical judgements can in fact be applied to human behaviour at large.

If the distinction between the positive picture and the symbol picture were an absolute distinction, the question ought to be answered decisively in the negative. But we have argued all along that the distinction is *not* an absolute one. The composition of the symbol picture begins in every case with an event that can be found in the positive picture. This natural event is originally taken as a symbol and is only

gradually denaturalized (or, we might now say, supernaturalized), in order to give it greater precision as an indicator of events in field A. We have seen how the process of giving it greater precision is a process of typological speculation. The last and most highly specified symbol is still an event which is typologically related to the first natural event that was taken over from the positive picture. It is the anti-type to a type. And the most general type, in all cases, is a natural event which also has its place in the positive picture. The death of Jesus on the cross is thus, for instance, the last anti-type of a certain type: of the death agony of a man.

It follows from this observation that whatever is said about the symbol picture applies also to the positive picture; but not the other way round. If we see a man in his death agony, this is an event in the positive picture and calls for very limited and laconic comment from the point of view of that picture. But if we see Jesus dying on the cross, our attention is drawn to all sorts of insights about the importance of a sacrificial death in which the supremely desirable and supremely good is surrendered in agony. And everything we understand about this particular version of death agony, of this particular anti-type, can also be true of every ordinary death agony. Having learnt all sorts of insights and having understood the significance of such sacrificial death from the contemplation of Jesus' death on the cross, we can turn back to the positive picture and apply what we have learnt to every instance of death agony. And not only to every instance of bodily death agony; but also to every instance of a spiritual or mental death agony.

In this reapplication to the positive picture of metaphysical insights into the symbol picture, we are doing, so to speak, metaphysics in reverse. And in doing metaphysics in reverse we ought to introduce a new concept, the concept of the concrete universal. I wish to use this concept with apologies to Hegel; for I am aware that I take it to mean something different from what he meant by it. But as I think that there are certain similarities between his and my meaning, I would like to use his term, albeit freely.

In doing metaphysics in reverse, we are descending from the anti-type of the symbol picture to the type in the positive

picture. In doing so we are using the anti-type as a concrete universal, of which the type is a particular instance. At first sight one might question whether this is really so and whether the type, being more general than the anti-type, can be a particular instance of the latter. But a little reflection will show that the anti-type is indeed a concrete universal in relation to the type; and that the type is a particular instance of the former. For a concrete universal, being concrete, must be specified; and a type is not. The anti-type, on the other hand, is a specification of the type. That specification can be re-exported to the type which, provided it is trimmed to receive the meaning that was attached by specification to the anti-type, becomes a particular instance of the anti-type. Since any anti-type can have a variety of types, every one of these types can be said to be a particular instance of the anti-type. And the anti-type stands therefore in the relation to its types in which a universal stands to its particular instances.

In this sense, that type becomes the particular instance of the anti-type, its concrete universal. The anti-type is concrete, because it is specific – at any rate more specific than the type. And it is universal because it can stamp its specific meaning on a number of other events – and precisely on those and only on those that are types of the concrete universal in question. It follows, therefore, that the fact that an anti-type is a concrete universal in relation to its types in the positive picture, justifies us in retracing our steps from the symbol picture to the positive picture, and in inflicting meanings, metaphysically established in the symbol picture, on the positive picture. The positive picture, in other words, can be viewed *sub specie symbolorum*.

There is nothing mysterious in this possibility of a reversal. It follows directly from our analysis of the genesis of the symbol picture and of metaphysics. If the symbol picture is formed by a progressive denaturalization of the positive picture and if such denaturalization consists in nothing more than a transposition of features of the positive picture to places to which they do not 'naturally' belong, it follows that one can indeed retrace one's steps, and that whatever is said of the symbol picture can, indirectly, also be said of the positive picture. Once we

have the metaphysical theory clearly in our minds and are sure of its truth, clarity and relevance to the symbol picture, we can discard the latter and begin to see the positive picture as so many instances of the metaphysical theory. We then must only guard ourselves against the mistake of assessing the truth of the metaphysical theory by a reference to the positive picture. This cannot be done. The metaphysical theory can illuminate the positive picture – but the positive picture cannot furnish proof for the truth of the metaphysical theory without first being denaturalized and thus transformed into the symbol picture.

It is not difficult to make this clear by examples. Consider, for instance, Shelley's lines:

If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?

