SOME ASPECTS OF THE PROBLEM OF GUILT, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO KAFKA, KIERKEGAARD AND DOSTOEVSKY

A thesis presented to the
Faculty of Arts of the
University of Edinburgh
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

by

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October, 1957.
(June, 1958.)

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Guilt, we are told by Hegel, belongs intrinsically to action;[1] and it is manifestly through action that such declarative terms as "criminality" and "heinous sin" become attached semantically to the word guilt. The Oxford English Dictionary associates with the word guilt those explicit, conceptual terms which enable one to see at once the intimate connection between guilt on the one hand and justice and the rule of law on the other. Terms such as "heinous moral offence", "responsibility for an action", and "great culpability" cannot easily be mistaken for purely abstract or subjective sentiments; clearly, what is indicated here is not private opinion but public judgement. In like manner the terms "delinquent", "criminal", and "deserving of punishment" attach to the word guilty.

Issuing from these fairly objective actions and conditions are certain feelings or states of mind. Remorse, for instance, is a feeling of deep regret for a sin or a wrong committed, and to be remorseful is to be penitent for for this wrong. Remorse is therefore associated with a sense of guilt, but it is by definition a conscious state of mind, just as contrition, in so far as it is remorsefulness

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[1] G.W.F. Hegel, The Phenomenology of Mind, tr. J.B. Baillie, (George Allen and Unwin Ltd., London, 1931), p. 488.

is, so to speak, aware of itself, aware of its cause.

It is quite apparent from the linguistic evidence that guilt, conscience, and consciousness have connections so intimate that we might almost be justified in assuming their mutual identity. The connection between guilt and law has its roots far back in man's past, in that fundamental law of primitive tribes: the taboo. "Taboo is a command of conscience, the violation of which causes a terrible sense of guilt ..."[2] For primitive man, conscience and consciousness were virtually equivalent. Linguistic evidence would seem to verify that conscience means precisely that which is known;[3] conscience therefore belongs to the realm of law; it is indubitable because it is a commandment. According to The Oxford English Dictionary, the term conscience, having been derived from continental sources, assumed the concrete significance of a form of self-knowledge, since it meant precisely "to know within one's own mind". The earlier word "inwit" was replaced by the term conscience during the Middle English period.[4]

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[2] Sigmund Freud, Totem and Taboo, tr. A.A. Brill, (George Routledge and Sons Ltd., London, 1919), p. 115.

[3] Ibid., p. 114. In some languages (French, for example) one word suffices for both conscience and consciousness, thus testifying that conscience belongs to what is known most certainly, that is, to law.

[4] The Ayenbite of Inwit by Daniel Michel is an interesting example of early English moral and religious thought. It contains a large number of ethical statements and psychological insights that can be compared, word for word, with similar judgements made by Kierkegaard.

To be "guilty" likewise once had the meaning of being conscious or cognizant, and was used as such by Hakluyt, Ben Jonson, and Dryden, among other writers. This again confirms the etymological coincidence of conscience and consciousness, and suggests also that guilt brings about the most intense form of consciousness or self-knowledge, as found in the expression "guilty to oneself", i.e., having a lucid self-consciousness.[5] When, today, we speak of being conscious of wrong-doing with regard to ourselves, we mean that we have guilty knowledge of morally wrong acts committed by ourselves.

The testimony from semantics, therefore, presents, by and large, an objective, if not legalistic, understanding of guilt. Guilt has always denoted the fact of someone's having broken a norm of conduct or a law; it is the result of a wrong action or a breach of conduct. The term "sense of guilt" is usually used to distinguish the subjective result of a wrong action. Hegel's analysis of guilt, as suggested above, contains social as well as aesthetic overtones, since for Hegel it is the action and interaction of human beings which constitutes the prime source of energy in social life. Hegel lays emphasis on action far more than on suffering, which, by itself, cannot be tragic. Suffering and misfortune, and therefore guilt, derive from actions wherein the individual consciousness comes into

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[5] So closely are these concepts united by Kierkegaard that he equates innocence with ignorance.

conflict with the double aspect (divine and human) of ethical reality. This is a case of self-consciousness in action, trying to assert its own specific form of ethical truth over against its opposing aspect of ethical reality. Self-consciousness becomes guilty in and through action, after which "the guilt acquires also the meaning of crime; for as simple ethical consciousness it has turned to and conformed itself to the one law, but turned away from the other and thus violates the latter by its deed."[6] In acquiring guilt by acting contrary to one ethical law, man advances the dialectic of history in the direction of the ethical idea.

Nietzsche, to whom guilt appeared as a "ghastly disease", also traced the origin of guilt to action. In this case, however, the action has none of the aesthetic overtones conveyed by Hegel. Nietzsche does not look to Greek drama or to the polity of the city-state for his interpretation of guilt, but rather to less sublime psychological evidence in the situation of indebtedness.[7] Hence, in his view also, guilt arises through action, although the action itself is without positive ethical and philosophical significance in the Hegelian sense. On the

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[6] Hegel, op. cit., p. 488.

[7] Friedrich Nietzsche, The Genealogy of Morals, tr. Horace B. Samuel (T.N. Foulis, Edinburgh, 1910). In Nietzsche's Second Essay there is clear evidence of his having profited from Dostoevsky's "Notes From Underground" and The House of the Dead. Nietzsche is said to have admitted that all he needed to know about psychology he learned from Dostoevsky.

contrary, so far from being actively resolved into progressively higher syntheses, guilt only succeeds in creating an appalling sickness. A Christian wrestling with a bad conscience is for Nietzsche the extreme of madness. There is, at least, linguistic evidence for Nietzsche's argument, since the word schuld means both guilt and debt. In Old English too, the word guilt has been rendered from the Latin debitum in the Lord's Prayer, though according to the Oxford English Dictionary there seems to be "no real evidence" for assuming an original identity of meaning in these two words.

On the evidence, then, guilt appears to be a result of action; even more, if Hegel is correct, guilt and action are one. Yet, we have noted that on Hegel's view the concept of crime appears subsequent to the act: "guilt acquires also the meaning of Crime". What then, is the relation of guilt to crime? It appears to one psychiatrist that crime is a social concept which could only have arisen because of a specifically individual sense of guilt. To him it seems "that the very emergence in society of the concept of crime has been made possible only because in individual psychology this sense of guilt exists".[8] This view, moreover, is not inconsistent with Hegel's, since the philosopher recognizes in self-consciousness a simple disposition or direction toward ethical reality. We may

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8 Emanuel Miller, "The Social and Familial Study of Juvenile Delinquency" in Mental Abnormality and Crime (Macmillan and Co., London, 1945), p. 222.

say, following Aristotle, that it is a passion, only a passion which is not a continual struggle and inward turmoil, but rather an aspect of consciousness which makes possible this inward self-conflict. We have only to disabuse ourselves of the common notion that the sense of guilt means exclusively a gnawing, biting remorse, (ayenbite of inwit) to see that this is so. The existence of this sense of guilt as a pre-rational aspect of consciousness is in itself the possibility of those terrible inner conflicts which the modern consciousness has brought to the extremes of guilt castigated by Nietzsche. And Nietzsche himself understood that the passions interpret ethical reality, for "moral valuations are a sort of explanation, they constitute a method of interpreting", and that which interprets is our passions. "All virtues are really refined passions ..."[9] Even so believed Aristotle:

> And we may state without any qualification that, contrary to the opinion of other moralists, it is not Rational Principle which originally points the way to Virtue, but rather the passions. For first of all, there must needs arise (as we know there actually does) an unreasoning impulse towards what is noble and good ....[10]

Returning to Dr. Miller's problem concerning the relation of guilt to crime, we now find that this relation-

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[9] Nietzsche, The Will to Power, tr. Anthony M. Ludovici, (T.N. Foulis, Edinburgh, 1909), Aph. 254-5.

[10] Aristotle, The Magna Moralia, II, 7, 30.

ship stands out in somewhat bolder relief. At the risk of oversimplifying the problem, we may state that whereas the crime is social, the sense of guilt is individual. Before crime as a concept can exist; that is, before an act can be understood as a crime, the sense of guilt must be a component of consciousness. The risk of oversimplification consists in suggesting not only that a collective sense of guilt cannot exist, for it surely does exist, but that the individual sense of guilt, divested of its tormenting power, is a kind of pristine ethical energy, a simple unit, so to speak. But this can hardly be the case, since we have already asserted that this extra-rational energy or passion is none other than the possibility of the tormenting inward conflict of guilt, and a conflict presupposes the existence of two or more opposing forces. At this point we shall turn to psychoanalysis, and to Freud in particular, and assert, with him, that this instinctual ethical energy is dualistic by nature, and that it is the polarity of those fundamental emotions, love and hate, which forms this primary ethical energy.[11] It is for this reason that the notion of crime, as well as the objective guilt which attaches itself to the crime, is determined by the relative strength of these passions. There is nothing in the action itself that determines the guilt which attaches to

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[11] Freud, Collected Papers, ed. James Strachey, (Hogarth Press, London, 1950), Vol. V. "Neither one of these instincts is any less essential than the other; the phenomena of life arise from the operation of both together, whether acting in concert or in opposition". (p. 281).

it, but it is the strength of these two passions which determines the guilt and therefore the nature of the crime. It may also be said here that this same relative strength undoubtedly determines the manner in which the individual reacts toward his own shortcomings and failures; it determines, in other words, the nature of his conscience. With this in mind, we are forced to reflect whether that which we call moral progress is not often the result of an excess of hatred over love. Is it not a fact that our humanists nowadays proudly claim to hate social evils in the same way that our older religionists hated sin?

In whatever field of knowledge the problem of guilt arises today - in psychoanalysis, in philosophy, in jurisprudence, or in the social sciences - a certain aura of embarrassing confusion seems to accompany the discussion. One might almost conclude that a slight sense of guilt must necessarily intrude itself into every attempt to investigate guilt; and indeed, such inquiries often tend ironically to assume the form of an arraignment: guilt is guilty: or, conversely: we ourselves are guilty. Implicit in nearly all attempts to deal with the problem of guilt is the apparently naive question whether the sense of guilt is a good or a bad thing. Nor is this merely the result of a difference between a philosophical and a theological outlook. It is partly the result of a growing recognition

that guilt has always been, and is perhaps now more than ever, a leviathan among those forces moulding individuals and civilizations. Partly it is due to differences of opinion as to exactly what the sense of guilt is, how it arises and how it abates; or to differences of opinion concerning the efficacy of punishment. And behind the whole controversy there seems to lurk the suspicion that if man is ever to achieve happiness some new and revolutionary method of self-control will have to supplant the seemingly perverse and autocratic methods of the super-ego. Whether this new method might not be more irrational and more authoritarian than the old, is not the least part of this uneasy suspicion. Perhaps the suspicion itself is nothing but the slight sense of guilt mentioned above.

Concerning the problem of guilt, Freud said that it was at once "the most important problem in the evolution of culture" and the terrible price exacted in the form of an unhappy consciousness by the progress of civilization.[12] Here Freud seems to have voiced a certain pessimism along with a certain, but less strong, hope. Human reason and scientific knowledge ought to prevail over superstition and instinctual behaviour, but is it probable that they will? Freud did not hold out much hope that this would soon be the case.

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[12] Sigmund Freud, Civilization and its Discontents, tr. Joan Riviere (The Hogarth Press and The Institute of Psycho-Analysis, London, 1930), p. 123.

Viewing the problem more optimistically, Jung has stated that ...

> When we are conscious of our guilt we are in a more favourable position, for then we may at least hope to change and improve it a little here and there .... Therefore consciousness of guilt can act as a most powerful moral stimulus .... without guilt there can be no ripening of the soul ...[13]

In another context he writes similarly:

> Conscience, and particularly bad conscience, can be a gift from heaven, a genuine grace, if used as a superior self-criticism. Self-criticism as an introspective, discriminating activity, is indispensable to any attempt to understand one's own psychology. If you have done something which puzzles you and you ask yourself what has prompted you to such an action, you need the motive of a bad conscience and its corresponding discriminating faculty in order to discover the real motive of your behaviour.[14]

With obviously similar views, William James referred to the sense of guilt as if it were the substance from which religion fashions its experiences of salvation and deliverance. It is from this sense of guilt, James thought, that the deepest religious experiences always began. "The individual, so far as he suffers from his wrongness and criticizes it, is to that extent consciously beyond it, and

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[13] C.G. Jung, Essays on Contemporary Events, (Kegan Paul, London, 1947), p. 71.

[14] C.G. Jung, Psychology and Religion, (Yale U.P., New Haven, Conn., 1938), p. 61.

in at least possible touch with something higher, if anything higher exists."[15]

Following in this vein, Ernest Jones has observed that "To the idealism and self-esteem of mankind it is a chastening reflection that ... a bad conscience should prove to be one of the prime motors in even our loftiest strivings."[16] In recognition of the historical and cultural significance of inner moral conflicts, Julian Huxley, one of the leading scientific opponents of guilt, has written: "... without such conflict, no guilt; and without such guilt, no effective moral sense".[17] Money-Kyrle states that "moral behaviour may be defined as behaviour dictated by a sense of guilt."[18] Another author states: "The concept of guilt is closely associated with the concept of justice. Guilt has the quality of proportion. The greater your wrong the guiltier you are".[19] Yet, as a Catholic psychiatrist, he denies to psychology the last word in what must remain "the mystery of guilt and suffering."[20] The psychiatrist, Emanuel Miller writes:

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[15] William James, The Varieties of Religious Experience, (Longmans Green, London, 1952), p. 498.

[16] Ernest Jones, "Evolution and Revolution, The International Journal of Psycho-Analysis, XXII (1941), p. 203.

[17] T.H. Huxley and Julian Huxley, Evolution and Ethics, (Chatto and Windus, London, 1948), p. 110.

[18] R.E. Money-Kyrle, Psychoanalysis and Politics, (Gerald Duckworth & Co., Ltd., London, 1951), p. 54.

[19] Karl Stern, The Third Revolution (Michael Joseph, London, 1955), p. 173.

[20] Ibid., p. 225.

"Every mental conflict which lies at the root of neurotic disorder is an expression of a moral conflict, and however unconscious this conflict may be, the sense of guilt is always to be found there."[21] The anthropologist, Geoffrey Gorer writes:

> Comparative research from a number of contrasting societies appears to demonstrate unequivocally that the development of a strict conscience, so that people will behave according to ethical imperatives (or feel guilt of they do not do so), is dependent on the parents rewarding and punishing their children, giving or withholding their love, on the basis of conformity to consistent principles the child can understand ... [Otherwise, the child] will not develope a strong ethical conscience; without such incorporated rules he cannot feel the type of guilt which produces internal discomfort for specific transgressions of specific rules.[22]

Beatrice Webb writes of a "consciousness of sin", a collective rather than a personal sin which arose "among men of intellect and men of property" during the last two decades of the nineteenth century, and which, in effect, convicted those men of failure to alleviate the poverty of the masses.[23] One might cite here the consciousness of guilt among the upper-class intellectuals in Russia during the last century.

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[21] Emanuel Miller, loc. cit.

[22] Geoffrey Gorer and John Rickman, The People of Great Russia (The Cresset Press, London, 1949), p. 137.

[23] Beatrice Webb, My Apprenticeship, (Longmans Green & Co., London, 1950), p. 152 ff.

Another view taken by some philosophers and psychologists is that their quarrel is not so much with the sense of guilt as such, but with the undue importance they believe theology places upon this sense. As might be expected, even psychologists find difficulties in keeping a consistently clear view in regard to so basic a problem. Grace Stuart finds in the psychologist's attitude toward guilt "two mutually contradictory opinions". One of these recognizes guilt as a "civilizing motive power" while the other attitude emphasizes the necessity to reduce every possible tension, both in society and in the individual, which might be the cause of guilt.[24]

It would seem to be asking the impossible that philosophy, psychology, and theology should be able to reach a consistent and fundamental agreement. So far from this being probable, the very language each employs tends to widen their differences. In general there seems to be a mutual distrust among philosophers and psychiatrists concerning the value of each other's field of study. Freud seldom bothered to conceal his contempt for philosophy. Karl Jaspers, the only living philosopher who is also an eminent psychiatrist, has even doubted the possibility of a useful rapprochement between philosophy and psychopathology.[25] In so far as it owes its existence to

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[24] Grace Stuart, Conscience and Reason, (George Allen and Unwin Ltd., London, 1951), p. 168.

[25] Aubrey Lewis, "Philosophy and Psychiatry", Philosophy, XXIV (1949), 99-117.

philosophy, it would seem that psychology is merely repeating one of its favourite phenomena - rebellion against the father.

Jung, on the other hand, is noted for his role of peacemaker between psychologists and theologians, a role which is frequently condemned by psychoanalysts. He affirms the meeting of theology and psychology at that point where every individual neurosis requires a spiritual therapeutic, a healthy weltanschauung. Unfortunately, as Jung also points out, the conceptual language used by the theologians and psychologists is only in appearance the same language.[26] In his essay "Guilt: Theological and Psychological," Victor White writes: "The 'fields of association' which the word 'guilt' can conjure up are indeed so different that it is no wonder that they can provoke perplexities which amount to mutual incomprehension."[27] From the philosopher's side, we find H.D. Lewis asserting that theology and moral philosophy seem to be speaking different languages.[28] Sir Walter Moberly speaks of a "condition of tension, and often of mutual exasperation" between the various professions dealing with the problem of guilt and of a resulting

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[26] See the introduction by Jung to Victor White, God and the Unconscious, (The Harvill Press, London, 1952).

[27] Philip Mairet (ed.) Christian Essays in Psychiatry, (Philosophical Library, New York, 1956), p. 155.

[28] H.D. Lewis, Morals and the New Theology, (Victor Gollancz, London, 1947).

confusion among the lay public.[29] This depressing picture includes the jurist as well as the philosopher, the theologian, and the psychiatrist. A plea for a common understanding between the jurist and the psychiatrist has been forcefully made by Gregory Zilboorg who sees the existence of an inner conflict between law and psychiatry.[30] The necessary formalization of law, in which the law takes the side of morality as conceived by society, is in opposition to the scientific character of psychiatry. Reconciliation of this and other antagonisms would mean a heightened sense of justice and the eventual treatment of the criminal as a human being needing "restorative punishment".[31] In establishing beyond question the intimate connection between the sense of guilt and the need for

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[29] Sir Walter Moberly, Responsibility, (Oxford U.P., London, 1951), p. 6.

[30] Gregory Zilboorg, The Psychology of the Criminal Act and Punishment, (The Hogarth Press and The Institute of Psycho-Analysis, London, 1955), p. 125. The recently published Royal Commission on the Law Relating to Mental Illness and Mental Deficiency recommends a complete revaluation of terms and categories in the approach to mental illness. In Soviet Russia, where until fairly recently, it was confidently supposed that the problem of guilt would disappear entirely, some attempts have been made in the courts to unite the practices of law and psychiatry. However, even there the "two tests, psychiatric and legal, remain logically as irreconcilable as ever". (Harold J. Berman, Justice in Russia, (Harvard U.P., 1950), p. 231.

[31] Ibid., p. 137.

punishment,[32] psychology has pledged itself to reform a punitive system so outrageously ancient that it might be said to be based to some extent "on the theory and practice of magic."[33] A similar view is expressed as follows: "The concept of criminal responsibility in particular (which does not differ in substance from any other kind of responsibility) has long bothered lawyers and psychiatrists who, in their wrangling over this issue, never seem to come to grips with the essence of the problem."[34] The writer concludes that "The concepts of responsibility and punishment popular in legal and psychiatric practice are theological and metaphysical anachronisms".[35] Another writer confirms the existence of this breach by stating that "It is impossible for the doctor and the lawyer to reach agreement on the question of criminal responsibility while they approach the matter from a totally different standpoint, as they still do."[36] James Drever in his article "Philosophy and Psychology" admits that relations between these two studies are not as

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[32] Freud was of the opinion that psychoanalysis should dispense with the term "sense of guilt" and substitute "the need for punishment".

[33] Edward Glover, <u>The Dangers of Being Human</u>, (George Allen and Unwin Ltd., London, 1936), p. 74.

[34] J.E. MacDonald, "The Concept of Responsibility", <u>The Journal of Mental Science</u>, CI (1955), p. 704.

[35] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 715.

[36] Angus Macniven, "Psychosis and Criminal Responsibility," in <u>Mental Abnormality and Crime</u>, p. 57.

close as could be desired, but he believes the linguistic and conceptual difficulties should be left to the philosopher rather than to the scientist for clarification.[37]

Significant attempts are being made by psychologists to expand a study of personality into an ideal view of society. Where this is done the concept of the normal personality has about the same relation to the paranoid personality that a utopia would have to modern society with its multifarious problems. By this view of the normal personality, man's sense of guilt is not destroyed; rather it is dealt with more rationally; man knows when he is guilty, but the tragic mystery of guilt fades away, and a type of reparation is made for his guilt, which heals the inward conflict without resorting to a vindictive projection of guilt.[38]

The Christian attitude toward guilt in contradistinction to the views of the jurist and the psychologist has been defended by Moberly.[39] Psychoanalysis in turn has been represented by J.C. Flugel who notes the parallels between Christianity and psychoanalysis. Following the comparisons previously drawn by Oscar Pfister, he observes that both

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37 James Drever, "Philosophy and Psychology," Universities Quarterly, IV (1949-50), pp. 126-30.

38 R.E. Money-Kyrle, op. cit., p.78 ff. The viewpoint of Erich Fromm would probably be similar to this.

39 Moberly, op. cit.

have the purpose of reducing guilt by the aid of intermediaries.[40] He concludes, however, that "The religious emotions must be largely or entirely secularized and be put in the service of humanity."[41]

In its insistence upon the importance of a strong sense of responsibility to oneself, to one's God and one's conscience, although not in the formalization of this sense, Christianity bears a resemblance to secular law. Indeed, Christianity has played a central part in the formation and interpretation of law. On the other hand, as Flugel has maintained, Christianity is unlike the law and resembles psychiatry by its use of spiritual or psychological therapeutics. Throughout this pattern of aims and methods in psychiatry, in law, philosophy, and theology, one sees at once overlapping, and flagrant opposition; it is also a pattern in which the notion of responsibility is constantly changing. This is bound to happen, since the more or less scientific professions have turned away from the juridical notions of responsibility and punishment toward physiological and psychological treatment. The idea of the criminal type has given way in these professions to that of the patient, with a corresponding

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[40] J.C. Flugel, Man, Morals and Society, (Duckworth, London, 1954), p. 272. For a criticism of Flugel's views, see White, God and the Unconscious, p. 158 ff. See also Chapter IX on "The Analyst and the Confessor".

[41] Flugel, op. cit., p. 275.

shift in the conception of responsibility. Traditionally, responsibility stopped, as it were, at the feet of the wrongdoer; it now points beyond him to many antecedent factors over which, it is said, the subject had no control. The ideal in this approach is to hate the crime, not the criminal. Thus a more enlightened view of punishment has been achieved, but, as Moberly warns, the sentiment tout comprendre c'est tout pardonner conceals a dangerous contradiction.[42]

A word might be said about the problem of guilt from the psycho-social standpoint, an approach laying emphasis on isolation and unhappiness. In some respects scientific humanism and psychoanalysis are successfully dealing with individual unhappiness and isolation. Individuals who are chronically unhappy tend to seek happiness in egoistic, selfish ways. Hence, the modern concern to distinguish between the egoistic hedonism of the neurotic personality and the hedonism of the integrated personality. Yet, the fact of integration itself is not as desirable as it first appears, since the integrated person may often compromise his values and desires to a bad environment. Furthermore, statements by scientists about integration imply, to some extent, personal experience of integration. We often find, however, that persons who make these statements owe the success of their own hedonistic principles to inherited

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[42] Moberly, op. cit., p. 24.

aptitudes or talents which are morally neutral. Thus, it does not seem that criticism of the so-called egoist hedonist can always be morally justifiable. Attention given to the estranged, unhappy personality is certainly necessary, but it is equally important not to overlook the way in which the individual uses his unhappiness. It is a fact that personal unhappiness sometimes redounds to the benefit of mankind.

There would seem to be agreement between C.G. Jung and Sir Walter Moberly that the sense of guilt deserves an approach and an interpretation which is not to be found in science. Guilt alone does not make a sick or a diseased consciousness, nor does it necessarily imply the previous existence of an illness. No one can be immune from guilt, but by a certain orientation of the consciousness the individual may accept guilt without harm to himself and may discover finally a higher and more pure consciousness than before. Moberly affirms that "a sense of guilt is not necessarily a morbid state of mind, to be dissipated by being shown up. Far from being enervating, it may be thoroughly healthy and an indispensable means of self-mastery."[43] True to its scientific methods, psychoanalysis tends to study guilt in quantitative terms; thus, any individual consciousness approaching a state of psychosis or psycho-neurosis is ipso facto bad and dangerous and should be submitted to treatment. One would certainly be

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[43] Ibid., p. 61.

inclined to accept the need for treatment in such cases; yet there is another way of approaching the problem of guilt which is less expedient and which is perhaps more fundamental. By this approach the crux of the problem is seen to be one of orientation. What on the one hand appears to be a matter of quantitative analysis appears in this case to be a question of direction, the problem of orientating the consciousness toward the original or ultimate ground of guilt: God. As Martin Buber would say: "Guilt is the product of not taking the direction toward God."[44] Once the sense of guilt is manifest, it is only necessary, morally speaking, that this sense should be grounded in an inner awareness, a self-consciousness which responds to the command of the conscience to master, to recreate, and to perfect the self. A sense of guilt is a call to become transformed.

From the standpoint of science the foregoing interpretation would be regarded as unfortunately mystical. Nevertheless, we suggest that it remains firmly based upon Freud's central thesis that the original act of guilt was the rebellion of the sons against the father.[45] Even Breasted, who presented evidence for the social basis of consciousness, could not overlook the fact that the ideas

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44 Maurice S. Friedman, Martin Buber: The Life of Dialogue, (Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., London, 1955), p. 104.

45 Freud, Totem and Taboo, tr. A.A. Brill, (George Routledge & Sons, Ltd., London, 1919), p. 235.

of right and wrong were first decreed in Egypt by the Pharoah.[46] Moreover, the Pharoah whom Breasted describes as having had the greatest moral influence is Ikhnaton, the same Pharoah whom Freud identifies with Moses. Breasted tells us that "the chief force which moved the soul of Ikhnaton was emotion."[47] Ikhnaton's religious reforms constituted an "assault upon tradition" of such "fanatical violence" that it "could not but bring down upon him and his movement a retributive vengeance which stopped only with complete annihilation."[48] Breasted's archeological evidence, therefore, tends to confirm Freud's hypothetical ventures into cultural anthropology, for, according to Breasted, it was only after the downfall of Ikhnaton and his religion that the "conscience [was] fully emancipated" and the sinner confessed "his ignorance and proneness to err."[49] From that time onward "conscience became, as it had never been before, the unmistakable voice of God."[50] The similarities to the Freudian hypothesis are too obvious

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[46] James Henry Breasted, The Dawn of Conscience, (Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1934), p. 42.