This verse is a question about a natural event. Shelley asks a question about the succession of the seasons. He intends to draw our attention to the fact that winter is followed by spring. But he does not mean us to see no more than such a laconic and platitudinous truth. He means to suggest that after darkness there comes light – after death, the resurrection. Nevertheless, his statement is confined to an invitation to consider nothing but a natural event.

Now if this natural event were taken by itself, it would mean absolutely nothing. For one could only add to it the observation that the spring that comes after winter will be followed by a summer; that summer by an autumn; and that autumn by a further winter, and so forth. Shelley, however, relied on our knowledge of a symbol picture. He took it for granted that at one stage, the natural sequence of the seasons had been used to fashion a denaturalized symbol about the resurrection that follows every death. He took it for granted that his readers were acquainted with the metaphysical knowledge that was derived from the relevant symbol. Taking this for granted, he could reapply this knowledge to a perfectly natural event and invite us to consider the sequence of seasons in the positive picture as an illustration of a metaphysical truth. That sequence, considered as a natural fact, would prove nothing; and least of all a metaphysical insight about the resurrection that follows death. A proof of such an insight

can only be obtained *via* the denaturalization of the symbol. But once the symbol is there and once the metaphysical summary is made, it is possible to reverse the process and see parts of the positive picture illuminated by the metaphysical insight. In this way it becomes possible to read the positive picture in the light of the knowledge gained through its denaturalization. The fact that the symbols are due to denaturalization of ordinary, natural events, makes it certain that these natural events will not contradict metaphysical truths. But at the same time, by themselves, they cannot support them. They can only be illuminated by them if one retraces one's steps down the ladder of typological specification.

As a further illustration we should cast a brief glance at another natural event, sexual intercourse. If one ascends the typological ladder to further and further specification, one can obtain the following images:

1. Sexual intercourse.
2. Ceremonial wedding
3. Christian marriage
4. Christ is the bridegroom of the church
5. *Unio mystica*

In this ladder, the natural event is clearly in the positive picture and is the type of all further images, which are the anti-types. With 2. we are on the threshold of the symbol picture, and with 5. we are in a high realm of specification at a point where the image passes into metaphysical abstraction. If we now retrace our steps and descend the ladder, 5. will become the concrete universal. And as we descend, every image will be a more particular instance, until we reach the natural event in the positive picture which is the first particular instance of the series. The act of sexual intercourse can now be read and understood in the light of a metaphysical truth, and thus be taken as an event with a very special significance. Although a perfectly natural act, it can now be seen as invested with a very special meaning. And we will be reminded of the ancient Indian principle: 'He who knows that . . .'. That is, he who knows that an act of sexual union signifies a *unio mystica* will be wise indeed.

To give a more concrete example, the case of friendship.

As far as one can ascertain in the positive picture, friendship, whether it is erotically conditioned or not, is a relationship between two people who are attracted to one another and take pleasure in each other's company for a number of more or less well defined reasons. And if one confines one's survey to the positive picture, one will always endeavour to state what the reasons for the attraction are. (I am now not considering the phenomenon of romantic passion, where the 'love' is completely out of proportion to the person loved and where this lack of proportion is more or less artificially induced through various forms of frustration.) But if one descends, so to speak, to the natural phenomenon of friendship from the heights of the symbol picture, one will be able to bring to bear on it a completely different stamp. One will then be able to treat it as a particular instance of incommensurate love (provided one begins one's ascent from the symbol picture in which incommensurate love has its place), and will be able to shape the natural phenomenon accordingly. We find here that the knowledge derived from the symbol picture will raise a purely natural phenomenon like friendship to a spiritual height it could not have attained otherwise. Early Patristic tradition ascribed a saying to Jesus which was not received in the canonical Gospels and which we may quote in this context, for it explains that its author saw the typological relationship between the natural phenomenon of one's love for one's neighbour and the love of God: 'Do you love your brother? Then you see God. Kneel down and worship.'