[47] Ibid., p. 297.

[48] Ibid., p. 309.

[49] Ibid., p. 317.

[50] Ibid., p. 320.

to be ignored: it was the violent rebellion of the sons (or the followers) against the primal father (or the Pharoah), that formed (or conformed to) the pattern of all human guilt.

It cannot be too much emphasized that the primitive brothers, whose crime Freud surmised, did not turn against each other; their crime was not internecine warfare, but destruction of the Father-god; their specific guilt was only incidentally the guilt of each brother before the other. In fact, this guilt of each one individually before the other has meaning only in the light of the supreme guilt: the guilt against the primal father. If Freud's hypothesis of the ultimate guilt pattern has any truth, and the history of Christianity would suggest that it has, then all guilt is ultimately guilt before God. A God-centred religion[51] must invariably disclose the same pattern: all sin is sin against God; therefore all guilt is guilt before God. In this context, it makes little difference whether we say with Freud that the primitive brothers, faced with their guilt, forswore the killing of the father and denied themselves the women of the group;[52] or whether we say with Moberly that guilt may be a means of self-mastery; the

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[51] Or, mutatis mutandis, a secular Father-god religion, i.e., Caesarisms of the modern as well as the Roman type.

[52] Freud, Totem and Taboo, p. 238.

result of guilt is to effect a self-transformation; it is, in other words, a call to become transformed.

But, if it is true that guilt does not necessarily imply a state of morbidity, it is equally true that guilt is often the cause of a morbid, thoroughly unhealthy condition. This condition may well be <u>the</u> condition of modern man and not simply the case of a single individual on the couch of an analyst. Something has gone radically wrong with man's ability to discover and to know the meaning of his guilt; the fundamental guilt which afflicts the consciousness of modern man is felt, and not known. It is felt with an intensity that drives him by despair from inaction to violent collective action in the hope that he can rediscover his conscience. Man's guilt remains incomprehensible because he has lost contact with that ultimate authority which gives meaning to his guilt. When we come to investigate the problem of guilt in the modern world, we do not find, as we did with the linguistic evidence, that guilt is grounded in objective action; on the contrary, it is bound up with, and almost indistinguishable from, a sense of failure, of futility, of doubt, and loss of direction; one feels guilty because of the overwhelming number of unanswerable questions presented by existence. No longer can we agree completely with Hegel that guilt and action evolve together; we now find, on the contrary, that the profoundest consciousness of guilt arises precisely from

inaction, from the inability to grasp the principles upon which all rational action must finally rest. Man in search of a soul is man in search of the meaning of his guilt, for to be able to discover this is precisely to have a soul. But man searches blindly and without ears to hear, so long has it been since the commandment has echoed in the world. A vital chord has been severed, as it were, within the psyche. In medical terms it is exactly as if a surgical brain operation had somehow deprived man of his eternal connection; he has been "cut off" from the higher levels as effectively as his moral perception can be disorientated by a scalpel.[53]

To say that man is searching for the meaning of his guilt is to describe but half of his tragedy, for he also attempts to flee from an unknown, impalpable, and therefore terrifying guilt. Not to know the meaning of guilt is to know something of the sensation of metaphysical horror which primitive man must have experienced before the unknown realm of nature. In a part of his distracted consciousness he seeks outward provocation and sensation; unable to endure rest, he thirsts for action and actually finds relief in the commission of crimes which he justifies on the basis of self-preservation, or historical necessity,

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[53] An operation by no means impossible, as the following statement reveals: "Within rather broad anatomical limits ... gross disturbances of social and ethical valuation can be brought about by the interruption of nerve tracts within the frontal lobes and by lesions in the neighbourhood of the hypothalamus and the sub-thalamus." Prof. Alexander Kennedy, "Brain Structure and Moral Values", The Advancement of Science, VII No. 25 (1950), p. 54.

or even reason itself. The typically modern urge to express the self through action, the tendency to identify truth and consciousness with action is nothing but the rationalization of this rushing wildly down every avenue of sensation in order to find release from the incubus of unknown guilt in the arms of a real and palpable guilt. Is it any wonder that modern man betrays a secret pride in the awareness that it is his achievement at last to be able to destroy everything, even to the annihilation of all distinction between guilt and innocence? He actually believes, or is at least capable of believing, that to kill with a clear conscience, as if murder were sanctified by the Deity, is to have rediscovered his conscience. Only a universal spiritual calamity such as the death of God could explain such moral idiocy.

That part of man's consciousness which turns inward upon itselt carries with it a deep suspicion and fear of reality, not only of outer, but of inner reality; man's suspicion is sometimes directed less at the outer world than at his inner self. But fear and suspicion are not controlled by us, rather it is they which become masters over us; suspicion desires to break away from its futile preoccupation with the self and to fasten upon a definite, objective enemy. And it can find that enemy with a haste and disregard for reason, yet with an utter certainty that makes reason appear as some loathsome excrescence on the face of Truth herself. Accordingly, we submit that Kafka

has given a clearer and more consistent picture of modern man in the midst of a hostile world than any other writer. Kafka is not an obscurantist, but an artist who describes with equal clarity subjective and objective reality. In the following example from his story "The Burrow", Kafka shows the agony of fear and suspicion issuing from the diffuse and profoundly experienced but unintelligible guilt in the modern world.

> And it is not only by external enemies that I am threatened. There are also enemies in the bowels of the earth; not even legend can describe them ....[54] It need not be any particular enemy that is provoked to pursue me, it may very well be some chance innocent little creature, some disgusting little beast which follows me out of curiosity, and thus, without knowing it, becomes the leader of all the world against me ...[55] But what avails all exhortations to be calm; my imagination will not rest, and I have actually come to believe - it is useless to deny it to myself - that the whistling is made by some beast, and moreover not by a great many small ones, but by a single great one ....[56] I merely assume that the beast - and I make no claim whatever that it knows of my existence - is encircling me ....[57] Lying on my heap of earth I can naturally dream of all sorts of things, even of an understanding with the beast, though I know well enough that no such thing can happen, and that at the instant when we see each other, more, at the moment when we merely guess at

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[54] Franz Kafka, The Great Wall of China and Other Pieces, tr. Willa and Edwin Muir, (Secker and Warburg, London, 1946), p. 49.

[55] Ibid., p. 59.

[56] Ibid., p. 75.

[57] Ibid., p. 76.

> each other's presence, we shall both blindly bare our claws and teeth, neither of us a second before or after the other, both of us filled with a new and different hunger, even if we should already be gorged to bursting.[58]

Can it be asserted that Kafka is not describing reality, but only some hallucinatory, completely subjective, and personal interpretation of reality? We do not believe that this can be maintained. The guilty fear and suspicion found in modern life is universal in extent; it is not confined merely to individuals, to nations, ethnic groups, or social classes, although it may take different forms and become especially intensified among certain groups of peoples. This is obviously the case with some individuals whose sense of guilt is dangerously exaggerated. That a consciousness of guilt can reach the pitch of madness among specific groups of people has been only too tragically borne out by modern history. The following evidence is taken from a psychological study of a people whose culture, literature, and political history shows pre-eminently the pervasive influence of a sense of guilt. Similarities between these collective reactions and those individual ones described by Kafka will be clear.

> ... the majority of Great Russians have a diffuse feeling of guilt, which is largely or entirely unconscious, and

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58 Ibid., p. 80.

> a diffuse feeling of fear ....[59]
> The mass of the [Russian] population is oppressed by diffuse feelings of guilt and hostility, but shows very little anxiety ....[60] The [Russian] intelligentsia and élites seem to share the diffuse guilt and hostility and to see potential enemies all around them, including the mass of the people they control ....[61] [The most common word in Russian for indicating an enemy is a word meaning] 'dark or sinister forces'. This term is completely vague; the dark forces might be anywhere and anyone, inside or outside the individual, the group, the country. All that can be certainly known about these dark forces is their plan (conspiracy, intention) to constrain and destroy[62]....
> If one's own guilt cannot be alleviated, then an enemy who has been identified appears to be irremediably wicked, and almost without human qualities, as though he were an incarnation of the scriptural devil no longer consciously believed in[63]....
> Once an enemy has been 'unmasked' and identified ... the proper response ... is an attack of destructive rage ....
> For the intelligentsia and the Soviet élites the proper response is hatred ... It would seem as though an attack of rage had a somewhat cathartic effect ... and that violence - especially emotional violence - becomes valued as an instrument in liberating one temporarily from the diffuse unconscious guilt and fear and destroying the confusions produced by the dark forces.[64]

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[59] Geoffrey Gorer and John Rickman, op. cit., p. 154.

[60] Ibid., p. 189.

[61] Ibid., p. 190.

[62] Ibid., p. 156.

[63] Ibid., p. 155.

[64] Ibid., p. 162.

Thus it seems clear that collective guilt is something more than a bad myth, since it is one of the fundamental purposes of a totalitarian regime to utilize and to perpetuate whatever feelings of guilt are natural to the people. Totalitarian Leaders, however, just because they are totalitarian, are not content to allow the natural pattern of guilt-innocence to resume its course in freedom. Their purpose is rather to impose a radically new structure of guilt-innocence, and to enforce the inclusion of every person under this system. Marxist philosophy, when it is brought down from the clouds in response to its demand to change the world, is seen to be, at bottom, not a demand for a new economic system, but a demand for new gods and new devils, for a new pattern of guilt-innocence. The revolution in the private world of Marx, the violent overthrowing of the structure of his own conscience is later re-enacted in history among those who attempt to enforce the new pattern on earth. It could not have been otherwise. These points are clearly substantiated in the essay "Truth and Guilt" by John Rickman. He asserts that the greatest difference between Czarist Russia and Communist Russia is "in relation to guilt".[65] The Church under the old regime did not deny the possibility of guilt in certain areas of life; it acknowledged a "complexity of guilt"; gave the

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65 Ibid., p. 235.

people a different scale of values from that of the State, and offered absolution for individual guilt. Under the new regime, however, there is no "complexity", there is only one sin - sin against the State, and to commit violence or destruction on behalf of the State cannot be a sin, and, hence, cannot involve guilt.[66] However, the problems concerned with guilt and totalitarianism will be considered in the next chapter.

We now have to ask, as we did above, whether it can be asserted that the foregoing evidence for the existence of a diffuse sense of guilt is peculiar to only one form of society and is, therefore, not applicable to psychological reality in other parts of the world. Again we deny that this is the case. Just as the revolution which was born in the consciousness of Marx was eventually played out in objective reality, so this latter revolution became the great historical event of the era, heightening the consciousness, vivifying the imagination, and, most important of all, purging the soul of its vast load of guilt. What happened when the tragedy of guilt was played out on the Russian stage was that repressed feelings of guilt and hatred were purged on a universal scale. The profound attraction experienced almost universally for the revolutionary, totalitarian events of this century signify

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[66] Ibid., pp. 234-5.

the need for an emotional cathartic, a violent (if only vicarious) casting away of a diffuse and unintelligible feeling of guilt, as well as for a weltanschauung and a clearer vision into the future. In other words, these events signify precisely the existence of those human problems that great religions have always responded to. Modern man's loss of the idea of authority, and, hence, his loss of inner control, manifested in his craving for action; his need to act upon the external world, and his desire only for "final solutions" corresponds, we believe, to the existence of an abstract, subjective guilt which is continually seeking, as it were, to objectify itself, to discover its objective source so as to vent itself in violent action against this suspected evil. In the modern world great revolutions imply activist philosophies, and activist thought implies a profound sense of guilt; therefore, the thesis must concern itself with the relations between guilt and activist, totalitarian thought.

To recapitulate the main points made thus far, the thesis recognizes the psychological priority of the sense of guilt in all problems of morality, and accordingly, it asserts the need for moral philosophy to begin with the problem of guilt, not with a view to provide universal scapegoats upon which man can discharge his burden of guilt, but in order to indicate that moral reality is individual, not collective, and that all attempts to solve this problem by collective thought and collective action

must ultimately reach the point where man's sense of guilt is either resolved in freedom within himself, or shifted by violence into a new pattern of guilt-innocence. Consistency in collective thought and action is the motivating force behind the latter endeavour, and the name given to it by the modern world is totalitarianism.

CHAPTER II

COLLECTIVE GUILT

Kierkegaard, with his characteristic fondness for paradoxical metaphor, explains in the Concluding Scientific Postscript how an inward movement of the self, travelling backward and downward, touching the whole past in all its most sensitive details, might raise the self at the same time to a new and higher level of existence. This would seem to presuppose an extraordinary strength of will, a kind of motive power, a religious energy, perhaps, to urge the self backward into the dark shameful corners of the past and to assuage the pain involved in reopening old wounds. For nothing can be so painful as to relive what the mind has so generously buried; the plunge into the history of the self opens an almost endless depth of guilt and misery. We should not be surprised to find that great heroes, the conquerors, and leaders of men have seldom troubled to look backward or downward either into their own lives or along the road whence they came to power. Such power over the lives of others usually grows in proportion to one's capacity to forget. It is a question worth asking: does it require more strength to forget, or more strength to remember? It seems to be characteristic of our age that it is easier to forget, easier to throw passions outward than inward; and needless to add, this is found to be much less painful. Yet this is also an age of inwardness and isolation; not of active inwardness such as

Kierkegaard understood, but of a blind, groping, darkened inwardness. It is painful because it has neither an intelligible beginning nor a discernible end; it is darkened by an impalpable shadow of guilt. We can illustrate this condition by these lines from a poem by Kenneth Fearing:

> 'I do not deny my guilt,'
> said John Doe, 'My own, first, and
> after that my guilty knowledge of
> still further guilt. I have
> counterfeited often, and successfully.
> I have been guilty of ignorance, and
> of talking with conviction. Of
> intolerable wisdom, and keeping
> silent. Through carelessness, or
> cowardice, I have shortened the
> lives of better men. And the name
> for that is murder.'
>
> ....
>
> 'Guilt,' said John, 'is always
> and everywhere nothing less than guilt.
> I have always, at all times, been a
> willing accomplice of the crass and
> the crude. I have overheard, daily,
> the smallest details of conspiracies
> against the human race, vast in their
> ultimate scope, and conspired daily
> to launch my own. You have heard of
> innocent men who died in the chair.
> It was my greed that threw the switch.
> I helped, and do not deny it, to nail
> that guy to the cross, and shall
> continue to help. Look into my eyes.
> you can see the guilt. Look at my
> face, my hair, my very clothing, you
> will see guilt written plainly everywhere.
> Guilt of the flesh. Of the soul. Of
> laughing when others do not. Of
> breathing and eating and sleeping.
> I am guilty of what? Of guilt.
> Guilty of guilt, that is all, and
> enough.'[1]

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[1] Kenneth Fearing, "Confession Overheard in a Subway", Afternoon of a Pawnbroker and Other Poems (Harcourt Brace & Co., New York, 1943).

Or, it may be illustrated with these words spoken by a character in a play by Sartre:

> I feel guilty. For thirty years I've felt guilty of something. Guilty of being alive. Just now, houses are burning because of me, innocent people are dead, and I am going guilty to my grave, my whole life has been one long mistake.[2]

But the self is unable to endure its own shame; it finds the shame of others almost as painful, and perhaps as hateful. Suspicion of oneself may lead to suspicion of others; hatred of oneself to hatred of others. Men recognize their individual guilt in each other's eyes; hence, inwardness and isolation. Turning away from each other, they see only the painful images of themselves and hardly recognize the distorted, ruined image of what they once were. The time is now past when man could imagine the existence of a divine human being and see the possibility therein of his own spiritual nature. To set us up a glass where we might see the inmost part of us would be, we feel, an unbearable torture. Never have self-reflections caused so much uneasiness; never have mirrors revealed such depths; the common mirror has become in modern literature the objective correlative to the human aversion to looking inward. Innocent mirrors may be the breeding places of great suspicions; they throw back our guilt and self-distrust.

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[2] Jean-Paul Sartre, Three Plays: "Crime Passionel", "Men Without Shadows" and "The Respectable Prostitute", tr. Kitty Black (Hamish Hamilton, London, 1949), pp.117-18.

> I have always had a certain suspicion about myself ... things like astonishment at the sight of one's own face in the looking-glass, or at the reflection of the back of one's head, or indeed of the whole figure, when, walking along the street, one suddenly passes a mirror.[3]

The symptoms of such unrelieved shame have undoubtedly crept into every nerve and fibre of our existence. A hundred years ago Dostoevsky recognized the shame of being individual men which we try to hide by contriving "to be some sort of generalized man",[4] a shame of which Albert Camus was probably thinking when he noted that modern man dreams of "a strange freedom of the species".[5] The suspicion that we have been false to the sacred image within us grows until we feel self-convicted; taking up our hands we point the accusing finger of guilt against our own souls. This, to some extent, affords relief, but we insist that others should do the same; if the guilt is to be accepted at all, it must be accepted universally. All guilt implies a wrong, and a wrong implies the need for punishment. The suspicion we have concerning ourselves begins to assume a

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[3] Franz Kafka, Wedding Preparations in the Country, (Secker and Warburg, London, 1954), p. 406. An interesting reference to mirrors and the sense of guilt is provided by Geoffrey Gorer. He recalls that the immense drinking orgies common among Russian peasants and workers end in the destruction of property, especially the smashing of mirrors, which is said to represent aggression turned inward so that by "destroying the mirror, which reflects the self, it may appear that the evil self is destroyed." (The People of Great Russia, p. 140).

[4] Fyodor Dostoevsky, "Notes From Underground", White Nights and Other Stories, tr. Constance Garnett, (William Heinemann, London, 1918), p. 154.

[5] Albert Camus, The Rebel, tr. Anthony Bower, (Hamish Hamilton, London, 1953), p. 272.

totally different perspective; perhaps it is not we who have been false to the consciousness of the reflection of God in man, but rather this image has dealt falsely with us. The accusing finger is relaxed; we release ourselves from suspicion, and we begin to look again more carefully. We already know the real criminal exists; the crime has never been committed for which a scapegoat could not be found. Suspicion pulses and throbs as if it had a separate life of its own; it is a stifled passion awaiting the advent of some spark, some impulse to give it complete liberation. And the liberation will come; it must come as surely as a law of human nature to those who are ready to receive it. Human guilt does not seek its own level, it does not desire equilibrium; on the contrary it tends to be either implosive or explosive, either self-destructive or other-destructive. And so suspicion, spawned in the beginning by guilt, waxes and wanes, now it secrets itself and now makes ready to burst forth. Even when it seems least viable ...

> ... it is nevertheless there and alive ... it is only gathering its strength, waiting for the favourable opportunity when, at a single bound, it will grow from a minute discomfort into a big, wild, malevolent suspicion that breaks free of its fetters and ruthlessly destroys everything that there is in common between him who has the suspicion and him who is suspect.[6]

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[6] Kafka, Wedding Preparations in the Country, p. 407.

We need not pause here to suggest what forms the will to destruction might assume. Man's technical ingenuity has amply demonstrated its sufficiency to reproduce the wildest and most fantastic details of all his underworld dreams. Seeking to destroy the evidence of his own guilt, man only succeeds in gaining the knowledge that he can destroy the whole world (i.e., all of humanity), that he has made everything possible except the destruction of guilt itself, and that as a last resort, as a last gesture of infinite defiance all human guilt must be flung back at its Creator. "God is guilty!" shout the characters in a post-war German play.[7] At the "trial of God", a character called Jonah turns the accusation back on modern man: "You can pick out the face of twentieth-century man from all others. Hardly ever will you find so much cruelty, self-righteousness, and emptiness, all in one physiognomy." One sees in the indictment of God, the "final solution" which "raving twentieth-century man" has indeed been seeking. It would hardly be possible to discover a more ultimate or a more universal scapegoat than God. The search for scapegoats seems in fact, to have effected a larger and larger share of modern thought, including philosophy and science itself. Where shall we look for the beginnings of such confusion?

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7 Although this play, The Sign of Jonah, by Geunter Rutenborn, has been produced in The United States, it has apparently not been published. The references have, therefore, been taken from an article in the magazine Presbyterian Life, (June 22, 1957).

THE INSTABILITY OF IDEAS

The first signs of definite instability were evident towards the end of the eighteenth century. Professor Barbu refers to Tocqueville's statement that the pre-Revolutionary period in France brought forth a tendency among the people to believe in absurdities of all sorts.[8] Much in evidence were pseudo-religions, semi-mystical cults and secret societies oddly flourishing in an age of "Reason". We are told that the eighteenth century was not more rational than any other, and perhaps less so. Actually, it secretly craved the irrational and the supernatural.[9] Thus, in an atmosphere of instability where reason was commencing to lose its supports, it could actually happen, and in fact did happen, that reason "became itself the object of faith, it became the omnipotent reason".[10] There were at least two men, however, who were uniquely aware by the middle of the nineteenth century that all was not well with reason. Both Kierkegaard and Dostoevsky understood that fundamental principles were slipping away, and that

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[8] Zevedei Barbu, Democracy and Dictatorship, (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1956), p. 234.

[9] See E.M. Butler, The Myth of the Magus (Cambridge U.P., 1948)

[10] Barbu, op. cit., p. 235. The decline of wisdom, writes Gabriel Marcel, is "a phenomenon of immeasurable gravity ... comparable to some great meteorological transformation such as now and then takes place ..." (The Decline of Wisdom, tr. Manya Harari (The Harvill Press, London, 1954), p. 46).

men were clutching at dangerous substitutes in the conviction that truth was near at hand. Young men in Russia were attracted to "certain strange incomplete ideas which [were] floating in the air";[11] one noticed the "extraordinary instability of ideas, ideas that prompt people to terrible actions".[12] Unable to grasp first principles, men were being converted to Philistinism without being aware of it. "But what then is Philistinism?" asked Kierkegaard. "Philistinism always consists in the use of the relative as the absolute in connection with the essential."[13] The situation was such that man's consciousness was being subverted; instead of relating himself directly to the ideal, man considered that he was "related to the ideal through the medium of successive generations, through the state, through the centuries ..."[14] Essentially, Kierkegaard's Philistine is none other than Dostoevsky's "direct man", the man of action who takes "immediate and secondary causes for primary ones" and so provides himself with a quick and simple excuse for his activity.[15] Confusion of the relative

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11 Dostoevsky, New Dostoevsky Letters, tr. S.S. Koteliansky (The Mandrake Press, London, n.d.), p. 43.

12 Ibid., p. 48.

13 Soren Kierkegaard, Kierkegaard's Concluding Unscientific Postscript, tr. David F. Swenson and Walter Lowrie (Oxford U.P., London, 1941), p. 486.

14 Ibid., p. 483.

15 Dostoevsky, "Notes From Underground", White Nights and Other Stories p. 62.

with the absolute, the purblind apotheosis of false absolutes and half truths led to the enthronement of reason and science which have never been able to unravel the obscurities of good and evil and have only succeeded in adding fuel to the confusion of all values. Such has been the subverting influence of ...

> ... the half truths of science, the most terrible scourge of humanity, unknown till this century, and worse than plague, famine or war. A half-truth is a despot such as has never been in the world before. A despot that has its priests and its slaves, a despot to whom all do homage with love and superstition hitherto inconceivable ...[16]

Underneath all the appearances of justifiable optimism, reason was becoming divorced from the conduct of individual life; man no longer sought ways to exist in harmony with nature and with God; he rejected the ancient wisdom of striving to justify himself before God and instead proudly began to apply reason to the efficient planning of mass life and to the subtle transformation of the term "good" into a question of utility and efficiency. Thus, in our day Martin Buber writes: "False absolutes rule over the soul, which is no longer able to put them to flight through the image of the true ..."[17] All the delirious enthusiasm

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[16] Dostoevsky, The Possessed, tr. C. Garnett, (Heinemann, London, 1913), p. 233.

[17] Martin Buber, Eclipse of God, (Victor Gollancz, London, 1953), p. 155.

for creating the "new man" could never have happened unless that "new man" had not already in actual fact become basically conceived quite independently of the conscious will of man. That fond dream of creating the "new man" which to all appearances began with the <u>Ecole Polytechnique</u> and which has survived into the present century had actually taken root in a different world from the world of man's conscious life.

THE CONFUSION OF DREAM AND REALITY

This instability of ideas indicates in its first stage a sensation of intellectual giddiness somewhat like the intoxicated feeling a released prisoner experiences when he breathes the clear air of freedom and believes that freedom means unlimited possibilities. His dreams have already helped to convince him of this, for the strongest and most persistent dreams concern our strongest desires, those objects we believe we have been deprived of by life. The stability of outer reality over against the reality given in our dreams is maintained by the authority of consciousness, an authority which is neither unchanging nor unmixed with explosive elements from the source of dreams, the unconscious. These elements are continually at war with the inner authority, and the balance of power invested in the latter is more precarious than we like to believe. Giddiness and hedonistic hysteria result precisely from a weakening of consciousness; the intellect flutters like a butterfly from flower to flower, from sensation to

sensation, always convinced it is coming closer to the truth when in fact it could not be farther from truth. It is not a question of the innocence or guilt of man's dreams, but a question of their unsuspected power, their capacity for depriving consciousness of its true interest in the self, so that perfection and imperfection cease to be images for the consciousness to apply inwardly and become merely pronouncements on what ought to be done actively and materially. In this situation the most guiltless dreams and the most innocent will may combine to [ensorcell] the consciousness into a state where it is no longer capable of clearly distinguishing good from evil, and where, in any case, a manifestly evil action, provided it is done with a good will, is superior to the innocence of inaction. Meanwhile, impatience has done its work; gradually the barriers between the conscious and the unconscious are broken down, ("For nothing is hid that shall not be made manifest") and the worst fantasies and dreams of man's underworld life break out into the real world.

Much of Kierkegaard's overwhelming sense of fear, which he developed into fantasies of his own wickedness, resulted from an acute perception of the constant war between the higher and lower natures of man. The fear arising from this perception is the basis of his conviction that education through dread is the only education worthy of the name. When it is fully realized that the terrible inner reality (the possibility) is never far from the outer, then one naturally finds a totally different interpretation of

reality. It would be quite true to say that one of the chief ideas which both Kierkegaard and Dostoevsky attempted to impart was that possibility could educate more convincingly than anything else. One might also add that Kafka's whole life consisted of this "education" in its most intense form.

Evidence of the confusion of dream and reality appears nowhere so notoriously as in the frequency and fervency with which we attempt to deny the existence of any and all threats to reality as we wish to have it. Over and over one hears the leitmotif of the modern consciousness: "It is impossible" (i.e., "It can't happen here"). Actually, all that seems impossible is that the human imagination should ever be able to grasp the tenuousness of this absurd defence and the possibilities which it contrives to deny. To a certain extent we are all like the condemned man in Kafka's sketch who is interrupted at his last meal by the executioner: "Are you ready?" asks the executioner. Receiving no reply, he commences to sharpen his knives; the condemned man looks at him, shudders and turns away; he "has no desire to see more". Again, after a while, the executioner says, "Ready". The condemned man jumps up with a scream, "Ready? You're not going to kill me ..." He is reassured as if by the sound of his own voice. "It is impossible," he says quietly. "This singular judicial procedure was instituted just because it is impossible. ... You will take me to another jail; I shall probably have to stay there a long time, but they will not execute me." Whereupon the executioner draws a

dagger from its sheath. "You are probably thinking," says the executioner, "of those fairy tales in which a servant is commanded to expose a child and does not do so and instead binds him over as apprentice to a shoemaker. Those are fairy tales: this, though, is not a fairy tale."[18]

This type of mental defence against a threatening reality may be illustrated by contrasting the effect upon the reader of Coleridge's The Ancient Mariner with the effect commonly produced by Kafka's story The Trial. Both tales present a dream-like, "impossible" view of reality; in both there is a judgement and a punishment completely inconsistent with ordinary standards of human justice; yet the poem alone immediately appears to have an intrinsic, retributive logic, a kind of divine necessity which has no place on earth, but which is nonetheless acceptable as a possible kind of earthly justice. In the same way, the fate of Oedipus, improbable though it is by merely human standards, has its own inner logic. The ordinary reader of Kafka's story, however, will try to convince himself that its events are outside the realm of possibility. He will be inclined to approve the punishment of the Mariner while rejecting as absurd the suffering and death of Joseph K.;

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[18] Kafka, The Diaries of Franz Kafka: 1914-1923 (Secker & Warburg, London, 1949), pp. 162-63. In refusing to take seriously the despair common to existentialist art, one refuses to accept the "existential meaninglessness and hidden despair" of one's own life. This is the opinion of Paul Tillich who writes, "one does not feel spiritually threatened by something which is not an element of oneself." (The Courage To Be, p. 134).

he will be impressed with the "truth" of the poem, while, at best, only the bizarre originality of the story will be impressive. And yet, it is the story, not the poem, which is classical in style; it is only the story in which the symbolism is natural and prosaic. The reason for this difference seems to be that so long as the dream-like consistency and logic of imaginative art remains in its accustomed place, that is, as a reflection and not as a description of possible events, it is acceptable, but when the absurd events normally restricted to dreams break through into real life, then the description of these events is no less unwelcome than the reality itself. From this we draw the conclusion that what is called "the failure of nerve" in modern life may be, in fact, the only positive reaction to present reality.

The universal fairy tale of the modern age begins with the words: "It is impossible." Thus, having come full round from the giddy fairy tale life of the eighteenth century which was so firmly convinced that possibilities were unlimited, we have now reached a stage where the human consciousness is haunted by the dreadful suspicion that in reality (not only in dreams) everything is possible.

THE MEANING OF KAFKA'S WORLD

Looking back upon Kafka's time from the year 1957 we can see that it is not so much the reality behind subsequent events (everything Kafka wrote can be said to represent this reality), but the events themselves that present the greatest obstacle to credulity. It is, therefore, not surprising that Kafka's conception of reality cannot easily be accepted as having any relation to an objectively real world. Even the authentic reports of survivors of concentration camps fail to provide the links with common sense experience which are required for a genuinely rational assent to the existence of such camps.[19] The very existence of such vast horrors is enough to render the mind incapable both of communicating and of accepting the fact. One of the survivors of those camps, however, noted that he had lived among characters "straight out of the world of Kafka".[20] In the account of his experiences in a French concentration camp, Arthur Koestler asserts that his inability to find anyone who could explain the reason for his arrest was a typical Kafkan situation. He compared the whole episode to

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[19] Cf. Hannah Arendt, The Burden of our Time (Secker & Warburg, London, 1951), p. 414. In a private letter to the present writer, Miss Arendt writes: "What makes Kafka so modern is that he seems to indicate: Everything can happen and nothing is real." The following is only one of many examples which might be used in support of this opinion: "... it could well happen that in flying from one enemy I might run into the jaws of another. Anything might happen!" ("The Burrow" in The Great Wall of China, p. 49).

[20] David Rousset, A World Apart (Secker & Warburg, London, 1951), p. 3.

a novel by Kafka.[21] With reference to the inability of the human mind to graps contemporary events, Koestler says: "Facts and proofs abound; but consciousness lags behind; it is easier for the imagination to grasp the past than the present."[22] We can see the truth of this statement in the cries of righteous anger against capitalist abuses of generations ago, while the worst terrors in history are brushed aside;[23] or in the reprobation of the Inquisition, when several hundred Inquisitions running simultaneously could not equal the mass exterminations of the present age.

Nearly every historian of events in Germany during the last war expressly warns his readers that although he has used the most exacting care in documenting his sources - which are often eye-witness descriptions - they may expect to find many of the details beyond credulity. Rousset says that the internees "are separated from other people by an experience which it is impossible to communicate".[24] The

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21 Arthur Koestler, Scum of the Earth (Collins with Hamish Hamilton, London, 1955), p. 152. Both Freda Utley and Margarete Buber have described the arrest of their husbands under circumstances even more sinister than those imaginatively described by Kafka in The Trial. Cf. Margarete Buber, Under Two Dictators (Victor Gollancz Ltd., London, 1949), and Freda Utley, Lost Illusion (George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London, 1949).

22 Ibid., p. 225.

23 See the essay by Bertrand de Jouvenel, "Treatment of Capitalism by Intellectuals" in Capitalism and the Historians, edited by F.A. Hayek, (Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., London, 1954).

24 Rousset, op. cit., p. 109.

authors of the book Russian Purge acknowledge that ...

> No event in recent history so tremendous as the great purge has remained apparently so incomprehensible. To the Soviet people, and to the two authors of this work, who were among its victims, the purge still seems utterly fantastic. What chance, then, has the non-Soviet world of forming a true picture of those extraordinary years?[25]

Again, we may refer to Koestler who tells us that prison life usually can be defined as normal life without its freedom. But this will not do at all when we attempt to understand totalitarian prison life, which bears the same relation to ordinary life, as life on the moon bears to life on earth. "Incomparable magnitudes are involved; earthly concepts lose all their meaning."[26] Writing about experiences in Russia during the war, another observer states:

> The reader can be given facts. He cannot share the experience ... One can enumerate the horrors ... All this can be described. It can even, to some degree, be imaginatively felt. To what degree, depends on the mind and heart of the reader. But there will always be the distance of a universe between this imagination and the experience itself.[27]

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[25] F. Beck and W. Godin, Russian Purge and the Extraction of Confession (Hurst and Blackett Ltd., London, 1951), p. 9.

[26] Arthur Koestler, Spanish Testament (Victor Gollancz, London, 1937), p. 373.

[27] The Dark Side of the Moon (author unnamed). Preface by T.S. Eliot (Faber and Faber Ltd., London, 1946), p. 69.

Another observer of totalitarian prison life writes: "We know how great is the tendency of the human imagination to exaggerate in the effort to picture the torture and humiliation of others. About the concentration camps no exaggeration is necessary; the most gruesome fantasies are reality."[28] A medical doctor who was an internee writes: "... no one who has not had any personal experience of a German concentration camp can possibly have any conception of concentration camp life ..."[29] He asserts that "The concentration camp as a symbol of reality can only be compared to the notion of death as a terrifying oblivion."[30]

In spite of the longer period of time that separates us from Dostoevsky we may not expect to find it any easier to credit the events in Soviet Russia or to see the connection between them and the world of Dostoevsky. Theodor Reik says that though The Brothers Karamazov is not real, "it is truer to life than life itself". Yet people would object if, as an expert criminologist and psychologist, he were to discuss the "invented" novel rather than a "real case". "There are judges," he adds significantly, "who

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[28] Curt Bondy, "Problems of Internment Camps", The Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, XXXVIII (1943), p. 454.

[29] Elie A. Cohen, Human Behaviour in the Concentration Camp, tr. M.H. Braaksma (Jonathan Cape, London, 1954), p.xv.

[30] Ibid., p. 5.

maintain that judicial errors belong exclusively to the realms of fiction".[31] How much more potent then will be the mental effort where one's survival is at stake. So strong sometimes is this "fairy tale" mentality, this fictive, self-preserving reaction, that even in the face of death itself one does not abandon the illusion that "it is impossible". Dostoevsky himself understood this profoundly. More than once he recalls the time when he faced the firing squad with the other members of the revolutionary Petrashevsky group. He understood that a condemned man can make the last few hundred yards to the gallows appear as if death were a thousand miles away.

If we were to choose from all of Dostoevsky's works the lines most pertinent to the utter confusion of dream and reality we should choose these words of Zossima:

> And we may ask the scornful themselves: if our hope is a dream, when will you build up your edifice and order things justly by your intellect alone, without Christ? ... Of a truth, they have more fantastic dreams than we. They aim at justice, but, denying Christ, they will end by flooding the earth with blood, for blood cries out for blood, and he that taketh up the sword shall perish by the sword.[32]

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[31] Theodor Reik, The Unknown Murderer, tr. Dr. Katherine Jones (Hogarth Press, London, 1936), p. 238.

[32] Dostoevsky, The Brothers Karamazov tr. C. Garnett, (William Heinemann, London, 1912), p. 338.

Anyone who has read The House of the Dead will remember that one of the most astoundingly vivid scenes in that book takes place in the prisoner's bath house. Someone has aptly described it as the most convincing portrait of hell on earth ever written. Another memorable scene in this book is the description of the prisoner's Christmas drama, a somewhat chaotic, but extremely amusing, human and touching scene. But what could any serious novelist, even a philosophical novelist of Dostoevsky's genius, do with a scene such as this?...

> To the horrors of Solovetsk Soviet prison had been added a figment of delerium: in the midst of a typhoid epidemic, the prison theatre was filled with camp beds on which the sufferers lay moaning, but on the stage, surrounded by the dying, those convicts who had been promoted to the role of actors were with great fervour rehearsing a play celebrating the success of the Five Year Plan and of Socialist Enthusiasm.[33]

... Or with the case of the prison where "in the same cell you could find prisoners suffering severely from the effects of interrogation, about which nobody bothered, while every conceivable medicine for the prevention and cure of coughs, colds and headaches was regularly distributed."[34] The same authors describe the fantastic legends that were

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[33] Anton Ciliga, The Russian Enigma, tr. Fernand G. Renier and Anne Cliff. (George Routledge and Sons Ltd., London, 1940), p. 183.

[34] F. Beck and W. Godin, op. cit., p. 59.

ingeniously created by accused people in response to the NKVD's theory that the accused had to build up the case for his persecution by his own free-will.

> A Kiev workman, for instance, described in detail how he had tried to blow up a kilometre-long bridge over the Dnieper with several kilograms of arsenic, but, because of rainy weather, had had to abandon the attempt. A worker in an educational supplies factory ... maintained that he belonged to an organization whose object was the construction of artificial volcanoes to blow the entire Soviet Union sky-high.[35]

Similarly, the complete confusion of the concepts of guilt and innocence resulting from the mass arrests in Russia between 1936 and 1938 has been reported by Alex Weissberg. He states that of approximately eight million people arrested between 1936 and 1938 not one was guilty as charged. As a result of this, the few spies and guilty ones who might have been arrested could not be detected from

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[35] Ibid., p. 46. This type of exaggerated confession corresponds to the confession extracted from Robert Vogeler in Hungary: "Finally, after sixty days, he was at the end of his tether and wrote a 'confession' which he consciously phrased as extravagantly as possible, hoping that its very ridiculousness might transmit a message indicating his desparate position." (See James Clark Moloney, "Psychic Self-Abandon and Extortion of Confession". The International Journal of Psycho-Analysis, XXXVI (1955), p. 57. However, it cannot be said that the Communists exaggerated for the same reason; their confessions were made in excess of zeal to confess, in a state bordering on intoxication. Perhaps Vogeler was nearer to such a state than he later realized. After sixty days of "mental or psychological torture" combined with the use of drugs (p. 56.) his confession could hardly have been phrased with complete consciousness.

the innocent, who had already been forced to confess.[36]

In China (so it is reported) large public meetings are held at night in order to induce mass-hysteria, that is, the right psychological background for mass-brainwashing.

> In the semi-darkness, in strained silence, each member of the actor audience comes in turn to the middle of the circle and weeps at the recollection of his former existence and the misery and oppression of which he was the victim ... [The] cries for vengeance against those responsible for all the many evils of life rise in intensity ... In the course of such a public confession one can see the guilty man sob and even roll himself on the ground in despair ... The atmosphere of these assemblies cannot be described; one must have experienced it for oneself.[37]

Perhaps enough examples have been given here to support our contention that it is neither Dostoevsky nor Kafka who have written "fairy tales", but it is we ourselves who indulge in "fairy tales" and self-delusion when we prefer to believe "it is impossible". When faced with the coincidence between Kafka's fantastic, unreal world and the totalitarian reality of today, one understands how difficult is the task of assimilating into a common-sense perspective

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[36] Alex Weissberg, Conspiracy of Silence (Hamish Hamilton, London, 1952) pp. 1 - 3.

[37] Francis Dufay and Douglas Hyde, Red Star Versus the Cross (Paternoster Publications, London, 1954), p. 112. Cf. also Sargant, Battle for the Mind. "Mao's terror gets the utmost publicity ... Hundreds of mass trials, often involving thousands of blood-yelling participants, (are) carried out in the big cities, usually at a popular sports ground, in which the victims are publicly denigrated, then publicly shot." (quoted from Time magazine, March 5, 1956).

the reality of a world in which the worst fantasies of the unconscious break through and overwhelm the whole of human existence. But it is not simply in the concentration camps that the individual battle to preserve one's identity goes on, for this happens everywhere. All thinking men must be engaged in the one essential struggle to distinguish the real from the unreal, the nightmare from the waking reality, and the mere scapegoat from the real criminal. If we mean by "real" whatever is existent, then we must admit that the real as a concept is not capable of distinguishing between the grotesque and the normal or between the irrational and the rational. Oddly enough, some people insist upon speaking of a "cult of unreason" as if this were something practised by secret societies or something found only in queer novels.

What must be made clear with regard to the relation between guilt and the historical events of the twentieth century is that in the world of the unconscious, that is to say, in the existing world, it is not the punishment which fits the crime, but the crime which equals and even surpasses the punishment. Once the demon of projected guilt has been loosed on the world there is an end to good and evil; actual crimes go beyond the range of the most perverted imaginations as well as beyond the imagined crimes they are intended to redress. Does anyone seriously believe that either Sade or Dostoevsky possessed imaginations equal to the actual crimes of our day? Here we see the enormous difficulty in understanding the causal relations between

the historical crime and its provocation; in trying to seek these relations in observed historical events, we completely overlook the evidence from the underworld life of man where forces unmeasured on earth are continually transforming the world. We see this difficulty especially in the incredibly feeble attempts to explain the manifold crimes of our age in the language of economics and sociology. We have been trained to observe, and, in fact, we desire to observe, only the visible relations on the surface of events, and many of these we disregard if they are too painful, or if we cannot fit them into any common-sense pattern of reality. Just as we may relegate to the unconscious whatever is evil in ourselves, so we disregard evil in others because self-preservation demands it, or because such evil in others reminds us too strongly of our own.

> The reason why the totalitarian regimes can get so far toward realizing a fictitious, topsy-turvy world is that the outside non-totalitarian world, which always comprises a great part of the population of the totalitarian country itself, indulges ... in wishful thinking and shirks reality in the face of real insanity ...[38]

If, in the totalitarian reality, "earthly concepts lose all their meaning" and "the most gruesome fantasies are reality", we can understand why Albert Camus has raised the problem of murder to the level of the most urgent philosophical problem of our day. But in actual fact,

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38 Arent, op. cit., p. 413.

while it may be possible for us to debate the justifiability of killing human beings, the words and concepts we use are at the same time in process of becoming meaningless. "What meaning has the concept of murder when we are confronted with the mass production of corpses ... [when] murder is as impersonal as the squashing of a gnat, a merely managerial technique?"[39] All of the brief evidence included here, which presumably would be confirmed by the untold millions of dead, means that the human psyche possesses no absolute defence against a reality which goes beyond good and evil and therefore beyond guilt and innocence. The testimony of history since the war only bears out with painful clarity that both the juridical and the moral aspect of totalitarianism which is called "war guilt" remains unsolved. Little good it does to deny the concept of "war guilt" when the guilt is there whether we deny it or not. This guilt is a chapter not written in official histories, but surviving only in personal memories and recollections of incomprehensible crimes. The greatest crimes in the history of man go unpunished and unforgiven, and it is in the nature of things that this should be so, because, being incomprehensible, they are beyond guilt and beyond innocence and therefore beyond man's capacity to judge. Where unforgivable and unpunishable crimes exist, it is sheer folly to deny the existence of a collective guilt consciousness. It is but

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[39] Ibid., pp. 415-16.

another example of the "fairy tale" mentality, the temperament which finds it difficult, if not impossible, to regard Kafka with deep seriousness. For us, on the contrary, Kafka's world and the totalitarian world complement each other; they are to be studied together and understood together as violent eruptions of the underworld life of man into the conscious life; accordingly, the reality of modern totalitarianism in general and of the concentration camp in particular become at once the point of departure for understanding Kafka, while the world of Kafka helps to lend historical perspective to the former.

TOTALITARIANISM AND "THE NEW MAN"

The first step toward the understanding of totalitarianism is to view this revolutionary method of control as the attempt by man, on a universal scale for the first time in history, to reforge his own conscience. The evidence for this is in the structure of the totalitarian society - a structure which is intentionally designed to force human beings under a revolutionary pattern of guilt and innocence. Thus, not only does collective guilt exist, but it positively must exist wherever guilt is deliberately organized to devolve upon all the people individually and collectively. It is useless to condemn the "barbarous doctrines of collective responsibility",[40] when collective responsibility

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[40] H.D. Lewis, "Morality and Religion", Philosophy, XXIV (1949), p. 52.

and organized guilt are the very essence of the totalitarian structure. It is not the doctrine that is barbarous, but the system which makes it possible for there to be such a collective responsibility.[41] By claiming to accept all responsibility for everything done by his subordinates the totalitarian Leader gradually spreads among the people the idea of their guilty complicity. "The real mystery of the totalitarian Leader resides in an organization which makes it possible for him to assume the total responsibility for all crimes ..."[42] By this arrangement it becomes possible for him to enmesh the whole people within an organized collectivity of guilt. The "mystery" is simply the fully developed expression of a plain psychological fact: shared guilt is easier to bear than individual guilt. It is shared guilt which makes it possible for individual men to commit unheard of crimes as if they were sacred duties. Jaspers has noted the peculiar phenomenon of Nazism by which every German was forced to accept his complicity in the crimes

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41 "[Collective guilt] is simply a psychic phenomenon, and therefore, when one asserts the collective guilt of the German people, one is not passing sentence, but merely stating an existing fact." (Essays on Contemporary Events, p. 49). Cf. also Jaspers: "Dass wir Deutschen, dass jeder Deutsche, in irgendeiner Weise schuldig ist, daran kann, wenn unsere ausführungen nicht völlig grundlos waren, kein Zweifel sein." (Die Schuldfrage, p. 50.) Paul Tillich has said that although "Not many individuals in Germany are directly guilty of Nazi atrocities ... all of them are responsible for the acceptance of a government which was willing and able to do such things." (Love, Power and Justice, p. 94).

42 Arendt, op. cit., p. 363.

of the regime.[43]

It is extremely important to fix this distinction in mind: modern totalitarian regimes differ from the autocracies and tyrannies of the past in no way so much as in their development of a completely revolutionary system of control. Absolute monarchies and various forms of autocracies have been traditionally distinguished by a leader who claimed autonomy for himself. By not surrendering in the least his right to wage war or to use his subjects in any way he pleased, this type of leader refused to allow his subjects the sense of whole-hearted participation and personal involvement in his schemes.[44] No modern totalitarian Leader, however, would ever make this mistake. On the contrary, his purpose will be to create a complete system of mental and physical control which will have as a fundamental characteristic a revolutionary pattern of good and evil and of guilt and innocence; in other words, his purpose is the creation of men with radically different values, new men in every respect, but men who can never be emotionally detached from the Leader's ideals. The importance of this transformation

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[43] Karl Jaspers, Die Schuldfrage, (Artemis-Verlag, Zurich, 1947), p. 61.

[44] Cf. Arendt, op. cit., p. 362. "A tyrant would never identify himself with his subordinates, let alone with everyone of their acts ... he would always maintain an absolute distance from all his subordinates and all his subjects." It is significant that Stalin presented a double aspect to his followers - that of supreme and exalted Leader as well as Comrade.

for the Leader and his group, and the evidence of its essentially "religious" character is given in the means for assuring its continuing effect. Lenin regarded as the most important duty of the Soviet law courts that of <u>securing the strictest carrying out of the discipline and self-discipline of the toilers</u> ... <u>Without compulsion</u> such a task [he stated] is completely unrealizable.[45] Thus, it is easy to understand why, in a country where the "withering away" of the state and the "withering away" of the law were formerly confidently expected, there is now "the coexistence side by side of a system of force and a system of law ...."[46]

To say merely that this system is one of force is to omit the presence of terror as its prime element. The presence of a condition of universal terror is far from being a haphazard or incidental part of the totalitarian structure; it is directly connected with the intentional diffusion of guilt among all the people, a guilt moreover, which is not without a certain resemblance to that feeling of guilt experienced by people who have no means of rationally determining its source. One of the peculiar features of the totalitarian system of organized guilt is the deliberate obscuration of responsibility, with the result

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45 Harold J. Berman, <u>Justice in Russia</u>, (Harvard U.P., Cambridge, Mass., 1950), p. 306.

46 See the preface by H.J. Berman to Boris A. Konstantinovsky, <u>Soviet Law in Action</u>, (Harvard U.P., Cambridge, Mass., 1953).

that, on the one hand, certain individuals may commit the most revolting crimes without any sense of responsibility for them, while on the other hand, all people without exception always know that their responsibility can be arbitrarily fixed at any time. Thus, the total situation is such that guilt is everywhere and yet nowhere; it is at once general and subjective and particular and objective. The extreme example of the absence of any sense of guilt or responsibility is the concentration camp system.

> Everywhere one came up against the mechanism of divided and therefore elusive responsibility. This system which made it impossible to ascertain the final responsibility for any act, the most insignificant as well as the most horrible, contains the key to a psychological understanding of most of the happenings in the police prisons and in the concentration camps. The system was designed to make it possible for many members of the S.S. to take part in actions of which ... they would otherwise not have been capable.[47]

The terror, however, resides precisely in the overwhelming awareness that victims are chosen arbitrarely from among any class or group and without any regard for objective guilt. In fact it may well be said that the very essence of the terror and the possibility of its perpetuation consists in its being arbitrary and without regard for objective guilt or innocence.

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[47] Ella Lingens-Reiner, Prisoners of Fear, (Victor Gollancz Ltd., London, 1948), p. 6.

> A fundamental difference between modern dictatorship and all other tyrannies of the past is that terror is no longer used as a means to exterminate and frighten opponents, but as an instrument to rule masses of people who are perfectly obedient. Terror as we know it today strikes without any preliminary provocation, its victims are innocent even from the point of view of the persecutor.[48]

Thus, it is possible that anyone may be a victim for any reason whatever since the totalitarian Leader extracts complete responsibility from everyone while simultaneously assuming total responsibility for himself. "The burden of the evidence now available indicates that the threat of arrest occurs as a very real possibility to a substantial portion of Soviet men, possibly as many as one in five, at some point in their lives".[49] Lenin's astute observation that compulsion must be an adjunct of the law has thus found its realization in ...

> [A] system of terroristic police control, supporting but also supervising the party for its leaders, and characteristically directed not only against demonstrable 'enemies' of the regime, but against arbitrarily selected classes of the population ...[50]

Though the terror is maintained by the arbitrary selection of its victims, it should not be assumed that

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[48] Arendt, op. cit., p. 6.

[49] Barrington Moore Jr., Terror and Progress U.S.S.R. (Harvard U.P., Cambridge, Mass., 1956), p. 155.

[50] Carl J. Friedrich and Zbigniew K. Brzezinski, Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy (Harvard U.P., Cambridge, Mass., 1956), p. 10.

the Leader has no purpose in choosing one victim or set of victims rather than another. This is to view the system from the standpoint of the potential victim for whom the capriciousness of the terror is only too obvious. "From the rulers' standpoint, on the other hand, terror is a means to an end, a rational device, to be used 'scientifically'."[51] The Leader's victims are chosen for a reason that only he needs to know; indeed, the terror would largely cease to exist if the Leader explained beforehand who was guilty and why. Consistently, totalitarian practice is to descend suddenly on the chosen victim, dispose of him by extermination or imprisonment and only later to make a public explanation. Within this framework of terror and organized guilt, it is easy to see why the responsibility for control in modern totalitarian regimes has passed from the army to the secret police.[52]

If such is the artificially created aura of terror within the totalitarian regime then how much greater must be the terror within the laboratories of the regime - the prisons and the concentration camps. We have been speaking of a world in which dream and reality exist side by side, a world in which objective fact may have no relation

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[51] Moore, op. cit., p. 157. See also Weissberg, op. cit., p. 2.