In the same way one could derive great help from the emanation picture in regard to the natural phenomenon of death. As a purely natural event, death is painful in that it puts an end to existence. But if it is considered as an anti-type of reabsorption, it will be understood as a 'natural' process, as the *diastole* that is the reverse of the *systole*. And similarly, the symbol picture can throw some light upon the relationship between parents and children. A child's attitude to its male parent differs profoundly from its attitude to its female parent. And I suspect that part of the reason why this is so, is that the child as well as the parents see these relationships as a particular instance of the concrete universal to be found in the symbol picture. In the symbol picture, the father is the creator

and, although the path is beset with innumerable difficulties, it is possible to establish a right relationship with the father. The mother, on the other hand, is the ground of being. The very fact of the separate existence of the child (as of any individual object) is a disturbance of the primeval oneness of that being, and hence no right relationship between the two is possible: the mother will seek reabsorption in one form or another and may even appear as the devouring monster that eats her children. And the child itself will either give in and seek an attachment to the mother that is 'unnatural' in the sense that it denies the child a development as an independent personality; or it will strive away from the mother and resist by various subterfuges the mother's endeavours to annul its separate existence or, at least, to limit it.

In modern psychology there has been an implicit recognition of the typological relationship between myth and natural event, and of the fact that this typological relationship establishes the anti-type as a concrete universal and the type as a particular instance of it. For ever since Freud psychologists have been in the habit of designating certain psychological phenomena as instances of certain myths. We get Oedipus complexes and Eve complexes, and so forth. Even though most pyschologists would not bother to encourage excursions into the symbol picture of the kind we have suggested, their habit of choosing mythological names for psychological events pays tacit tribute to the correctness of the view that the symbol picture is a world in which we can learn a great deal about the natural world. A highly elaborated symbol picture, carefully subject to metaphysical interpretation, illuminates the natural world by making it appear as so many particular instances of symbols. The symbol picture, in this way, draws our attention to aspects of the natural world which would never become apparent if we confined our gaze to nature alone.

We see, therefore, that the symbol picture is, as it were, a training ground for the acquisition of freedom. To contemplate it helps us to become acquainted with the notion of freedom, and to enact the symbols is an actual training in freedom. The freedom thus acquired can be exercised in everyday life, that is, in regard to all events. But if one does not know of the symbol picture and its correct meaning, i.e. if one

is unaware of the metaphysical doctrines about the symbol picture, both the theoretical training and the practical training in freedom will be lacking. And then one cannot expect a man to react in any other way than the natural way. One can then only expect him to respond in every case in proportion to the stimulus he has received.

If this is so, it follows that the symbol picture, once it has been contemplated for a considerable time and once one has taken part in its performance, becomes as such superfluous. Because if one keeps the metaphysical doctrines about the symbol picture firmly in mind, one can act in the freedom which they prescribe all the time. The metaphysical doctrine is a doctrine about the most highly specified symbols. Only the contemplation of those symbols will make one see the truth of these doctrines. But since the highly specified symbol is no more than an anti-type of a natural event, the metaphysical doctrine will equally be true of the type, of the unspecified natural event. Only, that truth cannot be seen directly, and the metaphysical doctrine cannot be tested by it. But once one has got firmly hold of the doctrine and dispenses with a direct test of its truth, it can be applied to the relevant natural event.

Consider for example the doctrine that love is absolute. This is a doctrine about a whole series of specified, supernatural symbols. But the series was built upon a natural event, which was the original type. That event, for instance, is an act of surrender. This act is a natural event and can find a place in the positive picture. If one now chooses to disregard all the intervening symbols and takes the doctrine to the original type, the natural event, the doctrine will enable us to see the natural event in a certain light, namely as a type of, e.g., Jesus's sacrificial death for the redemption of mankind. And since the positive picture abounds in acts of surrender, in the cessation of one existence or form of existence for the sake of another existence, the metaphysical doctrine will help us to see the whole positive picture in a certain light. If this is so, we can say that a man who is well versed in the symbol picture and in metaphysical doctrines, can afford to dispense with the symbol picture and, with the help of the doctrines, adopt an ethical attitude to the events in the positive picture. But the mere contemplation of the positive picture will not enable him

to do so. For without the doctrine, an act of surrender is simply an act of surrender; death is merely death and is naturally resisted by a number of drives and tendencies. And the mere contemplation of the ensuing struggle between death and the forces that naturally resist it, will not enable one to express any judgement about it other than the judgement that things are as they are. But if one approaches the spectacle of death, so abundantly offered in the positive picture, from the standpoint of the metaphysical doctrine that love is absolute and that God so loved the world that He sacrificed His only son for it, one will be able to see in every death an example of love that sacrifices itself for the sake of something else, i.e. for the sake of something that one would naturally love less than oneself and which in the course of nature and by natural compulsion is taken by oneself as less valuable than oneself. A death is then seen not just as a death in which certain natural forces naturally prevailed over others; but as a *type* of an act of absolute love.