[52] See Hannah Arendt's contribution to Totalitarianism: Proceedings of a Conference held at the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, ed. Carl J. Friedrich (Harvard U.P., Cambridge, Mass., 1954), p. 76.

whatever to a natural order of objective existence because modern consciousness is no longer founded upon authority. The most extreme form of this breakdown between dream and reality takes place in the prisons and camps of the totalitarian world where guilt and innocence, good and evil are utterly without any significance, except for that which is given by brute chance. Just as in the normal world men are not held guilty because of what they dream, no one is guilty in the concentration camp because what happens there is outside and beyond ordinary guilt or innocence. The ultimate battle is neither to live nor to die but simply to retain for as long as possible the semblance of some identity with a self which the surrounding world is purposely designed to destroy. Whether the final purpose within this environment is destruction and death, or whether it is the planned destruction of one self and the creation of another, the point is invariably reached where the dividing line between fact and fiction is broken down. That even the strongest willed individual must have a breaking point was demonstrated by Pavlov in his experiments on dogs.[53] Among the "scientific" demonstrations developed in the laboratories of the totalitarian world is that of the systematic effort to produce this breaking point as quickly as possible and to achieve thereby a world

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[53] See Chapter II, "Animal and Human Behaviour Compared" in William Sargant, Battle for the Mind, (Heinemann, London, 1957).

outside of guilt and innocence and even outside life and death. Thus it is, that, without exception, those who return from this world understand that they can no longer communicate their experience to others. They have come from a world where the "anarchic power of accident"[54] and sheer arbitrary terror have ruled over life and death, where merely to be alive is to feel guilty, where terror creates a pervasive and abstract guilt to isolate every victim from every other victim while creating a bond between the victim and his persecutors. "One of the more horrible consequences of these ruthless interrogations, as described by victims, is that they suddenly begin to feel

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[54] Elie A. Cohen, op. cit., p. 155. Cf. the following lines of Kafka: "... the mere reflection is enough that during or after my descent one of the countless accidents of existence might prevent my confidant from fulfilling his duty, and what incalculable results might not the smallest accident of that kind have for me? ... I can only trust myself and my burrow." (The Burrow" in The Great Wall of China, p. 61). It is precisely "the countless accidents of existence" which meant for Kafka that the reasonableness of personal events upon which normal life has always depended no longer exists. The Platonic doctrine that no evil can happen to a good man should now be changed to: evil can happen only to the good man. "Schmar, the murderer, took up his post about nine o'clock one night in clear moonlight by the corner where Wese, his victim, had to turn from the street where his office was into the street he lived in .... At the very corner dividing the two streets Wese paused; only his walking stick came round into the other street to support him. A sudden whim. The night sky invited him, with its dark blue and its gold. Unknowing, he gazed up at it, unknowing he lifted his hat and stroked his hair; nothing up there drew together in a pattern to interpret the immediate future for him; everything stayed in its senseless, inscrutable place. In itself it was a highly reasonable action that Wese should walk on, but he walked on to Schmar's knife." ("A Fratricide")

affection for the examiner who has been treating them so harshly ... they are near to breaking point and will soon confess."[55]

Hannah Arendt has spoken the truth about our age, and, at the same time, caught the essence of fear in the world of Kafka with these words: "The basic experiences and the basic sufferings of our time take place in an atmosphere where innocence is beyond virtue and guilt is beyond crime."[56] The atmosphere, for example, of "The Penal Settlement" or The Trial demonstrates the madness of an age in which guilt cannot be reckoned because good and evil have no meaning.

The experiments carried out in the prisons and camps of the totalitarian world can be understood only as logical developments of that world itself. The frenzied desire to act upon the world, to change the world at all costs even if it means destroying the world, to change the human psyche even if it means destroying the psyche, finds its logical conclusion in those laboratories where good and evil are merely fictions of the imagination, and where guilt and innocence are completely artificial stages to be manufactured at will by the "experts". The totalitarian world is the initial expression of supreme contempt for everything that is merely given in the world; it is the first fruit of

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[55] Sargant, op. cit., p. 209.

[56] Arendt, op. cit., p. 430.

the dawning suspicion that ends and means have no other relation than what men choose to give them; in short, that nothing is impossible. In its ultimate expression this outlook emerges in the creation of experimental camps where the "scientific" transformation of human nature, the creation of "new men", and the equally "scientific" destruction of life, have combined to demonstrate the horrible truth of the suspicion that no limits exist for the possible. The very haste with which ordinary men rush to convince them-selves and others that "it is impossible" only tends to suggest that everything is indeed possible. As we cannot hope to understand the concentration camp without under-standing the totalitarian world which gave birth to it, so we cannot hope to understand the latter without an examination of the problems which have made it possible. For ... "the fact is that the true problems of our time cannot be understood, let alone solved, without acknowledg-ment that totalitarianism became this century's curse only because it so terrifyingly took care of its problems ..."[57]

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[57] Arendt, op. cit., p. 430.

CHAPTER III

THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF THE CONCENTRATION CAMP

To state, in effect, that the concentration camp is the ultimate objective expression of the absurd does not seem to be consistent with the suggestion that there is an intentional theory behind it. Yet, just as the terror is a "rational" device for achieving a desired end, the camps must be considered as having their own rationale in the midst of the sense of unreality which they produce. The concentration camps in theory can only be compared to the monomaniacal insistence, seen everywhere in varying degrees, that the outside world should conform to our demands upon it. Just as the individual monomaniac cannot tolerate any difference of opinion nor any departure from his notion of reality, the camps exist to destroy every last vestage of opposition either by transforming whatever is "hostile" into a state of acquiescence, or by wiping out everything that is considered useless or incorrigible. Only a collective state of mind dominated and possessed completely by a singular ideology could account for this monumental act of aggression against the world and everything in it; for nothing can be excluded from the monomaniac's desire to bring all of reality into conformity with his idea of it; the mere existence of anything which denies his idea must be destroyed; anything that is not absorbed and physically altered exists as an enemy, there can be no limits, no bounds to what can be assimilated or destroyed. Thus, the

tremendous, insatiable lust for action against the world, which is one of the chief marks of totalitarianism, reaches its pitch of insane genius in the concentration camp. The concentration camp is the inevitable development of modern totalitarianism; neither could exist as we know them without the other.

With reference to the German concentration camps it has been said that "Their main purpose was the elimination of every trace of actual or potential opposition to Nazi rule".[1] Precisely the same intention to destroy every evidence of "the other" could be ascribed to all concentration camps in the world today. In these camps the battle is truly "for the mind"; if the mind cannot be changed it can be easily destroyed; indeed, we may say, that to some extent the mind is destroyed in any case. An internee wrote of the corrective labour camps that "<u>Nobody leaves lagier behind</u>. Lagier is forever."[2] A British government study reports that "It was the prison camps set up by the Chinese and North Koreans that became the battleground for [the] war of minds."[3] Another study of the camps reports that

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[1] Eugen Kogan, <u>The Theory and Practice of Hell</u>, tr. Heinz Norden (Secker and Warburg, London, 1959), p. 30. (Quotation italicized in original).

[2] <u>The Dark Side of the Moon</u> (author unnamed; preface by T. S. Eliot. Faber and Faber Ltd., London, 1946), p. 107.

[3] <u>Treatment of British Prisoners of War in Korea</u>, (Ministry of Defence, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, London, 1955), p. 1.

their main goal is "to break the prisoners as individuals and to change them into docile masses from which no individual or group act of resistance could arise ...."[4] The insane desire to change or destroy everything opposing the philosophy behind the regime results in "the concentration camp as a means of producing changes in the prisoners which will make them more useful subjects of the Nazi state."[5] Methods employed in the camps may vary, but, due to the almost absolute control of the few over the many, the achievement of their goal is relatively simple.

> The urge of self-preservation, bestial fear, hunger, and thirst led to a complete transformation of the majority of the prisoners. Never before ... had I witnessed such a loss of self-control. The ruthless struggle of 'each against all' began. No one spoke in ordinary tones, everyone screamed ... When food was brought in, an excitement ensued which one can otherwise observe only among animals ... Every trace of reason disappeared.[6]

Sargant has been quoted as authority for the strange and "horrible" feeling of affection which the tortured prisoner begins to feel for his persecutor. Another aspect of this phenomenon is that of identification by the prisoner himself with the values of his torturers. "A prisoner had reached the final stage of adjustment to the

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[4] Bruno Bettelheim, "Individual and Mass Behaviour in Extreme Situation", The Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, XXXVIII (1943), p. 418.

[5] Ibid., p. 419. (Quotation italicized in original).

[6] Curt Bondy, "Problems of Internment Camps", The Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, XXXVIII (1943), p. 455.

camp situation when he had changed his personality so as to accept as his own the values of the Gestapo."[7] This identification became so complete that old prisoners lost even the sense of injustice done to them; they fully complied to the very letter with absurd rules that had originated in the whim of some guard. Such prisoners believed they lived according to values they themselves had created, when in fact they had no values of their own, but only those of the Gestapo. It is reported that the main goal of this effort was to reduce the prisoners to a "childlike dependency on the will of the leaders."[8]

The impossibility of recreating the full terror of the concentration camp, and the refusal of the rational temperament to digest even that which can be recreated, have at their basis a world so utterly unbelievable that men within it begin to regard themselves as objects. Among the prisoners and in himself Bettelheim noticed a split between his objective and subjective self which was "strangely mixed with a conviction that 'this cannot be true, such things just do not happen'".[9] Thus the prisoners were so affected that they "had to convince themselves that this was real, was really happening, and not just a nightmare. They were never wholly successful."[10]

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[7] Bettelheim, op. cit., p. 447.

[8] Ibid., p. 452.

[9] Ibid., p. 431.

[10] Ibid., p. 432.

Our study has now brought us to the point where the results of concentration camp existence for the prisoner, for his guards, and for the totalitarian society as a whole, may be formulated. The conclusion which presents itself is that totalitarianism, as the conscious expression of man's wish to transform his own nature, uses the concentration camp as a laboratory to push forward its experiments on human nature to the farthest possible extreme, thereby destroying all opposition either by "converting" it, or by destroying it completely in accordance with a "final solution." Yet the camps, plus all the horrors which they create, are not completely alien to that belief which a large part of mankind hopefully and quite innocently anticipated as the dawn of a new age, namely, the belief that human nature had not been cast for eternity into one unalterable mould.

The success of the camps is quite simply accounted for: every camp presents the greatest possibility for controlled behaviour (such was the original purpose of the concentration camp); the internees are brought into the same relation to their masters as rats in a maze to the scientist who conducts an experiment. Some camps are more tightly and scientifically controlled than others. The Chinese, for example, are said to be experts at what is called "milieu control". By this system of control "The Chinese Communist prison is probably the most thoroughly controlled and manipulated group environment that has ever

existed".[11]

In his medical study of the concentration camp, Cohen, who was an internee, states his conclusion thus: "The super-ego, which is, as we know, among other things the introjection of the voices of parents, teachers, and society, is no unchangeable quantity."[12] Hannah Arendt expresses her conviction that "the very thing that must be realized is that the psyche can be destroyed even without the destruction of the physical man ..."[13] The frailty of man's moral being has never been so clearly understood as by the internees.

> I have looked in vain for marks of fellowship or mutual kindness among prisoners. Such things do not exist and they cannot exist. Only after such study is it possible to see how impulses of our own that we are accustomed to think of as part of our natures, impulses toward kindness and good fellowship ... our sympathy ... are, in effect,

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[11] Robert J. Lifton, "Thought Reform of Western Civilians in Chinese Communist Prisons", Psychiatry, 19 (1956), p. 191. (Quotation italicized in original). Cf. also this statement: "The political education of prisoners in the North Korean camps was not, however, confined to oral indoctrination. The Chinese imposed a rigid censorship, not only on news from the outside world, but also on every form of literature." (Treatment of British Prisoners of War in Korea, p. 8.)

[12] Cohen, Human Behaviour in the Concentration Camp, p. 278.

[13] Arendt, The Burden of Our Time, p. 415.

> so many spiritual luxuries which the conditions of our life allow us, and by no means ineradicable aspects of our own character, or any evidence of what we may be like at rock-bottom.[14]

Moreover, the destruction of the psyche and the transformation of the structure of the super-ego are not limited to the prisoners but extend to everyone within the totalitarian society. This would seem to follow from the point made several times before that the camp is a logical extension of the totalitarian system; what happens even at the remotest boundaries of the system will be found to happen with a maximum of intensity and speed to the individuals in the camps. As for the camp guards, Cohen found that in the S.S. many intelligent people from cultured and religious backgrounds underwent a complete change in their moral consciousness during their adult years. This astounding psychological fact is not to be confused with a mere change of one set of moral values for another; that it was a change of consciousness is to be emphasized. Concerning this, Cohen states his belief that the original super-ego was changed into a "criminal super-ego" which henceforth permitted the commission of incredible crimes without incurring a sense of guilt.[15] He also says that the guards

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[14] The Dark Side of the Moon, p. 107.

[15] Cohen, op. cit., pp. 232-3. Similarly, Bychowski asserts that German doctors and scientists who worked for the Nazis succeeded in creating new super-egos for themselves. (Dictators and Disciples, p. 191).

"really believed in a Jewish-capitalistic world conspiracy against the German people, and whoever opposed the Nazis participated in it and was therefore to be destroyed ..."[16]

With regard to the effects of totalitarian control outside the camps, Bettelheim, who also writes from personal experience, has this to say: "It seems that what happens in an extreme fashion to the prisoners who spend several years in the concentration camp happens in less exaggerated form to the inhabitants of the big concentration camp called greater Germany."[17] In other words, it is possible to exert a rigid control over vast spaces and over multitudes of people who cooperate willingly in the transformation of their own personalities. By surrendering their freedom, the masses lend themselves to an experiment which ends in the creation of a "new collective ego", a revolutionary ego structure after the pattern of reality created by the leader.[18] Such acquiescence on the part of the masses, mobs and groups suggests a condition of hypnosis in which the individual may easily assume what would normally be called a criminal superego. Flugel states that it is no less possible for whole nations to become transformed in this manner.[19] Bychowski states that the leaders in Russia "have been successful in

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[16] Ibid., p. 447.

[17] Bettelheim, op. cit., p. 452.

[18] Professor Alexander Kennedy, in a conversation with the present writer, affirmed the possibility of a totally amoral community. On the other hand, a community of idol worshippers would also be possible.

[19] Flugel, Man, Morals and Society, pp. 210-11.

in promoting Communist ideals to the point where they have formed the core of a new collective ego ideal which superseded the old one."[20] It may be said that practically no limits exist to the possible directions and the extent to which reality can be transformed under conditions of mass hypnosis. Under such conditions, men not only cheerfully surrender their freedom, but they calmly accept death in the full knowledge of their innocence, as if their deaths were a necessary expiatory sacrifice.[22] In the prisons, men who had been condemned to death accepted their sentence without a word of protest. In the prison where Ciliga was kept, "men taken out to be shot left the ward without a word, without a cry of revolt against the government that put them to death."[23] Merely the misfortune of being brought

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20 Bychowski, Dictators and Disciples, p. 241.

21 Ibid., p. 244.

22 Ciliga, The Russian Enigma, p. 96.

23 Ibid., p. 183. The authors of Russian Purge and the Extraction of Confession concur with Alex Weissberg in the opinion that, almost without exception, the prisoners were innocent of the accusations against them, and that their confessions were purely legendary. (p. 182.) Yet they insist that these condemned individuals could not escape a sense of guilt, for they had been loyal to a system which they now had to experience in its exercise of arbitrary terror. This feeling of guilt, the interrogation methods, and their desperate need to believe in the system and its leaders were the strongest influences in their lack of will to resist. (p. 180.) The most successful converts from the standpoint of the system are obviously those who condemn themselves. There is, for example, the recent case of the American woman who left a Chinese prison camp convinced that having been manacled and chained to a wall was far less than she deserved. Her case, perhaps, had not advanced as far as that of one Isobel Gowdie, who, according to Scott, voluntarily and with full knowledge of the consequences accused herself thus: "I do not deserve to be seated here at ease and unharmed, but rather to be stretched on an iron rack; nor can my crimes be atoned for, were I to be drawn asunder by wild horses." Scott adds "It only remains to suppose, that this wretched creature was under the dominion of some peculiar species of lunacy ..." (Sir Walter Scott, Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft, p. 282.)

under the control of a nation ruled by a powerful idée fixe is enough to cause people to change their values. Such was the case among thousands of people in France after the German invasion. It is reported of the Dutch people that ...

> ... in the first three months of the occupation [they] passed through what I might call a collective neuresthenic phase ... a kind of paralysis took possession of the people. Men were exhausted physically and mentally. They could find nothing upon which to base any hopes ... It was small wonder, therefore, that many were inclined to listen to the soothing words and the many promises of Seyss-Inquart. People tried to mitigate their lot by finding justifications for the German invasion.[24]

Hitler once said that his great mission was to free humanity from the chimera called conscience or morality. We wonder if this is possible. What the world seems to be witnessing may indeed be the birth of a new creature, but it is a birth attended by monumental hatred and the substitution of one guilt pattern for another. Man seems to be determined that the world will not end with either a bang or a whimper, but only with a mighty groan of anguish and suffering. One begins to wonder if the human race is now entering upon another stage of super-ego formation. Does the violent projection of guilt in the form of wars and revolutions, which characterizes our age, correspond to the killing of the primal father by the sons? What does it suggest for the future of man that the basic structure

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[24] A.M. Meerloo, Total War and the Human Mind, (George Allen and Unwin Ltd., London, 1944), p. 119.

of his super-ego was formed over a period lasting many generations, perhaps tens of thousands of years? We are reminded of Ivan Karamazov's comparison of man's destruction of the idea of God with the beginning of a new geological age. In the meanwhile the concentrated effort to purge man of his old conscience and to graft on the new continues in the concentration camps and the totalitarian societies of the world.

Among the theorists and psychologists of the totalitarian world there is at present an intransigent emphasis upon consciousness, upon conscious behaviour for every individual, which indicates the effort to bring about by every possible means the identification of conscience with consciousness. The absolute goals that must be strictly formulated in the individual mind are simply the reflection of the gigantic process of acting upon the world at large so as to bring it into conformity with the totalitarian notion of reality. Thus, the "impossible" may become reality by the mere whim of the Party line. Everything is objective which coincides with one's expectations of reality; whatever does not fit can either be made to fit or be destroyed. "For instance, if the working class, organized in a political party, decide that five million bourgeois should die, their decision corresponds to an objective order of history."[25] Obviously,

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[25] Zevedei Barbu, Democracy and Dictatorship, (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1956), p. 250.

an objective order of history cannot be a crime to those who have made it objective. However, leaders come and go, and totalitarian conceptions of objective reality have been known to change overnight. What then happens to the concepts of guilt and innocence? They too become no less subject to the creation of objective history than any other concept or event. A doctrine is formally ennunciated; a goal is prescribed toward which all reality must invariably move; history is scientifically forecast. But what if reality and the preconceived goals do not coincide? Then the history of the past must be rewritten and the future re-told; and not forgotten are the "criminals" who misdirected history and led everybody astray. We can see that there is here "a 'paranoid' concept of reality, that is, a reality which should at any cost identify itself with one's ideas of and expectations from it."[26] Thus, a situation exists where millions of people declared to be criminals and locked in concentration camps might suddenly be declared innocent, and then declared guilty again before they could be released. The concepts of guilt and innocence have no meaning whatever within such a system; they are constantly in use, everybody in the last analysis must be distinguished by his guilt or his innocence, but if guilt and innocence are applied with utter disregard for anything but making history correspond to our "expectations" then these concepts must cease to

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[26] Loc. cit.

have any meaning at all. " [Their] only criterion is the scientifically forecast course of history itself, according to which certain crimes are necessary and for which therefore 'criminals' must be found."[27]

An example of the arbitrary treatment of such concepts as guilt and punishment can be found in the development of Soviet legal theory.[28] In the early period of Soviet law, theorists generally agreed that law and religion were the two chief enemies of a classless society; both would have to "wither away" with the state. In the first Soviet criminal code the concepts of guilt and punishment were given an extremely idealistic treatment. The very word crime was made taboo, and the phrase "socially dangerous act" was given its place. But in 1929 the "withering away" theory began to undergo drastic revision.[29] Eventually the leading Soviet legal critic of those bourgeois concepts was himself attacked on all sides and declared guilty of

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[27] Hannah Arendt in Totalitarianism, p. 79. In the same work cf. Bertram D. Wolfe's essay on the totalitarian treatment of history where he writes: "What the totalitarian is sure of is what the rest of us are most unsure of ... It is the totalitarian's certainty about the future which makes him so ruthless in manipulating the present. To make the present conform to the inevitable future, he finds it justifiable to use force and fraud, persuasion and violence, to wage total and unending war on 'all existing conditions' ..." (Totalitarianism, p. 264).

[28] See Chapter III in Raymond A. Bauer, The New Man in Soviet Psychology, (Harvard U.P., Cambridge, Mass., 1952).

[29] Ibid., p. 36.

"opportunistic nonsense."[30] Since 1937 all the former idealism has so far gone by the board that "Soviet criminal law has stressed condemnation and disapproval of the crime and the criminal."[31]

The Chinese have apparently learned much from the mistakes of the Russians. They have founded their prison code solidly on a foundation of punishment for the criminal and simultaneous reform of his whole moral outlook. What might be called the philosophy of thought reform is described in the Chinese prison code:

> In dealing with the criminals there shall be regularly adopted measures of collective study classes, individual interviews, study of assigned documents, and organized discussions to educate them in the admission of guilt and obedience to the law, political and current events, labour production, and culture, so as to expose the nature of the crime committed, thoroughly wipe out criminal thoughts, and establish a new moral code.[32]

An editorial in Jen Min Jih Pao (The People's Daily) explains

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[30] Ibid., p. 37.

[31] Ibid., p. 40. See also the essay by Jerzy G. Gliksman in Totalitarianism. The new legal imperative is that no offence should remain unpunished. (p. 63.) The study made by Gorer and Rickman states that "The communists have also greatly extended the pre-revolutionary use of the emotion of shame, stid, and appear to consider this emotion of great social value." (The People of Great Russia, p. 150).

[32] Lifton, op. cit., p. 175.

the theory behind this method of thought reform.

> All crimes have definite social ideological roots ... if we are to wipe out all crimes from their root, in addition to inflicting on the criminals the punishment due, we must also carry out various effective measures to transform the various ideological conceptions in the minds of the people, so that they may be educated and reformed into new people.[33]

It now becomes apparent that the creators of the "new man" cannot do without the concept of guilt in the thought reform movement. The modern makers of the "new man" cannot begin to fashion their creature without moulding him in the image of one who is either guilty or innocent, either black or white.

According to the study made by Lifton, thought reform for the individual begins with his arrest at midnight or in the early morning.[34] Then follow long periods of interrogation in which torture, self-abasement and constant demands for confession alternate with periods of leniency and complete silence. The technique is also one of "intellectually pulverizing the prisoner. Through a process of intellectual attrition the prisoner is gradually induced to question his own judgement, his own memory, even his own motives."[35]

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[33] Loc. cit.

[34] If there is one thing which appears absolutely invariable among totalitarian regimes it is the arrest at night.

[35] Friedrich and Brzezinski, Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy, p. 158.

This treatment continues for several months until the prisoner is physically worn out, undernourished and "highly confused". He "may no longer be able to clearly demarcate the boundaries of truth and fiction. He is guilt-ridden, demoralized, and depressed, frequently to the point of being suicidal or experiencing transient psychotic symptoms."[36] An effort is made to give the prisoner "insignt" into any particular guilty act of the past, following which his guilt sense is broadened to include his entire life. At this point he "feels in need of thorough personal 'reform'".[37]

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[36] Lifton, op. cit., p. 179. Cf. the following statement of Sir George Mackenzie cited by Scott: "These poor creatures, when they are defamed, become so confounded with fear and the close prison in which they are kept, and so starved for want of meat and drink, either of which wants is enough to disarm the strongest reason ... and when men are confounded with fear and apprehension, they will imagine things the most rediculous and absurd ...." (Scott, Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft, p. 284).

[37] Ibid., p. 190. Cf. Sargant: "Brainwashers use a technique of conversion which does not depend only on the heightening of group suggestibility, but also on the fomenting in an individual of anxiety, of a sense of real or imaginary guilt, and of a conflict of loyalties, strong and prolonged enough to bring about the desired collapse." (p. 135). In modern political brainwashing the interrogators cleverly discover the victim's most vulnerable point, a latent feeling of remorse or a sensitive doubt, and on this point they work until the victim makes the required confession. (p. 146). Cf. Scott again with reference to Mackenzie: "This learned author gives us an instance, how these unfortunate creatures might be reduced to confession, by the very infamy which the accusation cast upon them, and which was sure to follow, condemning them for life to a state of necessity, misery, and suspicion, such as any person of reputation would willingly exchange for a short death, however painful." (p. 284).

A Bishop describes the process in this manner: "What they try to impress on you is a complex of guilt. The complex I had was that I was guilty ... I was a criminal - that was my feeling day and night."[38] On all sides the prisoner encounters the demand for confession.

> As the confession develops, the prisoner finds it looming before him as the basic reality of his immediate world, no matter how much it is at variance with the truth as he previously understood it. What he admits and what he wishes become standing truths, and a lever for additional confession pressures, creating a vicious circle of accusation and guilt.[39]

At last the final stage is reached - "The recoding of reality ... the acquisition of a new view of the world, and of a new personal relationship to the world ... He identifies himself fully with his captors. He is happy in his faith. He has been reborn".[40] Oddly enough, the symbolism of this process in Chinese thought reform is actually that of a "religious" movement from death to rebirth.[41] The progressive steps are plainly marked out: (1) "The annihilation of identity" in which the victim is systematically reduced to

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[38] Ibid., p. 178.

[39] Ibid., p. 183.

[40] Ibid., p. 191.

[41] Ibid., p. 188.

a sub-human level; (2) "The establishment of guilt" in which the victim is forced into a mental atmosphere of guilt. The victim is surrounded by cell-mates who urge his guilt upon him with increasing insistence; the atmosphere is such that everything he hears merges into the command: "You must learn to feel guilty."[42] Eventually the stage is reached where he actually desires punishment for himself,[43] a punishment moreover which he feels he deserves. "_His pervasive inner pain is experienced as guilt anxiety._"[44]

In attempting to review the reasons for a system of thought reform which follows mechanistic lines and which disdains any demonstration of patience or human kindness, we are left to pursue a number of possible explanations. Setting aside those which deal with strictly national or racial characteristics we arrive at the following practical and ideological considerations. Lifton refers to a private communication from Raymond Bauer in which the latter gives his opinion that the confession extraction methods are more likely derived from Marxist-Leninist and Stalinist doctrine than from Pavlovian techniques.[45] Sargant, on the other hand, has carefully studied the relation between Pavlov's techniques and the confession extraction methods. He writes:

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[42] _Ibid._, p. 189.

[43] Sargant, _op. cit._, p. 177.

[44] Lifton, _op. cit._, p. 189.

[45] _Ibid._, p. 194.

"Pavlov's work seems to have influenced the techniques used in Russia and China for the eliciting of confessions, for brain-washing and for inducing sudden political conversion."[46] Another writer notes an age-old method with Pavlovian features: "No matter which technique the Chinese were using, they always structured the situation in such a way that the correct response was immediately followed by some sort of reward, while an incorrect response was immediately followed by threats or punishment."[47] Still another view is that the Chinese theory of "[re-education] was based on certain assumptions, namely: that the Communists had a monopoly of the truth; that the prisoners accepted that they had been dupes of their capitalist rulers; that they were willing to learn the 'truth' and that they welcomed their 'liberation' by the Chinese".[48]

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[46] Sargant, op. cit., p. 3. Karl Stern writes: "I strongly suspect an inner connection between the Pavlovian reflex machine and the technique of obtaining confessions in the Soviet Union. If the connection is not one of method, it is certainly one of philosophy." (The Third Revolution, p. 250). Cf. also Mrs. Haldane's statement: "For a materialist, the analogy between dogs and men was obvious, as were the practical and political implications of Pavlov's researches for human beings. Men, like dogs, could be conditioned to react to any given situation in the desired manner, for they too, were animals. Subsequent application of this theory certainly appeared to justify it, not only in the Soviet Union, but also in Italy and Germany." (Charlotte Haldane, Truth Will Out, p. 39).

[47] Edgar H. Schein, "The Chinese Indoctrination Program for Prisoners of War", Psychiatry, 19 (1956), p. 163.

[48] Treatment of British Prisoners of War in Korea, p. 2.

Along with the foregoing considerations we must distinguish between those methods which are used because they are convenient and effective and methods which are determined by a fanatical world outlook. There is reason to believe that even had Pavlov never lived, many of his techniques would nevertheless have been developed independently of any truly scientific attitude toward behaviour problems. Instead, they should have grown naturally out of a system intentionally designed to exert the greatest possible control over every individual member. In a fanatical, paranoid view of reality demanding the coincidence of every aspect of reality with that same view, the mind of every man must be of the greatest importance. Simply to allow the independence (to say nothing of the revolt) of a single human mind would be to threaten the strength of the whole system; it would be tantamount to denying the correctness of the system's ideology. Even the smallest particles of matter cannot escape; indeed, they are the very first to be incorporated within the system; they form the foundation. How then can the human mind, which always tends to show most clearly its independence, be permitted to remain outside the pale? Here we see clearly the reason for individual confessions, for the months devoted to breaking down a single individual, after which he may as well be shot as allowed to live. Here is a system "that recognizes no spatial limits ... no temporal limits ... and no limits to its power over the individual: its will to power claims

total possession over every man it wins ..."49 In view of this, it seems probable that even without the knowledge of Pavlovian techniques a system of controls and methods would have been developed within the totalitarian system to effect results similar to those of Pavlov.

Totalitarian solutions by their very nature present themselves as universal solutions; they may, for this reason, survive among good men who are as sincerely eager to condemn them as they are to put them into practice. Totalitarian solutions live on in the world in the form of strong temptations which develop most readily in an atmosphere of suspicion and hatred where guilt and innocence become so tenuous as to be almost indistinguishable. Wherever suspicion begins to influence thought we may expect to find the most insignificant details counting in courts of law as primary evidence; guilt by association and guilt by intention rather than by overt action will be given precedence. Suspicion of guilt is, under these circumstances, far worse than the evidence of objective guilt. It is probable that where suspicion and mutual distrust are present, objective guilt can never be determined according to rules of law and justice. And there

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49 Jules Monnerot, Sociology of Communism, tr. Jane Degras and Richard Rees (George Allan and Unwin Ltd., London, 1948), p. 18. Cf. also Bertram Wolfe: "Even the mighty dead must be made 'usable', that is, made to conform, or they must be mocked, diminished, debunked and retroactively purged." (Totalitarianism, p. 267).

will be a pervasive suspicion that even the denial of guilt conceals greater guilt; thus, in non-totalitarian countries it can easily come about that men have to defend themselves against the most vague yet the most serious imputations of guilt. The McCarthy enquiries in the United States were notorious for the high-handed way in which the most serious charges were used to suggest guilt and to create ever deeper suspicion. McCarthy himself urged witnesses suspected of Communist sympathies to "purge" themselves of their "bad" thoughts. The emphasis in these inquiries tended to make guilty associations and guilty sympathies of equal weight with guilty actions.[50] Further dangers of the arbitrary manipulation of the concept of guilt can be seen in the totalitarian tendency to objectify guilt before any crime has been committed on the grounds that to name the person who might be capable of a given crime in the future is manifestly to forestall the "crime" and therefore to ensure public safety. Again, we can see that even in the non-totalitarian countries there is always the possibility that

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[50] Edward A. Shils, The Torment of Secrecy, (William Heinemann Ltd., London, 1956), p. 207. Fear and mutual suspicion have a notable partiality for seeking revenge on their own terms; their victims are never guilty of _acting_ but merely guilty of _being_; it is enough that they are said to _be_ guilty. In so far as this applies to present-day heresy hunting the "rules" for detecting guilt have not advanced much in the last three hundred years, as witness these witch-hunting rules used in 1646: (1) "Strong and long suspicion; (2) Suspected ancestors; (3) Bare confession ... unconstant and contrary Answers ..." See Christina Hole, A Mirror of Witchcraft (Chatto and Windus, London, 1957), p. 164.

the concept of guilt may lose its objective and juridical meaning and be used instead as a merely arbitrary method of creating criminals where there has been no crime. It has been said that the reason why no great change of heart has occurred among the German people, in spite of their full knowledge of the concentration camps, is that "the spirit of Hitler lives on in others as well, not merely in Germans; ... susceptibility to totalitarian methods has become apparent throughout the world."[51]

The very presence in the world of fear and suspicion, which are only the inevitable issue of a sense of guilt, provides the materials with which tyrants and demagogues rise to power. The tyrannical character may be defined as one who, through his fanaticism and his insane desire to act or to bring about action, has completely submerged his sense of guilt in the belief in his infallibility. It becomes his divine mission, as it was Hitler's, Lenin's and Robespierre's mission, to rid the world of its accumulated load of guilt. Never before has such fanaticism been capable of moving and controlling such great numbers of people; never before has the search for universal scapegoats inspired so many to such crimes as are now committed in the name of justice and of humanity. Those who are least capable of understanding their own guilt are the first to look for scapegoats; nothing seems to satisfy their need

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[51] Kogan, op. cit., p. 290.

for revenge; their demand for action is always total; nothing is to be left free and inviolate. It is this fanatical effort to bring everything and everyone in the world under submission and control that exactly describes the effort to destroy once and for all the evidence of man's guilt.

Finally, there is one consideration not easily formulated, but not less easily avoided, because the evidence in favour of it is clearly brought out in all that has been said here. It has been noted that a remarkable phenomenon occurs among prisoners by which they tend to identify themselves with their persecutors, in some cases even to the extent of completely adopting their moral values and slavishly imitating their absurd whims. In another way, an extreme case of identification occurs when the prisoner actually feels affection for his persecutor. If we apply this phenomenon on a larger scale to totalitarian solutions, we shall have to admit, whether we like it or not, that these solutions have come into being because men have found them necessary for survival, and that, just as the prisoners also find their survival depending on their ability to adapt their lives to their surroundings, no one can escape the influence of totalitarian solutions. If we welcome these solutions, we immediately succumb to their power; if we vigorously show contempt or hatred for them, there too we become their victims. We identify through hate as well as through love. In one sense it is wrong to speak of

totalitarian solutions, for totalitarianism presents itself to the world as _the_ solution, and therefore it possesses universal power; it cannot exist in the world without evoking either passionate devotion or equally passionate hatred. It is a solution that attacks the brain as well as the heart and from which there is no absolute immunity.

We can think of no more appropriately ironic words with which to end this chapter than those which Scott wrote to conclude his _Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft_.

> Even the present fashion of the world seems to be ill suited for studies of this fantastic nature; and the most ordinary mechanic has learned sufficient to laugh at the figments which in former times were believed by persons far advanced in the deepest knowledge of the age .... There remains hope ... that the grosser faults of our ancestors are now out of date; and that whatever follies the present race may be guilty of, the sense of humanity is too universally spread to permit them to think of tormenting wretches till they confess what is impossible, and then burning them for their pains.[52]

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[52] Sir Walter Scott, _Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft_ (John Murray, London, 1831), pp. 389-90.

CHAPTER IV

ALL IS POSSIBLE.

Of the innumerable cases of tragic irony in recent history the case of Freud would seem to symbolize the innocent victim of the corrupt union of knowledge and power, for he who was so confident that knowledge gives power was obliged to flee for his life from a regime whose secret knowledge of everything and everybody in Germany, and whose fanatical search for final solutions, brought about the actual birth of the "impossible". Although Freud understood, perhaps better than any living man, the latent, restless forces of the unconscious, he was not, like Kierkegaard, "educated by possibility".

Kierkegaard recalls the tale of the Indian hermit who had lived on nothing but dew for years; when the hermit at last tasted a drop of wine he promptly became addicted to drink.[1] Now, in whatever way one chooses to regard this tale, either as tragic or as comic, Kierkegaard assures us that a man educated by possibility can understand it only in this way: by absolutely identifying himself with the unfortunate hermit. The effect of such an identification must be, and can only be, that of dread, dread of possibility. One wonders how the enormous store of psychoanalytical literature now available to everyone would have effected

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[1] Kierkegaard, The Concept of Dread (Oxford U.P., London, 1944), p. 141.

Kierkegaard's "education". One wonders even more how it effects the education of anyone today. Has it helped to put anyone through "the school of possibility"; has it helped to teach anyone "that terror, perdition, annihilation dwell next door to every man";[2] or is this seemingly endless list of unhappy case histories only "finite" and "commonplace", and therefore unable to educate? The gist of our study thus far suggests that it is; we have seen that even reality cannot educate because the sufferings and the crimes of our time are beyond comprehension; they stand outside guilt and innocence, and we are given only the incredible tales of horror by survivors who write as if they too could not believe what had happened to them. How then can we expect psychoanalytical case studies to provide a source of education such as Kierkegaard speaks of? The extent to which possibility, in Kierkegaard's sense, has broken through to confound reality and our understanding of reality can be illustrated by Kierkegaard's comparison of reality, which is light, with possibility, which is heavy. It is this heaviness of possibility which will lead anyone who "has learned the profitable lesson, that every dread which alarms may the next instant become a fact" to "extol reality" and to reflect that it is possibility that alarms far more than its counterpart.[3] Now this might be true, but it can be true only in the case of someone whose interior

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[2] Ibid., p. 140.

[3] Loc. cit.

world is a conscious dualism of "higher" and "lower", of authority and freedom; in other words, it can be experienced only by someone who knows the authority of conscience as Kierkegaard did. It is precisely the strength of the inner authority which creates the tension between the "higher" or the "lower" possibilities and which in turn gives rise to dread. We are reminded here that Kierkegaard considered three things to be practically synonymous: consciousness, conscience, and personality. For him, the underworld life is illumined by the strength of these three, hence, the dread. How far the world has travelled from such an experience of inner authority is best indicated by the fact that dread in the Kierkegaardian sense means that unforgivable crimes are _potential_, whereas dread as man knows it today means that unforgivable crimes are _actual_. And being actual, they are incomprehensible, and because they are incomprehensible, it is too much to ask of dread, as Kierkegaard did, that dread should discover guilt. We repeat: "The basic experiences and the basic sufferings of our time take place in an atmosphere where innocence is beyond virtue and guilt is beyond crime."[4] Only the authority of an actual totalitarian Leader and the pseudo-conscience inspired by him can answer for the fact that unforgivable and unpunishable crimes have come into being in our time.

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[4] Arendt, _The Burden of Our Time_, p. 430.

Evidence of an inner authority such as Kierkegaard understood has all but disappeared from our world. Kierkegaard saw this fact only too clearly in his own time. We now find reason to believe that the super-ego structure is perhaps the weakest element of man's personality; it requires constant strengthening by direct corroboration that its impressions of moral reality at any given time are in accord with those earliest impressions which gave form to it.[5] We have seen what incredible effects can be produced on the super-ego by totalitarian experiments. Totalitarianism, by filling the gap made by the absence of authority, has made the "impossible" possible; guilt or innocence _can_ be suddenly reduced to strictly arbitrary formulations; the human psyche _can_ be made the object of "scientific" experiments to transform or destroy it, and crimes which the world has never dared to imagine _can_ become reduced to laws of history or to laws of state. Rousset has remarked that "Ordinary human beings do not know that everything is possible. Even when the weight of evidence forces their mind to admit this, they do not really believe it in their bones. The internees know."[6] They have passed through the fire alive - physically; they have had engraved on their flesh the knowledge that everything can be made lawful and therefore possible; unlike those heroes of Dostoevsky - Kirilov and Raskolnikov - who merely

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5 See Cohen, _Human Behaviour in the Concentration Camp_, p. 234.

6 Rousset, _A World Apart_, p. 109.

conceived the idea that he who dares to do the "impossible" will himself become a god, the internees have lived through the reality of the idea. "The concentration and extermination camps of totalitarian regimes serve as the laboratories in which the fundamental belief of totalitarianism that everything is possible is being verified."[7]

The use of the term "laboratory" seems particularly correct from the standpoint of the problems of pain and fear. In the sterile atmosphere of the laboratory, pain and fear often have little personal significance; pain is a problem for the anaesthetist. This is not to suggest that science is unconcerned with pain, but that pain has always been a definite obstacle to scientific, and particularly to medical, research; it has always been something to defeat absolutely. There seems to be a close connection between the limits of human pain and the frontiers of the possible. This is true not merely of physical pain but also of spiritual pain and suffering, for suffering in this sense is just as much a barrier as pain in the physical sense; both are limits to what lies beyond, and whatever lies beyond

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[7] Arendt, op. cit., p. 414. One can hardly imagine M. André Breton standing amid the corpses of Buchenwald and saying, as he did in the Surrealist Manifesto, "The admirable thing about the fantastic is that it is no longer fantastic: there is only the real." This is but the artistic expression of the "aesthetic joy" liberated by the vision that all things are possible. "The freedom surrealism possesses is a perfect freedom in the sense that it recognizes no limitations exterior to itself." It was no mere chance that surrealists allied themselves with a materialist and activist philosophy. (See André Breton, What is Surrealism? tr. David Gascoyne (Faber and Faber Ltd., London, 1936), p. 64 ff.

suffering has always been for man a great attraction. There are positive benefits to be gained by advancing the limits of pain and suffering, but the nature of these benefits depends upon what is desired. It was Kirilov, for instance, who said, "God is the pain of the fear of death;" to achieve complete freedom man must conquer his fear; he who will overcome his fear of death will become a god.[8] As with Raskolnikov it is a question of having the daring; to him who has the daring, either to kill himself or to kill others, everything is lawful. To have such daring means to conquer at once the ultimate obstacle to complete moral fearlessness, that is, to freedom based upon the destruction of guilt. In effect, to annihilate God is to annihilate pain and the suffering of guilt, and to live without these is to achieve perfect life, not eternal life, which does not exist, but perfect life on earth. "Men will unite to take from life all it can give, but only for joy and happiness in the present world."[9] Such is the pattern of metaphysical revolt against pain. There is also a form of hedonistic revolt which attempts to wring pleasure itself out of pain and which in doing so extends the limits of pain and therefore brings the "impossible" closer to reality. The Marquis de Sade, by demonstrating how the line between pleasure and pain could

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[8] Dostoevsky, The Possessed, p. 105.

[9] Dostoevsky, The Brothers Karamazov, p. 701.

be extended according to the individual's capacity for suffering, also suggested by these experiments that pain can be transcended by private methods. It may even be the case that modern man's algolagnic genius, particularly his genius for developing refinements of all kinds of torture, is, more than any other factor, responsible for his overcoming limits to the impossible. It might be argued that man's capacity for enjoying pain and cruelty, not only the pain he inflicts upon others but that to which he willingly subjects himself, has grown proportionately with his ability to reduce pain through science. The argument heard from some theologians that God requires pain on earth would be more sensible if it simply asserted that man himself demands the continued existence of pain. From the viewpoint of Sade we can see behind Sorel's apology for violence a pleasurable anticipation not so much of the post-revolutionary society as of the blood-spilling that is to precede it. The same can be said of many other revolutionists and activists.

The history of modern revolutionary thought would provide an excellent perspective from which to study the history of the attempt to liberate the "impossible"; in fact, the two histories may be said to be virtually equivalent. From about the time of the French Revolution, the limitlessness of possibility began to be identified with the abolition of the concepts of crime and guilt. It was Robespierre who, in the name of the people, abolished all crime and guilt from France and thereby established the

foundation for the Reign of Terror. Everything done by the sovereign people is virtuous, maintained Robespierre, "and no excess, error, or crime is possible."[10] This is what Robespierre understood by the limitlessness of possibility - in effect, nothing less than the violent overthrow of all inner values, the annihilation of God first in order to proceed with the annihilation of all objective enemies. It is noteworthy that revolutionary tyrants are invariably imbued with the idea that no limits exist to the possible. Hitler referred to the original members of his party as "energetic and disciplined young men who, through their years of military service, had been imbued with the principle that nothing is impossible ..."[11] We can therefore understand why Sartre's philosophy, which matured under the Nazi terror, echoed Kirilov's new, terrible freedom, this time for all men. The terror that gripped Europe had killed and buried God forever.

But it must be emphasized that by the limitlessness of

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[10] Gustave Le Bon, The Psychology of Revolution, tr. Bernard Miall, (T. Fisher Unwin, London, 1913), p. 241. Wordsworth undoubtedly is describing the psychology of a French revolutionist in the following sentences from his preface to "The Borderers": "Accordingly, his reason is almost exclusively employed in justifying his past enormities and in enabling him to commit new ones .... His imagination is powerful, being strengthened by the habit of picturing possible forms of society where his crimes would be no longer crimes ...." (The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth, Vol. I, p. 346).

[11] Adolf Hitler, Mein Kampf, tr. James Murphy, (Hurst and Blackett Ltd., London, 1942), p. 202.

possibility as expressed in the French Revolution and as generally conceived among revolutionists during the nineteenth century is implied something less than the actual knowledge that all is possible; it is rather the revolutionary affirmation that all is permissible, an affirmation which seems to be necessary before man can progress to the stage of creating the "impossible". At this stage of revolutionary theory the "new man" does not exist yet; he is only the "future man" who has accepted the doctrine that all is possible. The new man is not yet, but he will be; he first appears as it were out of the clouds like a divine revelation to spur on the revolutionists. This vision incites the revolutionist to greater deeds of glory and also increases his fury when the "new man" resists all attempts at his creation; the revolutionary leaders discover that their plans to wipe out the past and change human nature are being thwarted by human nature itself, that the past keeps reasserting itself. Consequently, their revolutionary fury reaches heights of insane glory; the ineluctable past gradually triumphs in a war of attrition, and eventually, complete reaction smothers the revolutionary passion.[12]

It is perfectly obvious that Dostoevsky was haunted by this problem of possibility, and that he saw the philo-

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[12] Le Bon, _op. cit._, p. 84.

sophical implications more clearly even than Kierkegaard. However, Dostoevsky could not completely believe that absolutely nothing stood between man and his desire to change the world and to transform human nature. Human omnipotence was conceivable, but it was not believable. Faith at last conquered fear and refused to allow reason to translate fear into terms of a possible objective reality; he dared to go only as far as the certain understanding that without God all is permissible. He glimpsed the possibilities open to men without God; he saw them only too well, but he could not express them with complete conviction in literary form. A writer like H. G. Wells might be able to project his imagination from <u>things</u> as they are now to <u>things</u> as they will be, but it is another matter to infer future objective reality from present subjective reality. An example of this difficulty is shown in <u>The Possessed</u> where the anbience of evil, so powerful and credible in Dostoevsky's other novels, is never quite equal to its effects; it is greater and more overpowering than the objective reality given in the novel, and hence, the revolutionary society fails to be completely convincing. But, as prophecy, <u>The Possessed</u> has been amply confirmed by history; it has even had its sequel written by Arthur Koestler. <u>Darkness at Noon</u> is not the literary equal of <u>The Possessed</u>, but it documents the truth of it.

In order to make the "impossible" possible it is first necessary to kill the idea of God in man; to kill the idea

of God is to kill fear, and to kill fear is to declare that all is permissible and to open the gates to the "impossible". That unpunishable and unforgivable crimes have appeared on earth in our time can only be explained by the eruption of the "impossible" into the realm of the possible, so that, in effect, we witness the paradox that a "non-existent" God demonstrates by His very absence that He is more terribly present than ever before. For this paradox, Jung gives the following explanation:

> It is an immutable psychological law that a projection which has come to an end always returns to its origin. So when somebody hits upon the singular idea that God is dead, or does not exist at all, the psychic image of God, which represents a definite dynamic and psychic structure, finds its way back to the subject, and produces a condition in which the thinker believes himself to be 'like unto God'; in other words, it brings out qualities which are only characteristic of fools and madmen and therefore lead to a catastrophe.[13]

This statement perfectly describes the situation of Kirilov who "could not compromise with an idea" and so became "great-souled because he had lost his reason".[14] Would that all such "great-souled" people killed only themselves. He who dares to kill himself for an idea is a rare man indeed; nowadays the activist ideologists and monomaniacs are content with nothing less than acting against

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[13] Jung, Essays on Contemporary Events, pp. 69-70.

[14] Dostoevsky, The Possessed, p. 635.

the whole world. Even in his madness Kirilov possessed the understanding that man and the world will be transformed only when each man as an individual transforms himself. All his life Kirilov had been tormented by God, and it is to his credit that he knew what it was that tormented him. In our day it is a fortunate man who knows the exact nature of his secret torment and does not mistake his personal grievance for a universal one. The Kirilovs of the world blame themselves and attempt various forms of self-transcendence, including suicide; the Verhovensky's blame the world and seek universal scapegoats. But in either case God, it seems, exacts punishment ("punishment belongs to me"). Man cannot get rid of God, believed Kierkegaard, and for this reason he cannot destroy his guilt. Man may shift the burden of his guilt for a time, but he can never wholly displace it or destroy it.

ACTIVISM

It has been truly said that "An unduly guilt-weighted civilization will of necessity be an unduly active one."[15] The cult of activism and the frenzied demand for change began to grow rapidly in the nineteenth century and have continued to grow up to the present time. The spokesmen for this new activism were apologists for revolution and

[15] Grace Stuart, Conscience and Reason, p. 175.

violence: Trotsky's Defence of Terrorism and Sorel's Reflections on Violence revealed the direction of historical events. Never before in political history has violence been so openly admired for its own sake as in this period; never before has it found so many eloquent apologists. Frustration and guilt-anxiety seem bound up together in this type of consciousness. Suspicion, hostility, and fear are only too obviously present in the world as powerful motivating forces. Ample reason exists for believing that modern man has reached a stage where he is unable to act in what he considers an effective way without the existence of an enemy; hostility and suspicion have become as necessary to thought as to action; in fact, effective action is only possible when suspicion and hatred have, to some extent, become rationalized and universalized; action is deemed worthless if it cannot be applied against the whole world. Modern man insists upon having not merely enemies; he wants universal enemies who must be exposed not as individuals but as a class, a nation, or a race of people. Above all, there must be an idealized system, a complete ethic of possible, by which the enemy is exposed and prepared for extermination; everything must be "justified" beforehand. Our modern vendettists are not satisfied with anything less than total revenge or total destruction. The truth about modern man is that he can no longer act until he has found a universal enemy. Action in this age means precisely to act against an enemy conceived to be universal

in extent for the purpose of destroying it entirely or transforming it in accordance with a totalitarian system. In order to act, modern man must first find an enemy; in other words, action and aggression have become virtually identical in the modern world.

But, we may ask, is it inevitably true that an historical period or a civilization strongly conscious of its guilt will become frenzidly active in the sense described above? Apparently not, for guilt consciousness was considered a central moral and religious problem by the greatest dramatists of ancient Greece. The Greeks too lived with wars, revolutions, and a strong consciousness of guilt, and revolutions are destructive wherever and whenever they occur. Nevertheless, it must be noted that Aristotle did not consider the destruction accompanying revolutions as worthy of any special attention.[16] In the present age, on the contrary, revolution has become the science of destruction. It might be said that, whereas for Aristotle revolution essentially signified the attempt to replace one form of state with another, our age has confounded the idea of revolution with that of annihilation and destruction.

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[16] Aristotle, The Works of Aristotle: Politica, tr. Benjamin Jowett (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1921), Bk. V. One notes with a kind of bitter humour the many anthropological and moral judgements of Aristotle which have been strangely inverted in the course of history, particularly modern history. For example, in calling a man utterly bad Aristotle refers to him as a beast; bestiality is beyond all finite definitions; a bestial nature is one without rational principles. Yet, we note in this present age numerous references to the effect that man does thus and so, engages in this or that crime, this or that internecine evil which even the beasts are above.

Even in his discussion of the causes of revolutions Aristotle fails to provide us with the sense of a nexus between the underlying forces of discontent among the Greek states and those forces of discontent in the modern age. Under the category of "trifling causes" Aristotle places feelings and emotions which at the present time assume monumental and universal proportions. This is true, for instance, of the motive of revenge.

Although Hobbes puts forward very credible reasons for the act of sedition it will be seen that he has not conceived a complete picture of the modern activist and revolutionist. We might, for instance, take exception to his statement that no revolutionist would dare to act wherever his eventual success was in doubt.[17] We might add, on the contrary, that this very improbability of ultimate success may be a spur to action which would be deemed all the more heroic for its lack of objective value. In this case, its purely activist, senseless nature would comprise the value.

Perhaps this is the place to observe a fundamental distinction between the Greek and the modern attitude toward action directed against the external world, an attitude which in our day may be accompanied by a kind of metaphysical rage, a burning desire to act upon existence itself as if

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[17] Hobbes, The Elements of Law (Cambridge U.P., Cambridge, 1928), Part II, Chapter 8.

to destroy the forms and essences behind everything. But this was in no sense true of the Greek attitude. From the standpoint of art this distinction is clearly manifest. Greek drama does not possess the sense of broadness, the feeling of vast action, of wide and contradictory emotions and unlimited possibilities which have come to be commonplace in literature since the time of Shakespeare and which were developed to an extreme in nineteenth century Russia by Tolstoi and Dostoevsky.[18] Dostoevsky continually refers to this tragic broadness in the Russian character. Dmitri says to Alyosha, "yes, man is broad, too broad, indeed. I'd have him narrower".[19] Although Dostoevsky does present us with a certain sense of fatality behind human action, and although he successfully constructs an inner reality operating through the diverse actions of his characters, we feel how uncertain and capricious are the laws of this inner reality compared to the laws of the narrower Greek world. Professor Kitto informs us that Sophocles and Aeschylus were able to go straight to the heart of these

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[18] In Greek tragedy the worst horrors and crimes are never impossible or improbable. "The drama's whole effort is to show the logical system which, from deduction to deduction, will crown the hero's misfortune ... In that revolt that shakes man and makes him say: 'That is not possible', there is an element of desperate certainty that 'that' can be so". (Albert Camus, The Myth of Sisyphus, tr. Justin O'Brien (Hamish Hamilton, London, 1955), p. 103).