We are then left, in the end, with the metaphysical doctrines and with the world of nature which we contemplate from the point of view of these doctrines. But it is very necessary to remind ourselves of the fact that the detour through the symbol picture, the detour through a supernatural appearance of the world, was by no means unnecessary. Without that detour, it would have been quite impossible to arrive at the metaphysical doctrines. And furthermore, without that detour, the metaphysical doctrines would not only soon lose their plausibility, but we would also be deprived of the proper training ground for the practice of freedom. Freedom, we said, is the common characteristic of acts of absolute love and of absolute consciousness. And since we can find in the positive picture only acts of love and of consciousness that stand in a necessary, i.e. an unfree, relation to certain stimuli, we can acquaint ourselves with the possibility of freedom and practise its exercise only through the symbol picture.

We cannot but conclude, therefore, that the symbol picture, though a detour, is an absolutely necessary detour. This observation is especially relevant to our modern societies in which the cultivation of the symbol picture is no longer an integral part of our lives. Our days are so taken up with utilitarian and

practical pursuits, and we are so bent upon the creation of those social and political conditions that will promote the production of material goods, that the symbol picture has been crowded out. For all these pursuits can only be carried on if we keep the positive picture firmly fixed before our eyes. Hence we show little inclination for the cultivation of the symbol picture, and less interest in metaphysical doctrines. And if metaphysical doctrines *are* put forward, we are not in a position to point at a symbol picture to which they apply and which alone can make them appear plausible. When they are put forward, they stand condemned as irrelevant to the only picture we endeavour to keep firmly before our eyes, the positive picture. Similarly, our disregard for the symbol picture implies a disregard for the events in field A. And our preoccupation with the positive picture forces us to think of all mental events as events that can be located in the positive picture. Our utilitarian pursuits and aims entail, therefore, a situation that is quite self-consistent. There is nothing that jars or stands out. For we know of metaphysics through the symbol picture; of the symbol picture, through events in field A; of events in field A, through the symbol picture; and of the symbol picture, through metaphysics. These three things (metaphysics, field A and the symbol picture) are the only evidence there is for metaphysics, field A and the symbol picture. If any one is made to disappear, the other two will also disappear, for the first was the only clue to the existence of the others. And if our utilitarian pursuits make us disregard the symbol picture, metaphysics and field A will both disappear from our ken without leaving so much as a trace. It is not that the awareness of events in field A might compel us to review the situation, for without the symbols, we have argued, there is no independent awareness of these events. And it is not that the truth of metaphysical doctrines would make us realize that the positive picture cannot be the only picture; for without the symbol picture, the metaphysical doctrines have no independent truth or even plausibility.

All this shows that it is no good arguing for metaphysics or for the recognition of the special character of mental events in field A. The only clue to both metaphysics and these events is the symbol picture. And if we have no time for, or interest

in, the symbol picture, no amount of theoretical argument will help us to keep it alive. For the only theoretical argument in its favour is that there are events in field A that need to be symbolized; and that there are metaphysical doctrines that apply to the symbol picture. But since we cannot prove either of these contentions except with the help of the symbol picture we must, in the face of our utilitarian preoccupations, admit defeat. For the only strong argument against the desirability of applying all our resources and attentions to the production of material goods could be derived from the contemplation of the symbol picture and the ethical values such contemplation would force us to recognize. But if we are bent on the production of material goods, we cannot afford to pay much attention to anything but the positive picture; and if we do that, we will not find any ground for upholding ethical judgements which will make the production of material goods a questionable value.

The production of material goods and our efforts to raise our material standard of living can indeed be likened to the practice of debasing the coinage. Both practices obey Gresham's law that bad money drives out good money. If one can, by adding a baser metal, make two florins out of one florin, everybody will seize the opportunity and the good florins, worth two shillings of silver, will rapidly disappear. It is the same with material goods. If there is a possibility of clean and speedy travel and of penicillin, one will not refuse them because their attainment involves a concentration upon the positive picture and a reordering of one's society and culture in accordance with the technology and science required for production. Hence the desire for material goods, since it involves a close concentration upon the positive picture, crowds out every other picture one has formed of the World, and with it makes disappear those values which the other pictures used to instil. And there seems nothing one can do about the inexorable operation of Gresham's law in economics as well as in culture.