[19] Dostoevsky, The Brothers Karamazov, p. 110.

inner laws with the "clarity and force of a single statement, the firmness and the cohesion which we find in a mathematical demonstration . . ."[20]

By Elizabethan times the breakup of this concise and tidy conception of the moral world had already begun. Man is less and less face to face with his gods and more alone; the artist seems scarcely able to "write humanity large"; his characters have, as it were, a tendency to run away from his original conception of them; their very broadness makes them perverse and unwieldy. The Greek temple does not strive; it is the Gothic cathedral that is filled with unrest and yearning. The Greek temple was bold but not aggressive; so was the Greek himself; he had the temerity to demand redress from his gods; he demanded new things of the universe, but he neither hated nor distrusted consciousness. What the Greek wrested from the universe was always in the form of a creative re-interpretation within his consciousness. As Malraux has said, "the crucial discovery made by Greece was that of man's right to stand up to his gods and to arraign the universe."[21] Consciousness was not a problem to the Greek as it is to modern man. In the words of Yeats we vividly perceive the old world of spiritual laws expanding into the outer nothingness of the physical universe: "Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold." Thus, the modern

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[20] H.D.F. Kitto, <u>Form and Meaning in Drama</u> (Methuen and Co., Ltd., London, 1956), p. 210.

[21] André Malraux, <u>The Psychology of Art: The Creative Act</u>, tr. Stuart Gilbert (A. Zwemmer, London, 1949), p. 15.

consciousness, like the modern conception of the physical universe, is centrifugal in contrast to the Greek consciousness. The Greek did not know the experience of being torn asunder by infinitely lofty desires on the one hand and devilish fancies on the other, and consequently he felt no hatred toward a nameless, hostile "system". The Greak idea was to find harmonious relations with the laws of nature, not to throw oneself against them.

This distinction between the Greek and the modern world has enormous significance for understanding what has happened to the human psyche. Psychologists generally agree that frustration is one of the basic causes of hatred and aggression. This is clearly borne out in child psychology where it is shown that the child who is deprived of some joy or possession, and, hence, feels itself alone in unfriendly circumstances, turns with violent aggression against the outside world.[22] The fear of the loss of love, the fear of aloneness and the rebellion against the frustration inherent in these conditions is alike in the child and in the adult.[23] But this is simply to say what has been said and acted out by men everywhere in all times: the fear of aloneness is one of the most terrible tortures of

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22 E.F.M. Durbin and John Bowlby, Personal Aggressiveness and War (Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co., Ltd., London, 1939), p. 16.

23 Loc. cit.

existence. What wonder then that modern man turns against an entire world from which he feels isolated? His sense of alienation is terrifyingly diffuse, as broad as his conception of the universe against which he strives. From the uncertainty of existence arises frustration, and eventually aggression and destruction complete the catharsis demanded by the inward conflict.[24]

It has been suggested that a close relation exists between the desire for action and that willingness to fight which is a part of human nature.[25] Destruction awakens destructive impulses; blood begets blood. Yet, this must be qualified, since a catastrophe of nature does not incite cruelty but rather the opposite; in the face of natural disaster men are united in a desire to prevent suffering. Therefore, it is not destruction itself that excites the baser passions, but it is the possibility of releasing those passions in a cause; the sight of blood spilled for a cause can really convince men that they are committing "great deeds" and thus spur them on to even greater destruction.[26]

In action, fear and reason are swallowed up. Mrs. Haldane writes frankly of the excitement and aesthetic pleasure

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[24] Harold D. Lasswell and Abraham Kaplan, Power and Society (Yale U. P., New Haven, Conn., 1950), p. 243.

[25] Durbin and Bowlby, op. cit., p. 30.

[26] Loc. cit.

bordering on rapture which she experienced during the bombing of London. Only once during this period of her life did she experience emotional fear. This happened at a time when she was forcibly inactive; otherwise fear was kept in check by action.[27]

Like doomed Ippolits, the modern activists sense that time is running out; they feel cheated by life, and the delusions of the past fill their hearts with hatred and shame; the temptation to wreak vengeance on all and on everything breaks out because action is their last resource, nothing else remains for them to satisfy their sense of frustration. There comes a time when man's frustration is joined to a cause, his rage becomes "metaphysical"; it is "purified" and elevated to a state of ecstacy. In such an intoxicated state is Ivanov in Darkness at Noon. Ivanov, with a masochistic frenzy raised to the level of a new spiritual crusade, is happy to be among those who are tearing off mankind's old skin. "Why should mankind not have the right to experiment on itself?"[28] His words echo Carrier's: "We will make a cemetery of France rather than fail to regenerate it in our own way."

Can there be any doubt that man's fundamental guilt outdistances his earthly conception of guilt when the violent revolutions of our time are conceived and launched

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[27] Charlotte Haldane, Truth Will Out (George Weidenfeld and Nicolson Ltd., London, 1949), pp. 185-89.

[28] Arthur Koestler, Darkness at Noon, tr. Daphne Hardy, (Jonathan Cape, London, 1940), p. 157.

precisely against the Infinite? To annihilate God by obliterating from men's minds any trace of metaphysical longing and to enforce a vision that is earthbound - this is the task assumed by our modern activists. But the past does not die so easily, it returns with a vengeance. Man can only destroy the past totally by destroying himself totally, and, indeed, he seems to be in a hurry to destroy himself for this reason. It is as if the guilt that all men carry through life leaves after them a wreckage more terrible in proportion to their vain attempts to destroy it.

There is a sense, however, in which this frustration theory is an inadequate description of a state of consciousness that could justly be described as victimized. God's absence means that He has tragically lost prestige; He has been discredited because He no longer guarantees anything. God is not even, like man, a part of history. Indeed, He must be anti-history, since He has no final goal for mankind and never did have one. The disillusionment of the modern ideologist with his shattered utopia is like a baby's whimper compared to the universal groan of anguish which continues (and will continue) to rise in mortified protest against the "Great Hoax" of history. In reality, the superfluous man of the nineteenth century was only a reflection of God's own ineffectualness. Not man, but God was superfluous. Apathy, boredom, and self-pity was the result in those who did not protest ("everything is good");

rage and a passionate desire for action in those who did ("everything is permissible").

Of what lasting good are man's utopian dreams if his love for humanity is inseparable from his thirst for action? "Love in dreams is greedy for immediate action, rapidly performed and in the sight of all. Men will give their lives if only the ordeal does not last long but is soon over, with all looking on and applauding as though on the stage."[29] Active love is the form of action men must strive for, though active love is difficult and painful in reality. That is why the fond dream is so attractive and so simple compared to the reality. "The imagination always wants to shorten and slip in a different picture, the picture in which the noble sufferer is admired by all; but in reality things do not move so quickly ...."[30]

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[29] Dostoevsky, The Brothers Karamazov, p. 55.

[30] Kierkegaard, The Journals of Soren Kierkegaard, tr. Alexander Dru (Oxford U.P., London, 1938), p. 341. Cf. also this statement by Bertrand de Jouvenel with which Kierkegaard would surely have agreed: "Disillusioned with the weapon proper to itself, persuasion, the intelligence admires those instruments of Power which are swifter in action ...." (Bertrand de Jouvenel, Power: The Natural History of its Growth, p. 119). And cf. also the following statement by Wordsworth: "Perhaps there is no cause which has greater weight in preventing the return of bad men to virtue than that good actions being for the most part in their nature silent and regularly progressive, they do not present those sudden results which can afford a sufficient stimulus to a troubled mind. In processes of vice the effects are more frequently immediate, palpable and extensive. Power is much more easily manifested in destroying than in creating." (The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth, Vol. I, p. 345).

Arthur Koestler compares the awareness of guilt to the eternal pounding of the surf; it may be still in moments of self-forgetfulness, but the eternal beating must eventually break through the consciousness.[31] Such is existential guilt, a guilt shared by all men, and independent of time and place, of whether the individual is active or passive.[32] But action in our age has the quality of desperation and frenzy as if man aspired to cause sufficient din to drown the intolerable evidence of his guilt. Even philosophy joins in the charivari, for "Europe no longer philosophizes by striking a hammer but by shooting a cannon."[33] In order to silence and drown forever everything suspected of being merely given, all solutions must be final and universal. Every thought and every action must be total, all-embracing; only final solutions, only revolutionary, planetary methods are considered. It is as if the death-wish had been liberated from the unconscious, rising up to possess mankind with a fanatical hatred against everything merely given, against life itself, with a desire to obliterate in toto human history and thus all evidence of a meaningless and guilty past. For this exactly describes the death-wish: the illusion that we can restore innocence to ourselves, wipe

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[31] Arthur Koestler, Arrow in the Blue (Collins with Hamish Hamilton Ltd., London, 1952), p. 78.

[32] Karl Jaspers, Tragedy is not Enough, tr. Harold A.T. Reiche et. al (Victor Gollancz, London, 1953) p. 52 ff.

[33] Albert Camus, The Myth of Sisyphus, p. 149.

clean our guilt by punishing or destroying that person or thing through which we believe we have become guilty.[34] Man has always yearned to recreate the world, and no one can doubt that this legitimate passion had led to great achievements; but only the present age has had the originality to introduce alongside the urge to recreate the world the urge to punish it. Our modern idealized actions must be joined to a great cause, and the cause must possess the masses who in turn are justified, and controlled by a Leader.

The mass action of modern movements has been described as a "powerful car with no brakes" ready to hurl us into another world but certainly not the imagined utopia.[35] And it seems to be necessary that the "car" should be without brakes, for otherwise we would despair of getting anywhere, and that is the important thing, not to arrive but to go.

The specific genius of the great activist personality is to blend the whole of reality into a Manichean system of good-bad and black-white, allowing for no gradations of guilt or innocence. The lack of direction experienced by the modern intellect is clearly attested by the extreme caution with which it treats any intellectual system not thoroughly imbued with all the requirements for action - final solutions, final goals and absolute methods. Once

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[34] Koestler, who carefully analyzed his guilt consciousness, remarks on what he calls a "bridgeburning pattern" in his past. He thrived on catastrophes for the very reasons mentioned above. (See Arrow in the Blue, p. 117).

[35] F.L. Lucas, The Delights of Dictatorship (W. Heffer and Sons Ltd., Cambridge, 1938), p. 47.

this difficulty has been overcome the sluice-gates are opened for complete emotional attachment. We have already noted the paranoid aspect of this treatment of reality. Money-Kyrle calls attention to the hypo-paranoid who sees the world in black and white, the latter division always being an attribute of his own consciousness. Never can this individual experience a sense of guilt except within the outlines of his world-view.[36] But, having succeeded in divesting himself of all traces of a vague and unknown guilt, he is ready to commit any action deemed necessary by the system's rigidly prescribed goals.

That such systems are precisely designed for liberating individual frustrations and feelings of guilt must presuppose an activist personality who has successfully liberated his own guilty conscience and his frustrations by discovering the final solution. The amazing mental agility by which the system makers of our age are able to wield the most diverse problems of existence into closed, absolute ideologies with intellectual and emotional appeal for everyone is to be explained by the dynamic influence of a personality who has dealt "successfully" with his own problems of guilt and conscience. He may be a great thinker or simply a demagogue, but the system itself and the method by which it is originally achieved is basically the same - that of releasing frustration and guilt feelings so that action can be directed within the

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36 R.E. Money-Kyrle, Psychoanalysis and Politics (Gerald Duckworth and Co., Ltd., London, 1951), pp. 76-7.

new pattern of guilt-innocence toward the preconceived goals of the system.[37] Bychowski states that "Hitler offers a perfect illustration of what the Swiss neurologist Monakow termed 'agglutinated, emotional causality', which unifies the most varied, unrelated subjects and reduces them to a common denominator on the basis of strong emotions of love, jealousy, and hate."[38] Hitler himself described in <u>Mein Kampf</u> the operation of this peculiar talent:

> It is part of a great leader's genius to make even widely separated adversaries appear as if they belonged to but one category because among weakly and undecided characters the recognition of various enemies all too easily marks the beginning of doubt of one's own rightness.[39]

Thus, the Jew as Hitler's personal scapegoat was transformed by him into a universal scapegoat capable of assuming culpability for anything and everything that might happen. It requires no special insight to perceive that Hitler's conception of "weakly and undecided characters" applies specifically to people with overburdened consciences and feelings of guilt, i.e., to practically everybody. The

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[37] In a private letter to the present writer, Professor Barbu of Glasgow states: "I agree that there is a strong element of 'projected guilt' in Marx, Hitler and Stalin, and that their activities (and conceptions) are modes of playing out a feeling of guilt."

[38] Bychowski, <u>Dictators and Disciples</u>, p. 147.

[39] Quoted from the <u>Encyclopaedia Britannica</u> (1957), Vol. 16, p. 160.

one basic characteristic of modern ideological systems is that they offer everybody freedom from guilt in order to release the inwardly felt obstructions to action. It is not to be wondered therefore that ideological systems are dedicated to the masses, and accepted by the intellectual élite as well, with the result that totally new and revolutionary structures of guilt consciousness may be found extending throughout what have hitherto been the basic ideological structures, namely, religions, racial groups, and states.

We notice in this totalitarian age the increasing need of the masses to bow down before a great man, a Leader who can offer something for which to live and, more especially, to die. The modern totalitarian Leader wields a power which can only be compared to that of a hypnotist who projects into millions of subjects his own paranoia, his own hatreds and fantastic desires.

It has long been understood by psychologists that a close resemblance exists between the hypnotic state of mind and the individual consciousness within the group. If this group is a large mass held together by strong racial or patriotic ties the socializing process tends to be more subtle, more difficult to define, because it is diffused among large numbers of individuals who are subject to many lesser socializing influences. Exactly this broadness of conditioning factors, however, enables the

individual to transcend their direct influence and to retain a personal character, a will of his own. It is when all these socializing forces are concentrated within a small orbit that the phenomenal power of the group mind appears. Under these conditions the individual qualities preserved until then become ruthlessly submerged, and the essential identity of the individual is lost.[40] Such is the picture of the group mind which Freud, following the example of Le Bon, has drawn in relation to the ego. He refers to "these noisy ephemeral groups" investigated by Le Bon which offer to the psychologist so many examples of the disappearance of the individual within the group. These very groups of which Freud speaks have in our day attained unprecedented power; they are not simply "superimposed" [Freud's term] upon the major divisions of society, but they are actually created apart from them, usually in opposition to them, so that by their very presence in our midst they threaten the meaning and even the existence of that larger world they spring from. Their amazing virulence sweeps aside lesser factions within the social body, destroying all opposition, until the "noisy ephemeral group" is a mass of obedient humanity under the direct control of the Leader. Freud maintains that man's passion to be hypnotized and led by a dynamic Leader "is solidly founded upon

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[40] Sigmund Freud, <u>Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego</u>, tr. James Strachey (Hogarth Press, London, 1949), pp. 101-2.

a predisposition which has survived in the unconscious from the early history of the human family."[41] That this instinct lives on in ever more strange and virulent forms is attested by the passion with which modern man seeks for the means to vent his frustration and hatred in action, particularly action in support of an ideology. If what Freud has said about religions is true, that they must be cruel and intolerant to those outside their beliefs, then how much more cruel must be the secular religions of our age and of the future.[42] What Freud could hardly have imagined is that man's need to act upon the world, to destroy the past in order (as he thinks) to create the future, has brought into being groups which extend across all boundaries of state, race, and religion. The ideological systems of today grasp converts on a universal scale simply because they point out universal enemies to hate. Groups and societies of men in ancient times kept the foreigner at bay because he was different and therefore dangerous. But an activist society knows that it cannot exist without a constant attack upon all opposition; the final solution must be reached at all costs; therefore a perpetual effort to change the world must be made; the existence of an enemy, and even of potential enemies, is essential proof that action must never be diminished.

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[41] Ibid., p. 100.

[42] Ibid., p. 51.

Modern man everywhere is looking for a condition of hypnosis in which his conscience and his will can be submerged into a mass will and a mass conscience. It has come to be true that "all is possible" because man has lost his individuality; man himself desires nothing more than to lose it completely; by throwing off the intolerable burden of freedom and guilt he merges his consciousness into the hypnotic medium of the activist group. We are reminded again that Flugel has pointed out that under such hypnotic influences, groups, and even nations may allow the individual to assume a criminal super-ego.[43] Glover has also said that ...

> ... the more deeply we investigate the problem, the more irresistable becomes the conclusion that group life is governed by mechanisms which are identical with those observed in the individual. But whereas the irrationalities of the individual are usually limited as to consequences, the effects of group irrationality are therefore infinitely more dangerous.[44]

Not only do we find a fanatical hunt for universal scapegoats, but we see today the total absorption of the individual in this hypnotic process. Hence, the impossibility

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[43] Flugel, op. cit., p. 210.

[44] Edward Glover, The Dangers of Being Human, (George Allen and Unwin Ltd., London, 1936), p. 67.

of locating any consciously guilty Nazis after the war. Once the totalitarian machine which had supported the ideology collapsed, the spell of hypnosis broke. Precisely because the individual psyche had been totally absorbed by the ideology and its objectification, the totalitarian machine, there could be no awareness of it even after the event.[45]

Such is the individual human condition with which the totalitarian systematizers and Leaders count upon to produce conformity among the masses, to create their artificial structures of guilt-innocence and to bring every individual under their influence.

In his deep, overpowering need to find release from the burden of his guilt, modern man is willing to accept the slavery of mass hypnosis; more than this, he demands it. The totalitarian system gives him an enemy, it enables him to hate and to act aggressively with a "good" conscience and a sense of duty; it provides him with goals to work for; and the over-all stimulus of action plus the accompanying sensation of release from guilt offer all the illusions of a militant religion. But all this is necessarily built on a Godless, and therefore, a friendless world. To say that the world is friendless is to describe in a word its hostility. Because he feels that it is hostile, man is forced to act aggressively against the world; he unloads

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45 Arendt, op. cit., p. 353.

his feeling of guilt upon a scapegoat which must accept the punishment for the hostility the world directs against him. Because he has no God, man can no longer blame himself consciously; he looks inward but sees only emptiness; he cannot understand the meaning behind his angst, and although he has psychology and religion, he has no insight. In the end there is only one thing he finds to do: he turns with all his long-denied need for worship and for aggression to that "system" which offers him the possibility of finding his gods again and punishing his enemies. In modern activist philosophies there is always a definite paranoia, a dreadful suspicion that enemies may be everywhere, and that the outside world is hostile, existing as an enemy to be punished and subdued. We are in truth a haunted people such as never have been on earth before. Individually we sense the terrible loneliness and fear of existence; each in himself is precisely no-one; hence the fanatical urge to group, to *find* identity of feeling, thought and action, to seek revenge against the world.

Guilt in our age has become so profound a problem of existence, it has so far exceeded our individual capacities either to control or to understand, that mass hypnosis may well become the gravest of all human problems. It is precisely because man has lost his sense of inner authority that he can no longer contain his guilt-anxiety and that his guilt must take the form of outward aggression. To this need for aggression the activist Leader and systemitizer

responds with goals for action, an enemy to hate and to punish; he provides a complete system, a way of life, a way to think, a way to express emotions, a way to act. It may even be the case that history is entering a period in which "greatness" and "genius" will belong exclusively to those activist leaders and thinkers who can persuade large numbers of mankind that certain other large numbers of mankind are guilty. The key to such solutions is already clear: an enemy to hate, a future to build, and a utopia to achieve. Within a system requiring absolute obedience to such ideals it is equally clear that a revolutionary and artificial pattern of guilt-innocence is being grafted upon what is thought to be the "new man". This, as we have said, is precisely the task of the totalitarian Leader, to define absolutely the meaning of guilt and innocence in relation to the prescribed goals for action and to bring everyone within this orbit. The essential thing is to make everyone _feel_ guilty for certain actions and for the omission of others. Therefore, collective guilt not only certainly exists, but it is the chief formula upon which the Leader reckons to construct his new society. If collective guilt is denied altogether then the theory and practice of totalitarianism is completely misunderstood. What should be condemned by everyone is the collective guilt theory by which the totalitarian system is born, the theory that a certain section of humanity is _the_ enemy which contaminates the rest of humanity by its guilty existence.

CHAPTER V

SCAPEGOAT PHILOSOPHY

Totalitarianism, in its attempt to impose a revolutionary pattern of guilt-innocence upon everyone within its system, erects what is basically a new theodicy in order to universalize its enemy and to justify its new order of crimes. Not only are scapegoats necessary in order to raze the existing structure of society, but their utility becomes just as important in maintaining the tyranny that follows. As the ultimate authority, the Leader and his Party cannot tolerate any imputation of error or guilt to themselves. Before any new line of thought or action can be instituted a suitable scapegoat must be found to ease the transition and to punish the "guilty".[1]

Totalitarian thought is the expression of moral revenge trying to take in the whole world. Since the devil cannot exist for the totalitarian moralist, his devil-surrogate must be a universal enemy, namely, a social class, a race or a political system; in other words, a universal vehicle for carrying away the sins and troubles of the "Chosen" class or race. The strength of totalitarianism therefore consists in the fact that aggression and hostility are given almost unlimited scope; the forces of good are encircled by the forces of evil; the "other" is either a

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1 Cf. Barbu, Democracy and Dictatorship, p. 249.

declared enemy or a suspected enemy. Evil is not in ourselves, but in the "other", and the "other" exists as an objective fact against which all action and thought are aggressively directed. This is why, for the totalitarian moralist, there can be no justification for thought unless it results in action, primarily in aggressive action. For the totalitarian religionist, immortality is in destruction and the achievement of vengeance; his profound grievance against the world is mollified only when the object of his hatred has been totally destroyed or totally transformed. It is not enough that mere punishment or mere suffering should be the lot of his enemies, but the punishment must result in confession of guilt; the accused must accuse himself. Shestov correctly divined the totalitarian trend among moralists who ...

> ... are not satisfied with simply despising and condemning their neighbour _themselves_, they want the condemnation to be universal and supreme: that is, that all men should rise as one against the condemned _and that even the offender's own conscience shall be against him_. Then only are they fully satisfied and reassured.[2]

Although projection of guilt is apparently a universally human method of unburdening the self of guilt, it is the

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[2] Leo Shestov, _All Things Are Possible_, tr. S. S. Koteliansky (Martin Secker, London, 1920), p. 55.

present age which has added to the ancient symbolic rite the act of aggressive revenge on an unlimited, almost metaphysical, scale. The ancient scapegoat rite of the Jews, for instance, seems like a charming fairy tale when compared to the monumental acts of revenge by which modern man attempts to transfer his guilt. This diffuse and uncontrollable anxiety-guilt was at the bottom of that urge for aggression which Dostoevsky discovered in a certain type of Russian liberal. His hatred, Myshkin observed, was not simply directed at the order of things, not at the objective structure of existence, but at the fact of existence itself.[3]

According to a study by Grygier, the sense of oppression, whether real or imaginary, causes the individual to seek an outlet for his need for revenge by throwing the blame onto others. The oppressed personality is deeply prejudiced, he is ...

> ... moralistic and professes a philosophy according to which somebody is always responsible for misfortunes; but he tends to deny any weakness or fault in himself. Instead he projects the blame on to other people: minorities, authority, police, etc. He feels frustrated, and considers himself a victim of persecution ... He dichotomizes people into good and bad, and attributes blame and responsibility accordingly; the underlying assumption being that he himself is good and so are all those who are like him and who agree with him.[4]

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[3] Dostoevsky, The Idiot, tr. C. Garnett (Heinemann, London, 1913), pp. 335-6.

[4] Tadeusz Grygier, Oppression: A Study in Social and Criminal Psychology, (Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., London, 1954), p. 270.

We may reasonably assume that the so-called oppressed personalities become more numerous in proportion to the spread of oppressive forces in the world. Wars, revolutions, and totalitarian methods release the feelings of oppression and guilt, but these feelings are not thereby consumed in the process. They not only continue to exist, but they increase in the world by feeding on themselves. Grygier finds a "positive correlation between crime and the tendency to direct aggression outwards and, on the other hand, between neurosis and the tendency to direct aggression inwards".[5] Thus, in the present world man is eager, as never before, to find the Leader who can deliver him from the awful ordeal of blaming himself. We said before that activist thinkers and leaders have this one point of "genius" in common, that they have "successfully" dealt with their own problems of guilt and conscience. Ernest Jones considers that activism as an attempt to unburden oneself of guilt betrays a much greater than normal sense of guiltiness. The revolutionary, for instance, is a person in whom something has happened so as to enable him ...

> ... to pursue his murderous aim with the callousness, ruthlessness and apparent freedom from guiltiness that are the attributes of the typical destructive revolutionary. The Jacobin has been able to do something about his sense of guilt which the Girondin could not ... In my experience what has

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[5] Ibid., p. x.

> happened is that the sense of guilt in such people has been disposed of, or successfully kept at bay, by their developing in a specially high degree the paranoid mechanism of projection. They have persuaded themselves that their opponents are so unspeakably evil that they deserve no better fate than torture and death and that to inflict this, so far from being a guilty act, is a laudable one ... In their exalted conviction they find it easy, in certain circumstances, to infuse a following with both dread of the wicked enemy and loathing for him, and at the same time to inspire him with confidence that if they follow their noble leader the good cause must triumph. We reach thus the conclusion that a successful revolutionary must be more than a little mad ...[6]

A considerable part of the madness of the activist consists in his unalterable conviction that it is by action and action alone that the world can be changed. And indeed, it is changed, but hardly in accordance with the avowed purpose of the activist. On the contrary, the hatred which breaks out in aggression is never dissipated by the act of aggression. If such were the case, the world would long ago have achieved utopia. However, let us, for the moment, accuse ourselves of being unwarrantably pessimistic; let us suppose that all or most of the hatred now accumulated through wars, revolutions, and the general conflicts of this century can

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6 Ernest Jones, "Evolution and Revolution", The International Journal of Psycho-Analysis, XXII (1941), p. 200.

somehow remain repressed in the human psyche until it dissipates itself. Is this possible? The judgement of at least two investigators does not allow us this hope. "The overwhelming fact established by the psychological evidence is that aggression, however deeply hidden or disguised, does not disappear. It appears later and in other forms. It is not destroyed. It is safe to conclude from the evidence that it cannot be destroyed."[7] One psychologist goes so far as to speak of new and different egos which are formed not only by extreme physical and psychological torture such as we described in a previous chapter, but by the traumata of war and oppression which strike nearly everyone. The effects of such traumata cannot be undone; the ego once changed is changed forever.[8] These statements do not appear to mean that hatred culminating in aggression offers a final catharsis for that hatred. Nor are we given any reason to suppose that aggression motivated by some utopian cause (as, indeed, all modern aggression seems to be) is any more likely to prove beneficial. So far from being the end of hatred, aggression is simply the perpetuation of it. We might not be far from wrong in comparing aggression to a kind of psycho-physical energy controlled by its own Law of Conservation. If this were indeed so, it would help

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[7] Durbin and Bowlby, Personal Aggressiveness and War, p. 17.

[8] Stephen Schönberger, "Disorders of the Ego in Wartime", The British Journal of Medical Psychology, XXI (1947-8), p. 253.

to explain why so-called idealistic aggression can never achieve its avowed purpose. It should also explain why power when it is addressed outwardly and aggressively must inevitably prove a corrupting influence, and why this power never diminishes as the revolutionists claim, but in fact grows increasingly stronger. We must agree with Bertrand de Jouvenel that revolutions are not the death of power but the substitution of a greater for a lesser power.[9] Accordingly, we need not stop to inquire concerning the perversion of activist philosophies or the betrayal of revolutions, as if these violent creations are accustomed to spring immaculately from the heads of their systematizers like Athena from the head of Zeus. The reason for the inevitable perversion of such activist philosophies is that they are never conceived in innocence; but, being spawned in hatred and worship of power, and, being acts of aggression in their very conception, they naturally seek for objective scapegoats; the enemies of the original fantasy must be perpetuated in reality.

It has become in the nature of a cliché to speak of the unprecedented amount of hatred in the world today. The fact that large numbers of intellectuals and respected thinkers have allied their sympathies with totalitarian ideologies may be taken as evidence that human thought, which used to have powers of ennoblement and which used to be replete with

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[9] Bertrand de Jouvenel, Power: The Natural History of Its Growth, tr. J.F. Huntington (Hutchinson and Co., Ltd., London, 1948), p. 185 ff.

images of the beautiful, is now more slave than master, more dead than alive. Philosophers, as Bertrand de Jouvenel reminds us, have from the time of Plato, associated themselves with power and authority.[10] But has philosophy ever, we may ask, been so openly in alliance with aggression and activism? Philosophy may have been poverty stricken before Marx's time, but at least its pages were comparatively free of blood. We may assume the omnipresence of hatred if only because hatred, along with fear, has become the most powerful impulse in the will to group. We shall have to question seriously the future moral significance of any system based upon the premise that the world must be acted upon to make it conform to reason. As if reason can ever be the result of fantasy and scapegoat philosophy. Such a philosophy might be rationalized to the most sublime degree, but in the last analysis, the aggression and the guilt would still remain. Man expects to recover reason by attacking the world; he hopes to bring peace with a sword and freedom

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[10] Ibid., p. 119. Cf. also Hannah Arendt: "What is more disturbing to our peace of mind than the unconditional loyalty of members of totalitarian regimes ... is the unquestionable attraction these movements exert on the [intellectual] élite, and not only on the mob elements in society." (Arendt, The Burden of Our Time, p. 318). In the present age philosophers are no longer alone in the intellectual vanguard of totalitarian movements. Totalitarianism has the unique power of transforming anyone into a god and a philosopher at once.

with tyranny.[11] One of the chief lessons that should have been learned from the French Revolution is that a vast difference lies between reason and reasoning. To reason is one thing; to be guided by reason is quite another. Modern man reasons in a state of hypnosis; he is hypnotized by goals he cannot reach; in his blindness to everything except his ends, he cannot see the corrupting influence of his means, which mount in fury and destruction until his own conscience whispers "all is permitted", and his deeds announce that "all is possible". The ideologies of our day may be permeated with emotional and fantastic ideas, and yet they attract millions of followers who can never admit that what they do and say is anything but the command of reason; to admit this, they know, would mean to lose their hold on life.

It must be seen that there is a world of difference between rationally locating the sources of evil and simply nominating a convenient scapegoat on which to unload the world's sense of guilt and frustration. A rational notion of what is good is possible, and it is possible and even necessary to be convinced that its opposite is an evil which must be hated and destroyed wherever it appears. But it is just at this point, this point of destruction, that we must stop to ask what we expect to achieve by destruction.

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[11] Cf. Grace Stuart's statement that "until we understand that these mechanisms of the mind which protect us from guilt are universal - we shall continue to go about the world as powers of darkness and to see ourselves as angels of light." (<u>Conscience and Reason</u>, p. 101).

Modern man and only modern man has earned the distinction of making a religion of destruction. Destruction exerts a tremendous fascination upon everyone everywhere; it may even be the case that modern man's only claim to reason is precisely that in rare moments of insight he understands what it is that needs to be destroyed. Then violent emotion takes over, and the true vision is lost. Those who proclaim most loudly their adherence to reason are often marvellous destroyers (as they may also be marvellous reasoners), but after their fit of destruction is over they have no energy for creating, which proves how deeply emotional their reasoning was in the first place. These emotional systems of thought have all the characteristics of fanatical religions; they completely dispense with the notion that fallibility touches all human nature and that all individuals, separately, and without reference to environment, are subject to evil.

So powerful have certain emotionally charged ideas become, and so prone is man to accept all the conclusions of those incomplete and unstable ideas which took root in the eighteenth century, that these fantastic conclusions now become the basis of our secular religions. The truth of this matter is not simply that incomplete and unstable ideas provide the chief motivating force of great movements, but that this force actually <u>depends</u> upon the instability of the ideas. Essentially, Hitler's discovery that the most violent distortions of the truth are the most firmly believed in is

not different from that other triumphant discovery that history can be rewritten; both are significant additions to that larger discovery of our age that "all is possible". One of the chief sources of strength for totalitarianism is its understanding that never before in human history has man been so eager to believe _anything_. But the one factor which seems, more than any other, to be embodied directly in the centre of the dominant secular religions and philosophies of our age, the _übermensch_, racial, and proletarian movements, is the violent projection of guilt.

We reach therefore the conclusion that it is not the guilt which people of our time passively experience, but the guilt they actively project that determines the course of action pursued by the dominant philosophies. The powerful totalitarian movements of this century are powerful and are aggressive in direct proportion to the guilt which they manage to project onto universal enemies having no more true relation to the ideals these movements profess than their means have to their professed ends. At the present time an activist system probably could not be conceived, and certainly it could not long exist, apart from an enemy, that is, apart from a scapegoat. We conclude that it is highly probable that any activist philosophy will be a scapegoat philosophy, and that its course of action and its final solutions will largely, if not completely, be determined by the violent projection of guilt.

CHAPTER VI

GUILT, FREEDOM AND POSSIBILITY

The great tragedy of our age is that man's guilt has been become far too oppressive a burden for his consciousness to bear, and that much of his anxiety and aggression is shown in his desperate attempts to deny the real existence of that guilt. In a very true sense the central problem is not man's guilt, but his rejection of guilt as an illusory burden imposed by mythology. One frequently meets the objection that, after two thousand years of Christianity and a sense of guilt, man is farther than ever from achieving self-mastery. The answer is surely not more guiltiness, but, if it is possible, more conscious acceptance of guilt. However, it might be equally correct to say that mankind has never carried and does not now carry a burden of guilt; rather it is man himself who seems to be thrust into existence by guilt. In answer to the fundamental question "what is man?" we might reply: "man is his guilt". Man is what he does, and what he does has come to be more and more determined by what he does with his sense of guilt. Moreover, there would seem to be psychological evidence even for the apparently mystical assertion that man is thrust into existence, or at least into conscious existence, by his guilt. For this would seem to be implied in Freud's contention that a sense of guilt is the expression of an ambivalent feeling and therefore of a conflict which begins

with the very earliest awareness of other people's existence.[1]

Heinrich Zimmer describes the celebrated Buddhist myths which pronounce all creation as guilty in its particularity and exclusiveness.[2] This guiltiness has been called by Jaspers existential guilt. To Richard Hertz it appears that "all mankind without exception is deeply engaged in the collective guilt of its pursuits ..."[3] There is, consequently, the guilt of character, of individuation, and of the unaided human will because all who are involved in creation are what they are by virtue of their peculiar guiltiness. Guilt, it seems, is the very stuff of existence, and very little in man's recent history would seem to deny this assumption.

> ... character as such, by its very existence, is guilty. The lion is lion by eating the lamb, and the lamb is lamb by displaying its particular brand of covetousness; the Moslem is Moslem by marking the burning deserts with his fanatical footprints; the Christian is Christian by wading knee-deep in the blood of the infidels when 'liberating' Jerusalem.[4]

The meaning of the Promythean myth, according to Nietzsche, is that existence necessarily imposes crime and therefore guilt upon the individual; at the heart of all things lies a mystery, an antagonism which must be

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[1] See Freud, Civilization and Its Discontents, p. 121.

[2] Heinrich Zimmer, Myths and Symbols in Indian Art and Civilization, ed. Joseph Campbell (The Bollingen Series VI, Pantheon Books, Washington, D.C., 1946).

[3] Richard Hertz, Chance and Symbol (The U. of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1948), p. 156.

[4] Ibid., p. 32.

experienced by each individual as he strives to transcend and universalize the self. Both sides of the polarity are equally right, Apollo is balanced by Dionysus and both are equally justified; both are necessary aspects of a world which is divine and human and in which every individual is "in the right individually, but as a separate existence alongside of another has to suffer for its individuation".[5]

In this identity of individuation and guiltiness the great religions of East and West bear close agreement. Coomeraswamy was convinced that mystical theology is identical the world over and that the great Christian mystics reveal a remarkable similarity to Sanscrit writings.[6] Anaximander's assertion that all existence must expiate the fact of its particular existence is suggested by Hertz to be in line with Christian doctrine, since for man to become a man a "fall" was necessary.[7] Indian mythology traces the original act of individuation back to the gods themselves; thus, the first sin originated with them, and the wheel of

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[5] Friedrich Nietzsche, The Birth of Tragedy, tr. Wm. A. Haussmann (T.N. Foulis, Edinburgh, 1909), p. 79.

[6] See the foreword by Walter Eugene Clark to Ananda K. Coomeraswamy, Elements of Buddhist Iconography (Harvard U.P., 1935).

[7] Hertz, op. cit., p. 33. As Hertz points out, this is not Werner Jaeger's interpretation of this famous saying. That all "things must pay one another the penalty and compensation for their injustice according to the ordinance of time" is due to the rule of law within the cosmos, not to the sinfulness of existence. "Existence in itself is not a sin - that is a non-Greek idea." (Werner Jaegar, Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture, tr. Gilbert Highet (Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1939), p. 157).

guilty existence began to turn under that perpetual life-energy by which each of us comes to have a personal identity and a personal history. Guilt and individuation were simultaneously introduced into existence. Indra became "guilty of the most heinous of all possible crimes, namely the slaying of a brahmin".[8] With the slaying and dismemberment of Vritra the first act of creation and the first sin were accomplished; the one became the many. Thus, the gods themselves need a stepping-stone to individuation. Even the Lord, says Peer Gynt, "needed the earth to make himself God of the Earth ..." and Peer's life-energy, his shakti is that which "makes me 'me' and no one else. No more than God could be the Devil."[9]

Indian philosophy, however, is not content merely to explain how the one became the many, it seeks to teach the many how to become the one again, how to transcend the self. Guilty as he is by the very fact of individuation, man is yet free to atone for his guilt and to transmute his all-too human nature. Our understanding of freedom is to be found grounded in the spheres of philosophy, literature, and art. With N. O. Lossky, we take freedom to mean that inward experience of "an open way upwards or downwards ... the possibility of the highest good and the worst evil."[10]

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8 Zimmer, op. cit., p. 189.

9 Henrik Ibsen, Peer Gynt, Act IV, Sc. 1.

10 N.O. Lossky, Freedom of Will, tr. Natalie Duddington, (Williams and Norgate Ltd., London, 1932), p. 108.

Likewise, Berdyaev believes in a freedom interiorly lived, an understanding of freedom closely resembling Dostoevsky's as well as Kierkegaard's in the sense of freedom in truth, the higher, divine freedom. The broadness of the human soul, which Dostoevsky so clearly perceived and described in such characters as Dimitri Karamazov and Versilov, reveals the possibility of the purest and highest sentiments existing side by side with the basest desires in the same soul. As if in confirmation of events to take place a hundred years hence Dostoevsky wrote: "Believe me, the most complete aberration both in the minds and hearts of men is always possible."[11] The possibility of an upward and a downward way as the essence of freedom is exactly the understanding of freedom which comes from a study of the heroic figures of world literature, the archetypal heroes "poised between height

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[11] Dostoevsky, Diary of a Writer, Vol. II, tr. Boris Brasol (Scribner's, New York, 1949), p. 604. Goethe is said to have asserted in regard to himself that there was no crime he would not deem himself capable of committing. Also, Kierkegaard's love for Socrates was founded in part, at least, on his discovery that Socrates looked upon himself with a mixture of horror and hope. (See the Phaedrus where he wonders whether his nature is more like Typhon's or more simple and gentle. See also Lowrie, Kierkegaard, p. 307). Wordsworth's experiences in revolutionary France gave vent to the following lines which he wrote in the preface to "The Borderers": "The study of human nature suggests this awful truth, that, as in the trials to which life subjects us, sin and crime are apt to start from their very opposite qualities, so are there no limits to the hardening of the heart, and the perversion of the understanding to which they may carry their slaves. During my long residence in France, while the revolution was rapidly advancing to its extreme of wickedness, I had frequent opportunities of being an eye-witness of this process ..." (See E. do Selincourt's edition of Wordsworth's works (1940) Vol. I., p. 342.)

and depth, between the Divine and the Devilish ..."[12] Arthur Koestler is convinced that this possibility of an open way upwards and downwards has had an illimitable effect upon art and literature. He recognizes as a part of the basic pattern of the archetype the "Night Journey" of the hero, an expression as old as mankind. "The journey always represents a plunge downward and backwards to the origins and tragic foundations of existence ..." after which the tragic hero emerges "regenerated on a higher level of integration."[13]

The evidence for such figurative movements of the soul in mythology and literature is far too voluminous to be dealt with here. We may, however, succeed in clarifying our purpose in identifying freedom and possibility in this way. From Jung we obtain the interpretation that the night journies are symbolic representations of profound descents into the self, psychologically speaking, of introversions, after which the self is reborn. Jung refers to the night journey of the hero as an "almost worldwide myth".[14] He cites the example of the Egyptian God Osiris who, after a night sea journey in a cedar coffin, is dismembered before

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[12] Maud Bodkin, Archetypal Patterns in Poetry, (Oxford U. P., London, 1934), p. 245.

[13] Arthur Koestler, Insight and Outlook, (Macmillan and Co., London, 1949), pp. 371-2.

[14] C.G. Jung, Symbols of Transformation, being Vol. V of The Collected Works of C. G. Jung, tr. R. F. C. Hull, (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1945), p. 347.

being reborn.[15] Christ, it is noted, spent three days in the underworld,[16] an event not without resemblance to the "dark descent" of the Eleusinean Mysteries.[17] There is also the mythological _motif_ of dying and rising again in which the cave and the grave are prominent symbols. Christ was born in a cave and rose after death from a cave.[18] Parallel to this _motif_ is that of being lost and found again which occurs in Christ's being lost from his parents.[19] Jung informs us that these journies or regressions show the "inherent possibilities of 'spiritual' or 'symbolic' life and of progress which form the ultimate, though unconscious, goal of regression."[20]

Koestler enumerates several instances of the hero's night journey: Orpheus and Odysseus to the underworld; Joseph to the bottom of the well, and Jonah into the belly of a fish.[21] These heroes, in contrast to the vast majority of mankind, act on a tragic level of existence. The guilt of Jonah, his complacency and love of the trivial, combine to thrust him onto the tragic level where he eventually

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[15] _Ibid._, p. 236.

[16] _Ibid._, p. 331.

[17] _Ibid._, p. 341.

[18] _Ibid._, p. 338.

[19] _Ibid._, p. 343.

[20] _Ibid._, p. 331.

[21] Koestler, _Insight and Outlook_, p. 371.

finds God.[22] Koestler suggests that the crisis-conversion theme in Tolstoi and Dostoevsky is an example of this universal theme of the night journey and the regeneration.[23] Furthermore, the task of the artist is to reveal the connection between these two movements.[24] When the artist creates a great hero, something fundamental to the spiritual effort of all men is preserved forever. The hero is a hero because he brings something human from the common to the uncommon plane where it is preserved for all men to admire. In the words given to Daedalus by Gide, there is a ...

> ... truer plane on which time does not exist; on this plane the representative gestures of our race are inscribed, each according to its particular significance. Icarus was, before his birth, and remains after his death, the image of man's disquiet, of the impulse to discovery, the soaring flight of poetry ... What happens, in the case of a hero, is this: his mark endures. Poetry and the arts reanimate it and it becomes an enduring symbol.[25]

In blindness there is also light, also a night journey culminating in the achievement of inner light. "Nobody understood me," says Oedipus, "when I suddenly cried out 'O darkness, my light'! ... People heard it as a cry of grief; it was a statement of fact. It meant that in my

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[22] Ibid., p. 374.

[23] Ibid., p. 375.

[24] Ibid., p. 380.

[25] André Gide, Oedipus and Theseus, tr. John Russell, (Secker and Warburg, London, 1950), p. 92.

darkness I had found a source of supernatural light, illumining the world of the spirit."[26] Kierkegaard had found it "very notable ... that the great geniuses of poetry (like Ossian and Homer) are represented as blind", and, whether they actually were blind or not, the representation of this "seems to show that when they sang the beauties of nature they did not see what they saw with the outward eye but that it revealed itself to an inner intuition."[27] Tiresius, blinded for divulging Jupiter's secrets to mortals, was able, in the opinion of Milton, to see things denied to mortal sight. Milton, like Kierkegaard, remembers "those old poets, ancientest and wisest, whose calamity the gods are said to have recompensed with far more excelling gifts, and men to have honoured with that high honour, as to choose rather to blame the gods themselves, than to impute their blindness to them as a crime."[28]

Toynbee considers the _motif_ of "Withdrawal-and-Return" to be of great spiritual significance in history. The lives of some thirty historians, philosophers, statesmen, saints, mystics and poets are studied from the aspect of their withdrawal to the underworld or into the wilderness and their

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[26] _Ibid._, p. 113.

[27] Kierkegaard, _The Journals_, pp. 1 - 2.

[28] John Milton, _A Second Defence_ in _The Works of John Milton_ (Columbia U.P., New York, 1933), Vol. VIII, p. 63.

ascent to a higher plane of existence.[29]

The fact that the mythological emanations of man's sense of an open way upward and downward have recently been criticised as being incompatible with a modern scientific <u>weltanschauung</u>, in no way denies the psychological truth of this sense.[30] In the foreground are the religious myths, inconsistent perhaps with a naturalistic conception of the universe, but nevertheless consistent with the psychological background of the sense of spiritual freedom. In terms of this background the doctrinal words "ascended into heaven" are not different, except in degree, from the basic human identification of "stepping up" with every inner, spiritual event. The author of <u>Symbolism and Belief</u> inquires "how it is that all over the world to follow the good impulses has seemed like going uphill, and to follow the evil ones like going downhill."[31] Christopher Dawson states that "The religious attitude towards transcendence ... appears to be ... deeply rooted in human nature ..." so much so that even naturalistic world-views are described with religious feeling.[32]

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[29] Arnold J. Toynbee, <u>A Study of History</u>, (Oxford U.P., London, 1935), Vol. III, p. 248 ff.

[30] See Rudolf Bultmann's essay "New Testament and Mythology" in <u>Kerygma and Myth</u>, tr. Reginald H. Fuller; ed. Hans Werner Bartsch (S.P.C.K., London, 1953).

[31] Edwyn Bevan, <u>Symbolism and Belief</u> (Allen and Unwin, London, 1938), p. 63.

[32] Christopher Dawson, <u>Religion and Culture</u>, (Sheed and Ward, London, 1949), p. 38. Cf. William James's assertion that in all the autobiographical evidence in <u>The Varieties of Religious Experience</u> there probably is not one instance where the experience of "rising" to one's "higher part" would not apply. (p. 499).

Notwithstanding Hume's arguments that mankind has progressed from a groveling attitude to familiar spirits to a notion of Deity, myth and symbol have always shown that the divine descends from above and that evil arises from below. Andrew Lang's special contribution to the study of mythology was the idea that even the most primitive peoples worshipped a "high god", and that this type of worship was intimately bound up with the moral traditions of the same peoples. Turning away from Hume's theories, Lang came to see that the "high god" embodied moral ideas and consequently had nothing in common with Hume's familiar spirits.[33] In any discussion of symbolism the special symbols of certain poets should not be overlooked: the use by Blake of the sun to suggest God, or of the moon by Keats to represent perfection and beauty are examples.

An identification of spiritual effort among all men would seem to be possible only if there is a common structure of religious and moral experience behind it; a structure, moreover, in which the place of man in relation to God is essentially that of creature to creator. Given such a relationship, the first fruits to emerge are those of love, hatred, and therefore, guilt. Something of a basic common tradition in literature, as seen in the Ulysses theme as well as in the universality of certain symbols and images,

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[33] Richard Chase, Quest for Myth, (Lousiana State U.P., Baton Rouge, La., 1949), pp. 61-63.

presupposes this common spiritual effort. An example of this yearning, as we may call it, is the Grail Quest.

The quest of the holy grail has been conclusively established by scholarship in all the major European languages "as the record of a determined effort to attain, on the lower plane, to a definite and personal knowledge of the Secret of Life, on the higher, to [an] intimate and personal contact with the Divine Source of Life." Thus the Grail Quest belongs in literature "with the deepest, and most keenly felt, of all human needs".[34] The Ulysses tradition is also one of spiritual quest. In the post-Homeric era, Stoics and Christians "made use of Ulysses as an emblem for nostalgia or for spiritual aspiration."[35] Impatience and nostalgia have the two-fold aspect of love and hatred; the opposing aspect of self-assertion and self-transcendence. If the yearning for self-transcendence is accompanied by neuroticism or mental illness, it is also a sign of spiritual health. Kierkegaard refers to Hamann's belief that "diese heilige Hypochondrie" is a kind of spiritual homesickness without which man would forget God and sink back into paganism.[36] With the same thought in

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[34] Jessie L. Weston, The Quest of the Holy Grail, (G. Bell & Sons, London, 1913), p. 139.

[35] W.B. Stanford, The Ulysses Theme (Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1954), p. 175.

[36] Kierkegaard, The Concept of Dread, p. 145. Similarly, Gide remarks on the "vast sickly unrest of ancient heroes" and concludes that it is fortunate that man is "forced to feel more than to think," (André Gide, The Journals of André Gide, Vol. I, pp. 80 - 1.)

mind, Cattell reminds us that emotional adjustment is not always to be found through the method of acquiescence in the group consciousness. "Some other form of emotional adjustment was evidently at work in Columbus, in Newton, in Darwin, in Mohammed, and in Christ."[37] Similarly, Gide says that "At the origin of a reform there is always a discomfort; the discomfort from which the reformer suffers is that of an inner lack of balance ... he aspires to a new equilibrium".[38] From Unamuno comes the question: "But what is disease precisely? And what is health? May not disease itself possibly be the essential condition of that which we call progress and progress itself a disease?"[39] Again we may refer to Kierkegaard whose opinion was that "To lead a really spiritual life while physically and psychically healthy is altogether impossible."[40]

Among writers besides Homer who have used the Ulysses theme are: Sophocles, Seneca, Racine, Tennyson, Lander, Giradoux, Shakespeare, Dante, Euripides, Joyce; and among painters, Rubens, Claude, Ingres, Fuseli, Turner and others.[41] The literary perpetuators of the Ulysses theme often tend

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[37] Raymond B. Cattell, Psychology and the Religious Quest, (Thomas Nelson & Sons Ltd., London, 1938), p. 114.

[38] André Gide, The Journals of Andre Gide, tr. Justin O'Brien (Secker and Warburg, London, 1948), Vol. II, p. 242.

[39] Miguel De Unamuno, The Tragic Sense of Life, tr. J.E. Crawford Flitch (Macmillan and Co., London, 1921), p. 19.

[40] Kierkegaard, The Journals, p. 326.

[41] See Stanford, op. cit., p. 279.

to identify their personal yearnings with those of Ulysses, a fact which prompts Stanford to suggest that Jung's archetypal theory may be a valid explanation for the maintenance of this tradition.[42] In line with Miss Bodkin's studies of the archetypal hero poised between good and evil, Stanford points out that Homer's Ulysses comprises two opposing elements which he calls the "Autolycus-Athene antithesis".[43] Yet Joyce's Ulysses conveys an even greater sense of separation within the self, an almost cosmic yearning. By combining Greek and Hebrew traits in Ulysses, Joyce carried this symbolism of the divided self deeper than it had ever appeared before.[44] Homer's Odysseus is not driven by an interior dichatomy or by a nameless yearning, but rather by divine wrath; he is not a wanderer like Byron's guilt-haunted Manfred. And to this extent the Homeric wanderer should rather be compared to the Wandering Jew and the Ancient Mariner.[45]

These considerations bring us to the significant observations of Kierkegaard on the philosophical importance of three legendary characters: Don Juan, Faust, and the Wandering Jew, who are respectively the embodiment of three ideas: desire, doubt, and despair. These ideas according

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[42] Ibid., p. 246.

[43] Ibid., p. 279.

[44] Ibid., p. 221.

[45] Ibid., p. 87.

to Kierkegaard are the beginning of religion and morality when they are united in the individual.[46] Don Juan is the sensual demoniac; Faust, the intellectual.[47] Although every age has its Faust and its Don Juan, there is only one universal Faust and only one Don Juan. Each age simply interprets the given symbol.[48] Dante's Ulysses is merged with a Faustian conception of the "sinful desire for forbidden knowledge",[49] while Marlowe, who was fascinated by the human phenomenon of greed for power, made Faust the personification of this lust.[50] The problem of the pride of intellect, le tragique de l'intellect, is just as large a theme in modern literature as it ever was. Herbert Read has said that "Faust is still our representative myth".[51] Read has also shown that Coleridge, before the creation of The Ancient Mariner, "had come to realize from his investigations into the nature of dramatic poetry, that all dramatic effect was dependent on a tragic sense of life".[52]

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[46] Kierkegaard, The Journals, p. 26.