It is often alleged nowadays that our progress in scientific knowledge and its application has far outdistanced our progress in morality, and that mankind is today facing an unprecedented crisis. For it wields scientific powers of unheard of

dimensions when its moral condition is no better than that of a child. Mankind today, it is said, is like a baby in charge of a machine-gun. I think that this allegation is completely unjustified. Careful observation will, in fact, prove the contrary. Hand in hand with our scientific and technological progress there goes a moral determination, the like of which has never been seen. We are determined today to eliminate war and to establish systems of collective security to protect helpless individuals both against ruthless exploitation by stronger individuals and against the vicissitudes of nature. There is more talk about moral order and a greater determination to establish it than at any time in human history. Only complete blindness or wilful ignorance can deny this. And if one is pessimistic, one can only be pessimistic about our chances of success; but not about the firmness of our desire to establish moral order and not about the conviction that moral order is desirable. The only observation one might add is this. The moral order we are seeking is based upon the concept of social manipulation and is entirely and exclusively concerned with the effort to find a sadist for every masochist. Such a moral order is based upon the conception that evil can best be eliminated by the establishment of a vast and complicatedly inter-related system of symbiosis. Given the fact that a great deal of suffering can be eliminated when every sadist finds his masochist and a system of universal symbiosis is established it would be both foolish and irresponsible to refuse one's co-operation.

Nevertheless, I would add a comment. The establishment of a universal system of symbiosis will depend upon persuading every single individual of the fact that he ought to 'fit in'. The success of the moral effort along these lines will depend, therefore, upon a certain degree of selflessness and self-denial. For every individual must allow himself to be 'used' in one way or another. True, the system, when finally established, will provide corresponding compensations for such selflessness and will endeavour to alleviate the pain caused by the hurt to people's pride, which such co-ordination must of necessity cause. But at the same time it stands to reason that people will bear the slights to their pride more readily and will be more willing to be selfless *if* they are bent upon the genuinely moral

pursuits of which I have spoken in this book. If this is so, the success of the attempt to establish a universal system of symbiosis for the elimination of suffering will be very much bound up with the persistence of genuine moral effort. And since the persistence of such effort is, in turn, bound up with metaphysics and the symbol picture, we are neglecting the latter at our peril. By too single-minded a concentration upon the positive picture and the moral endeavour to establish within its framework a universal system of symbiosis, we will endanger the success of that system. For as genuine moral training in freedom is pushed into the background and overlooked, individuals will become more and more intractable. They will be less and less likely to surrender their egotisms for the sake of the co-operation which the universal system of symbiosis requires. If this is so, the exclusive preoccupation with the establishment of a universal system of symbiosis may well defeat itself. Whereas, on the other hand, a more persistent preoccupation with education for freedom, as we have described in this book, is likely to make people tractable and willing to co-operate in the establishment of such a system. It would be silly to argue that if people are educated to be free, the establishment of symbiosis would be superfluous. This is true in theory; but in practice there will always be such a wide gap between the goal and the attainment that no attempt at symbiosis can ever be considered superfluous.

By way of summing up, I would like to propose a small change in nomenclature.

The question arises as to whether it is appropriate to describe the symbol picture as a non-natural picture. One might be tempted to use for the symbol picture the term 'supernatural' if it were not for the fact that that word has been so persistently misused. The word 'supernatural' is commonly used to describe events which are said to occur, but the occurrence of which cannot be located in the positive picture because they are not functionally dependent on other events. Now if one is thinking only in terms of the positive picture, then the use of the word is a contradiction in terms: for how is it possible to say that events 'occur' and yet cannot be located in the positive picture, when the only criterion of 'occurrence' is 'capable of being located in the positive picture'? If one is

thinking purely in terms of the positive picture, there can, by definition, be no supernatural occurrences. Any occurrence, worthy of the name, must be an occurrence in the positive picture and must, therefore, be described as a natural one.

At the same time, there have always been people who have chosen to accept the positive picture and the natural criterion for what does and what does not occur in it; but have decided at the same time to believe that some arbitrarily chosen occurrences are to be taken to be occurrences even though they cannot be located in the positive picture. They maintain that such occurrences are known by 'faith'.

It is always striking to find that people are quite arbitrary in their choice of those occurrences which are said to be known by faith and which they thus choose to describe as supernatural ones. To some people every thunderstorm is a supernatural event; and to others only very special apparitions that occur very infrequently are supernatural events. The more elaborate the positive picture which they have before their eyes, the fewer the occurrences which are said to be of a supernatural character, known by faith.

If one examines the arguments of the people who insist that the word 'supernatural' ought to be used to describe certain events, one will always be struck by two things. First, one will find that such people have an unwarranted regard for the finality of the positive picture. They sense that it is not complete in every respect and therefore reserve the right to interpolate it with 'supernatural' occurrences. But they do not entertain the possibility that the positive picture is only one of several possible appearances of the World. By treating it with too much respect as a final and monopolistic picture, they are forced to postulate that it contains, beside all ordinary events, a number of miraculous occurrences. I say 'postulate', for by the nature of the case the miraculous occurrences cannot be observed in the positive picture in the way in which all other occurrences in that picture can be said to be observed. And thus we come to the second point. Too much respect for the finality of the positive picture invites an excessive irrationality; for the postulation of such miraculous events in the positive picture is indeed an exercise of unreason. We must therefore conclude that excessive positivism and

irrationalism always go hand in hand. They mutually sustain one another.

It seems much more sensible to reserve the term 'supernatural' for the symbol picture and to use it in order to stress that in the symbol picture there are events which, because they are used as symbols for events in field A, are of a non-natural character, i.e. are such that they could not be located in the positive picture (except, of course, in so far as they are pictorially or theatrically represented). Consequently, the word 'faith' should not be used to describe the belief in the occurrence of those events which can be shown, in terms of the positive picture and by the criteria used for its compilation, not to have occurred. If one uses the word 'faith' in this sense, it means no more than credulity or superstition. The word 'faith' should be used to describe the way in which one views the symbols in the symbol picture. The symbols are viewed with a peculiar emotional firmness. They make a very powerful appeal to us and exercise a strong hold over us because they are the signs that indicate the occurrence and the quality of our states of consciousness. It is through them, and only through them, that we are aware of how we feel ourselves to be. Hence the symbols arouse in us an attachment and addiction which could never be aroused by the contemplation of a mere natural fact. For this reason it is appropriate to describe our attachment to the symbols as a faith. This kind of faith is not a form of credulity – for in the contemplation of a symbol or in the performance of a rite we are not asked to subscribe to a certain belief. It is more like a trust, a trust in the power of the symbol that indicates the way we feel ourselves to be.

I have tried to show that there is a real connection between the symbol picture and the positive picture. And that what one learns from the former has its application in the latter. Our ethical knowledge, gained from the contemplation of the symbol picture, requires the exercise of freedom. This is the final and most abstract formulation of ethical science – since it comprises both elements of ethical knowledge, Relationship as well as Solitude. From the point of view of the positive picture, the exercise of freedom appears as something unnatural, or as something against nature. It is not natural to forgive, to love more than the loved object warrants or deserves, to

be conscious without being conscious of something, etc. The exercise of freedom, therefore, is an unnatural or supernatural act. And yet, from the point of view of the symbol picture, the exercise of freedom is a natural and fitting act. We find then, in the end, that the question as to whether the exercise of freedom is a natural or a supernatural virtue, is a question of words. Perhaps the most sensible way of putting it is this. The natural, positive picture does not teach us to exercise freedom. But if that picture is transformed into the non-natural or supernatural symbol picture, the exercise of freedom will appear as something natural. Hence we can conclude that our conception of ethics as the science of the good depends on whether the positive picture is transformed into the symbol picture, that is, upon the transformation of nature into supernature.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks are due to the following: Editions Gallimard, Paris, for permission to quote from Apollinaire's *Oneirokritika*; Cambridge University Press, for permission to quote from Schrödinger's *Nature and the Greeks* and *Minds and Matter*; the Editor of *Philosophy*, for permission to quote a short passage by Bertrand Russell from No. 133, pp. 146–7; the Society of Authors, for permission to quote from Laurence Binyon's translation of the *Paradiso*; Methuen and Co., for permission to quote from M. Oakeshott's *Rationalism in Politics*; the Hogarth Press, for permission to quote from Leishman's translation of Rilke's *Sonnets to Orpheus*; the Centaur Press, for permission to quote from J. A. Stewart's *The Myths of Plato*; George Allen and Unwin, for permission to quote from I. A. Ramsey, ed., *Prospects for Metaphysics* and from C. A. Campbell, *Selfhood and Godhood* and from C. A. Campbell's contribution to *Contemporary British Philosophy*, 3rd series.

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