[47] Kierkegaard, Either/Or, tr. David F. and Lillian M. Swenson (Oxford U.P., London, 1944), Vol. I, p. 73.

[48] Kierkegaard, The Journals, p. 31.

[49] Stanford, op. cit., p. 181.

[50] See Rex Warner, The Cult of Power, (John Lane, the Bodley Head, London, 1946), p. 7.

[51] Herbert Read, A Coat of Many Colours, (Routledge and Sons, London, 1945), p. 176.

[52] Read, Coleridge as Critic, (Faber and Faber, London, 1949), p. 32.

It is not surprising that the Mariner's tragic guilt begins with an act of aggression. "The violent self-assertion of the individual is one of the roots of tragedy ... a kind of revolutionary urge, a desire to defy the powers that be ..."[53] The entire history of tragic art is, after all, the story of man's guilt; one of the basic characteristics of tragedy, according to Jaspers, is guilt, guilt in the aspect of action and guilt in the aspect of all existence.[54] In tragedy is expressed pre-eminently the meaning of spiritual freedom, and in tragedy we find the basic questions of philosophy in dramatic terms.[55] The examples of the open way upward and downward in myth and in tragic art illustrate convincingly, without attempting to prove, the experience of freedom.

"In every man," said Baudelaire, "and at all times, there are two simultaneous yearnings - the one toward God, the other toward Satan. The invocation of God, or spirituality, is a desire to ascend a step, the invocation of Satan, or animality, is a delight in descending."[56]

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[53] Warner, op. cit., p. 7.

[54] Jaspers, Tragedy is Not Enough, p. 52 ff.

[55] Ibid., p. 103. Cf. the following statement: "... Hebbel considers the fundamental characteristics of tragedy as related to a metaphysical conception of original or cumulative guilt." (T.R. Henn, Harvest of Tragedy, p. 67.)

[56] Charles Baudelaire, My Heart Laid Bare, tr. Norman Cameron; ed. Peter Quennell (George Weidenfeld and Nicolson Ltd., London, 1950), p. 181.

Dostoevsky, in his notes for the projected novel, The Life of a Great Sinner, the dominating idea of which was to be religious, depicts his hero with an extremely ambiguous temperament given to "Fallings and risings".[57] Already in his second novel, The Double, Dostoevsky had made the psychological discovery of the duality between the higher and the lower impulses of character. In Conrad's Lord Jim there is the significant remark made by Stein that man wants to be a saint and also a devil; he lives in a kind of dream, and at last comes to grief because he hasn't the strength to live a consistently perfect life.

Freedom seems at times to be an illusion, the background of the dream which man lives in presuming himself to be capable of existing consistently in the rare atmosphere of perfection. Yet, in so far as man acknowledges his spiritual nature he will not give up the notion of his freedom to move upward or downward, nor will he deny his guilt in failing to do the one or to indulge the other. Kafka has described this insistence upon freedom in the following parable:

> He is a free and secure citizen of the world, for he is fettered to a chain which is long enough to give him the freedom of all earthly space ... But simultaneously he is a free and secure citizen of Heaven as well, for he is also fettered by a similarly

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[57] Dostoevsky, Stavrogin's Confession and the Plan of The Life of a Great Sinner, tr. S.S. Koteliansky and Virginia Woolf (The Hogarth Press, Richmond, 1922), p. 114. Cf. the following speech by a tragic character envisioned by Wordsworth: "I am undone/No living power can save me - sinking, sinking,/ And feel that I am sinking - ." (The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth, Vol. I, p. 350).

> designed heavenly chain. So that
> if he heads, say, for the earth,
> his heavenly collar throttles him,
> and if he heads for Heaven, his
> earthly one does the same. And yet
> all the possibilities are his, and
> he feels it; more, he actually
> refused to account for the deadlock
> by an error in the original fettering.[58]

These chains, which we may understand as fettering Kafka himself, symbolize the stifling of freedom by a sense of guilt. Yet, as we have declared before, a sense of guilt does not necessarily deprive one of freedom, it does not degrade life nor induce mental illness. Kierkegaard, on the contrary, eventually broke loose from his earthly chains. In confirmation of the equivalence of freedom and the possibility of moving upward or downward, he speaks of sinking and then of floating "up from the depth of the abyss, lighter now than all that is oppressive and dreadful in life."[59] Kierkegaard also uses the illustration of going backward and downward, not in the enjoyment of evil, but in the recollection of guilt. "The religious experience is essentially an expression of the confidence that man by God's assistance is lighter than the whole world, the same sort of faith which makes it possible for a man to swim."[60]

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58 Kafka, The Great Wall of China and Other Pieces, tr. Willa and Edwin Muir (Secker and Warburg, London, 1946), p. 151.

59 Kierkegaard, The Concept of Dread, p. 142.

60 Walter Lowrie, Kierkegaard (Oxford U.P., London, 1938), p. 262.

Man, says Buber, is a dual creature "both brought forth from 'below' and sent from 'above'", a situation resulting in the relation I-Thou and its contrary relation I-It.[61] Not to be capable of moving both ways, to be deprived of the "possibility", would be to lose the possibility of any victory over the duality inherent in one's nature. To be completely denied one's freedom in this sense is a situation we can hardly imagine, for it is this freedom which is fundamental to human existence and which, for this reason, is a terrible freedom. There is no question of accepting this freedom; it is given. Yet Kierkegaard does not speak of his despair in terms of necessity; rather he insists that he chooses despair, and, therefore, it is not by necessity but by freedom that he despairs.[62] Can this be literally true? Both Kafka and Kierkegaard were born into despair; they were, to so speak, born guilty. In what sense then can Kierkegaard speak of choosing himself as guilty in order to choose himself absolutely.[63] What is meant by choosing himself and at the same time choosing freedom? To choose oneself is to turn inward upon oneself; this is the first step toward freedom. I know (says Kierkegaard) that only guilt can deprive me of

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[61] Martin Buber, The Eclipse of God, various translators, (Victor Gollancz, London, 1953), p. 165.

[62] Kierkegaard, Either/Or, tr. Walter Lowrie, (Oxford U.P., London, 1944), Vol. II, p. 179.

[63] Ibid., p. 182.

freedom;[64] therefore I must defeat guilt where it originates: within myself. To assume otherwise, to assume, for instance, that I am not guilty, that the cause of the guilt I feel is outside me, would call for activity directed outwardly. By this assumption, inward activity, or self-activity, would be meaningless. My activity must be inward activity. How else can one expect to know oneself? The very act of turning away from the self, that is, of directing activity outward, is a refusal to understand oneself. But it is precisely the self that must be understood, for it is the self that is guilty. By turning inward I come face to face with my guilt; by turning outward I flee from my own guilt and at the same time increase the possibility of further guilt. To become free is to become conscious of one's guilt. That man is truly free who is conscious of having descended a step; he refuses to believe that a step down can be the same as a step up; he refuses to persuade himself that he has "risen" when he has, in fact, "fallen"; and he knows (or at least attempts to know) why he despairs. In other words, this man has begun to know himself. To be as fully conscious of one's despair as one is conscious of one's victory over despair - this is to be as free as it is given any man to be free. In despair, a man's eye is on himself; whereas enthusiasm and optimism, usually associated with collective cures, are often incurably blind. There is reason to believe now that true insight is only possible through despair, and if this is so then a certain despair is the

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64 Cf. The Concept of Dread, p. 97.

pre-condition of wisdom just as insight is ordinarily the pre-condition of intelligent outlook.[65]

In conclusion then, the possibility of the open way upward and the open way downward is the essence of man's spiritual freedom; this freedom is given in the nature of existence, and to this extent man is subject to it, he is a slave of freedom. But man may steal a march on freedom by turning inward and becoming fully conscious of his relation to freedom and of the possibilities which inhere in him as the agent of freedom.

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65 Money-Kyrle has asserted that moral changes in character resulting from insight are equivalent to the possession of wisdom. Insight is the name he gives to the process by which the individual is revealed to himself through psychoanalysis. (Money-Kyrle, Psychoanalysis and Politics, p. 68).

CHAPTER VII.

IMPATIENCE AS THE ORIGIN OF GUILT.

The suggestion was put forward above that man may be defined in terms of his guilt: man is his guilt. In this chapter we shall discuss the reasons for impatience as an explanation of existential guilt or the guilt of individuation.

It would seem that mankind must invariably account for the distinction between good and evil, as well as for the eventual triumph of good over evil, by the belief in a state of primal innocence and in an event through which innocence was sacrificed. In mythology this belief is clearly manifest; it is, of course, the basis of the greatest religious myths and it has been used in such modern works of fiction as Ulysses and Finnegan's Wake; in philosophy it was used by Plato, and it may safely be said that even the modern activist philosophies cannot do without this belief. Cornford has said that "All ancient thought is haunted by regret for a golden age in the remote past ...."[1] We are informed by E. H. Carr that Karl Marx believed in a golden age of prehistoric communism which existed before private property and class divisions were known on earth.[2] He was

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[1] F. M. Cornford, The Unwritten Philosophy and Other Essays (Cambridge U.P., 1950), p. 45.

[2] Edward Hallett Carr, Karl Marx: A Study in Fanaticism (J.M. Dent and Sons Ltd., London, 1934), p. 81.

convinced "that, just as mankind has emerged from a state of communistic innocence, so it will one day return to the primitive ideal of a communistic society."[3]

In his state of original innocence man enjoyed perfect freedom. According to the myth devised by Plato the souls of men travel through the heavens where they are invested with the possibility of discerning the truth and inhabiting the heavens, or, failing in this, of going down to earth and inhabiting the human body. No soul is bound by necessity to fall to earth, for the soul may travel forever on its journey with the gods around the heavens.[4]

The Biblical myth of the Fall portrays essentially the same environment of freedom surrounding the first two souls. They exist in a state of innocence; yet there is the possibility of falling away, in a sense, of becoming subject to the body. The first apparent result of their guilt is that they are revealed in their nakedness. In the beginning they exist in freedom; they are free to reject or obey the commandment of God, and, since they can have as yet no direct knowledge of the consequences of disobedience, their freedom is now at its greatest extent. As yet, they have no conception of the power of God, which is to say,

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[3] Ibid., p. 82.

[4] Plato, Phaedrus, tr. R. Hackforth (Cambridge U.P., 1952).

they do not yet possess the knowledge of good and evil. Here, it hardly seems possible to speak of "the first sin". Rather, the actors in this myth are moved by a dreamy contemplation which conjures up for them more than the eye can see. The woman "seems moved by dream longing, but it seems to be truly in dream lassitude that he takes and eats ..... the two doers know not what they do.,..."[5] As a result of this act of disobedience, they have "stolen" something of the nature of God: the knowledge of good and evil. They become self-conscious, ashamed before each other and before God; the power of God is for the first time experienced by the soul and the sense of guilt is born in man. Insofar as the knowledge of good and evil is also the knowledge of the power of God it may be said that God begins at this point to exist for the soul. Freedom has become circumscribed.

In The Concept of Dread, we read similarly that man in his innocence was "a dreaming spirit"[6] and that "Innocence is ignorance".[7] Although Kierkegaard does not here use the term impatience with regard to the Fall, one suspects that "a sweet dread, a sweet feeling of apprehension"[8]

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[5] Martin Buber, Images of Good and Evil (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1952), p. 15.

[6] Kierkegaard, The Concept of Dread, p. 44.

[7] Ibid., p. 37.

[8] Ibid., p. 38.

is not inconsistent with impatience. And in The Journals we find the statement "Dread is nothing but impatience."[9] Elsewhere, however, Kierkegaard regards impatience sympathetically in the sense that a man may be impatient to receive God's love.[10] Impatience is comparable to the "Foreboding [which] is the homesickness of earthly life for something higher, for the perception which man must have had in paradise."[11] God is infinite patience, the absolute ideal by which one measures one's earthly strivings and sufferings. In one of the prayers of The Journals he says: "Infinite patience, suffering of infinite patience. How many times have I not been impatient, wished to give up and forsake everything, wished to take the terribly easy way out, despair...."[12]

Kafka would seem to have added his support to Kierkegaard. As a reader of The Journals, Kafka may well have had Kierkegaard in mind when he wrote:

> There are two main sins from which all others derive: impatience and indolence. It was because of impatience that they were expelled from Paradise, it is because of indolence that they do not return.

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[9] Kierkegaard, The Journals, p. 363.

[10] Ibid., p. 268.

[11] Ibid., p. 53.

[12] Ibid., p. 361.

> Yet perhaps there is only one major sin: impatience. Because of impatience they were expelled, because of impatience they do not return.[13]

The impatience of man to be justified is not far removed from his impatience to taste the sweets of sin. "Job endured everything - until his friends came to comfort him, then he grew impatient."[14] What Kierkegaard has in mind here is Job's loss of freedom. Job sinned with his lips only after the arrival of his friends prevented the working out of his salvation through inwardness. Thus, in Purity of Heart we read that "precipitate repentance" is false because guilt cannot be changed even by the "passage of a century".[15] Inwardness can be achieved only through freedom, and loss of freedom (as with Job) may lead to impatience, just as (with Adam) impatience leads to loss of freedom. Again we are reminded that guilt "is the one and only thing that can deprive [one] of freedom".[16]

In the freedom of innocence there is perhaps a latent tendency to determine the self, an inward tension demanding an outward expression. Freud calls attention to the

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[13] Kafka, Wedding Preparations in the Country, p. 38.

[14] Kierkegaard, The Journals, p. 300.

[15] Kierkegaard, Purity of Heart is to Will One Thing, tr. Douglas Steere (Harper and Bros., New York, 1938), pp. 44-45.

[16] Kierkegaard, The Concept of Dread, p. 97.

polarity of primal emotion, the tension generated between love and hatred, between the passive and the active instincts. "Neither of these instincts is any less essential than the other; the phenomena of life arise from the operation of both together, whether acting in concert or in opposition".[17] Such is the situation that gives birth to guilt. Yet the poets and dramatists understand that man has always blamed himself for what happened without understanding precisely what did happen when guilt entered the scene of life. The tremendous disproportion between the carelessness, indifference, or whatever it was that precipitated the Fall, and the consequences of the act have always been a stumbling block to the understanding. Milton considered that the original mistake was "due to carelessness, letting Reason slip for a moment, not living quite forever as in the great Taskmaster's eye".[18] The "Ridiculous Man" in Dostoevsky's story, who brings moral corruption to paradise, cannot remember how it happened.

> I only know that I was the cause of their sin and downfall. Like a vile trichina, like a germ of the plague infecting whole kingdoms, so I contaminated all the earth, so happy and sinless before my coming. They learnt to lie, grew fond of lying, and discovered the charm of falsehood. Oh,

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[17] Freud, Collected Papers, Vol. V, p. 281.

[18] William Empson, Some Versions of Pastoral (Chatto and Windus, London, 1935), p. 180.

> at first perhaps it began innocently,
> with a jest, coquetry, with amorous
> play, perhaps indeed with a germ, but
> that germ of falsity made its way into
> their hearts and pleased them.[19]

An active, "Dionysiac" nature such as Nietzsche's will find the ambiguity and disproportion mentioned above not less intolerable than the dreamy indifference with which it came about. For Nietzsche, it was the bold theft of fire, not the careless, feminine plucking of an apple that symbolized the first act of individuation. The Promethean myth bestows the masculine dignity of a crime upon an "<u>active sin</u>" and, so far from stooping to explain the act, it justifies the act and all subsequent guilt and suffering.[20] Yet the hero does not always bring happiness, and there is no certainty that by daring to approach the gods man betters his lot. The hero exists precisely because in his guilty existence he needs the guilty existence of all men; in the hour of historical need the hero appears and calls the people to be saved, but, in truth, it is the people who save the hero. But it is otherwise with the saint, without whom the people cannot exist above the level of beasts of prey and for whom they will endure much suffering. The saint is a living reminder to men that all are to blame for everything, and that patience, not action, allows the

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[19] Dostoevsky, <u>An Honest Thief and Other Stories</u>, p. 321.

[20] Nietzsche, <u>The Birth of Tragedy</u>, p. 78.

remembrance of one's guilt to become the centre of the moral life. Nietzsche could not quite forgive Sophocles his saint-like Oedipus for whom patience was the lesson of suffering. Nietzsche obviously is less patient with Sophocles and Oedipus than with Aeschylus and Prometheus.

Modern theories of tragedy also recognize the disproportion, even the irrelevance, of the initial tragic situation to the tragic result. But in the initial tragic situation itself there is neither defiant heroics nor fate-driven destiny. In accordance with the guilt-anxiety which underlies modern life, the tragic dramatist presents a situation ready to explode into action at the moment the "spring and the trigger" are released. From an examination of the works of Anouilh and Giraudoux, T. R. Henn finds that in the tragic situation there exists "a preparatory state of extreme tension [and] that the initiating action, the trigger, is often unrelated in its seriousness to the force released...; the pressure upon it may be trivial or capricious."[21] At the heart of this state of tension the "spring" is absolutely taut; forced to extremes by an almost metaphysical impatience, it must resolve into violent action. "Ripeness is all" is a truth scorned by a large part of mankind, yet it is meant precisely for those potentially tragic characters for whom

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21 T. R. Henn, The Harvest of Tragedy, (Methuen and Co., Ltd., London, 1956), pp. 62-3.

"Impatience with time may become a neurotic obsession".[22] That the patience counseled by Shakespeare is nearer to Christian teaching than to Stoicism is maintained by John F. Danby. "Patience nowadays is a negative thing," whereas in the Middle Ages it was the opposite of this.[23] Not only is patience considered a negative, pessimistic response in a world where action seems to be the only possible response for many, but large numbers of men have also come to regard patience as repulsive, as a kind of disgusting anachronism impeding necessary reforms and the necessary movement of progress. Patience is identified with reaction rather than with conservatism which is its rightful relation. Patience, so far from being connected, as Gabriel Marcel believes it to be rightfully connected, with the inner sense of time and growth, is nowadays rather determined relative to speed of travel, or to the accomplishment of things in time. Moreover, growth, in the same way, has become synonymous with expansion of power and the control of man over nature.

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[22] Ibid., p. 162. Philosophically speaking, this is the obsession that was born in the era of the great "systems" and later became identified with action for its own sake and with totalitarianism. It is the obsession Felix Weltsch has in mind when he explains the sin of impatience in terms of the inevitable desire of men to reduce the fundamental duality of the world to a unity which does not, and cannot exist. (See Weltsch's essay "Religioser Humor bei Franz Kafka" in Max Brod's Franz Kafkas Glauben und Lehre).

[23] John F. Danby, "King Lear and Christian Patience", Cambridge Journal, I (1947-48), p. 306.

Patience and a sense of guilt seem to be completely incompatible in the same individual or in the same society. Modern man's pride, writes Weaver, "reveals itself in impatience, which is unwilling to bear the pain of discipline".[24] The "inhuman excesses" performed by modern man are the result of his impatience with limits, an impatience which finds man straining against just those human conditions by which he is defined as man, until his despair is really the despair of being human.[25]

Patience in the modern world has degenerated into boredom; at best it is often simply inaction, a "conscious sitting-with-the-hands-folded" (to use Dostoevsky's expressive phrase), and at worst, it may be the lull before the storm. To the activist, things exist to be made ripe, for there is no law that guarantees ripeness will come of itself. Human imperfections, being exterior to man himself, must be attacked violently, and thought must be wedded to action in the service of destroying objective imperfections. An activist thinker, a thinker who knows with fanatical certainty what must be done, is literally consumed with the urge to put his theories into practice. "Having ideas in one's head which can never be applied is a torture, a

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[24] Richard Weaver, Ideas Have Consequences, (U. of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1948), p. 183.

[25] Albert Camus, The Rebel, tr. Anthony Bower (Hamish Hamilton, London, 1953), p. 272.

terrible torture."[26] On the other hand there is also the torture of not being able to grasp such imperious ideas. In direct contrast to this densely charged state of mind is Dostoevsky's "underground man" who continually exercises himself in reflection without ever gaining the least idea of what is to be done. With him, reflection only draws forth one conclusion after another, each more basic than the last. Thus, for him, boredom and inactivity are the direct, legitimate fruits of consciousness.[27]

There is, on the surface, a strange similarity here to the ethical impasse which Kierkegaard so often discovered himself to be in; but the two cases must not be confused. "If I really have powers of reflection and am in a situation in which I have to act decisively - what then? My powers of reflection will show me exactly as many possibilities pro as contra."[28] This situation, says Kierkegaard, means that

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[26] The remark is apparently genuine, but it has been ascribed variously, by Barby to Katkov and by Monnerot to Tkachev. Cf. Kierkegaard's remark that there can be "no more terrible torture for a thinker" than to be always on the point of arriving at his conclusion. "If the natural scientist does not feel that torture he cannot be a thinker .... A thinker is, as it were, in hell until he has found spiritual certainty ...." (The Journals, p. 185). But the "spiritual certainty" of the scientist as well as of the activist thinker is in objective results. Kierkegaard implies this distinction in Fear and Trembling where he accuses "the present age" of finding its justification in results, (p. 95).

[27] Dostoevsky, White Nights and Other Stories, p. 62.

[28] Kierkegaard, The Journals, p. 291.

reflection has come up against the absurd, and that action from this point must be "by virtue of the absurd", that is, by faith alone. One cannot reflect at all, in Kierkegaard's opinion, without reaching an impasse composed of equal alternatives, one as good as another. In contrast to this, the "underground man" would be happy to arrive at such a relatively comfortable impasse, but he cannot get that far. Searching, for instance, for a just rule by which he can avenge himself, the "underground man" is unable to believe in his own innocence.

> In consequence again of those accursed laws of consciousness, anger in me is subject to chemical disintegration. You look into it, the object flies off into air, your reasons evaporate, the criminal is not to be found, the wrong becomes not a wrong but a phantom, something like the toothache, for which no one is to blame ....[29]

Promptly, he sinks into lethargy, and in one way or another, takes to punishing himself because there is no other object for his spleen. But Kierkegaard is not worried about the loss of his powers of reflection; he does not feel the lack of ground underfoot in the way Kafka and the "underground man" do; he is rather worried about letting his intellect usurp the chief position in a relation which cannot by its very nature allow anything so arrogantly certain as

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29 Dostoevsky, White Nights and Other Stories, pp. 62-63.

pure intellect to assume authority. That relationship is the relationship to God, and for Kierkegaard it must be exclusively a relation of love, of emotion. Kierkegaard wants to have the daring, plus all the suffering corollary to the daring; he wants to throw himself completely on the mercy of God. With Kierkegaard, introspection and reflection lead inevitably to faith; in relation to action, introspection and reflection lead to acting on the orders of God; for the "underground man", on the contrary, by these two activities one arrives simply "underground" where the only possible action is the laceration of one's own soul. This whole contrast is contained in the conception of "the knight of faith", reserved by Kierkegaard for himself, and in the "insect" with which the "underground man" compared himself to his own disadvantage.

Another distinction which must be made here is that suffering, while being a necessary part of existence for both, does not have the same significance for both: suffering for Kierkegaard tends to mean not so much a sign of guilt as of justification, whereas suffering for the "underground man" is doubt and uncertainty, it is senseless perhaps, but there it is; even a kind of enjoyment is to be found in suffering. At best, suffering may be a process of atonement, of "unguilting"[30] oneself. There is no doubt that Kierkegaard

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[30] The expression is typically Russian. For its use see Gorer and Rickman, The People of Great Russia, p. 12.

found enjoyment in pain also, but it is essentially the enjoyment of certainty, of being justified. Many are the expressions of pain in Fear and Trembling: he writes of "the pain of resignation";[31] of "the pain of not being able to make himself intelligible to others";[32] of suffering from the pain of silence,[33] and of being "tortured in the bondage of repentance".[34] With so much spiritual certainty behind him, Kierkegaard found reflection to be a luxury he could afford to cast aside. In The Present Age he pours scorn upon a reflective age: "Our age is essentially one of understanding and reflection ..."[35] Even suicides cannot be called suicides since it is not they who take their lives but thought and deliberation. It is an age when one can hardly escape from "the coils and seductive uncertainty of reflection".[36] Kierkegaard's anti-rational, anti-philosophical temperament comes to a head in his belief that the "conclusions of passion are the only reliable ones,

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[31] Kierkegaard, Fear and Trembling, tr. Walter Lowrie, (Princeton U. P., Princeton, 1941), p. 73.

[32] Ibid., p. 107.

[33] Ibid., p. 143.

[34] Ibid., p. 153.

[35] Kierkegaard, The Present Age, Alexander Dru and W. Lowrie (Oxford U. P., 1940), p. 3.

[36] Ibid., p. 4.

that is, the only convincing conclusions".[37] It is the expression of one who knows profoundly that he lives in an age when God can no longer be taken for granted, that philosophy, which used to dispense with faith in favour of reason, must now abjure reason because it is no longer grounded upon spiritual certainty. If philosophy should then cease to be itself, so much the worse for philosophy.

IN THE BURROW

The spiritual doubts and the uncertainty experienced by Kierkegaard centre chiefly around the problem of how he is to deal with his sense of guilt according to the will of God.[38] He never doubts that he <u>is</u> guilty, or that he is guilty before God; it is his intense awareness of God that makes the course of action so difficult to decide. On the other hand, the "underground man", like the burrowing animal in Kafka's story, is "underground" precisely because he cannot find certainty; it is not simply his guilt which drives him underground, but the fact that he cannot discover a rational source for his guilt; he cannot relate it to an

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[37] Kierkegaard, <u>Fear and Trembling</u>, p. 154.

[38] In an early entry in his journal he writes: "What I really lack is to be clear in my mind <u>what I am to do</u>, not what I am to know, except in so far as a certain understanding must precede every action. The thing is to understand myself, to see what God really wishes me to do ...." (<u>The Journals</u>, p. 15).

absolute principle or to a definite world-view; least of all can he relate his guilt to God. Therefore the "underground man" cannot act. He possesses no principles upon which to act; he does not consider his actions justified. "Underground" is quite simply the place of no action; the place where self-mortification and self-laceration are substituted for action and where the human animal feels himself undistinguished from the insect and the rodent.

> There in its nasty, stinking, underground home our insulted, crushed and ridiculed mouse promptly becomes absorbed in cold, malignant and, above all, everlasting spite ... spitefully teasing and tormenting itself ... it will invent unheard of things against itself.[39]

The "underground man" is a kind of wretched, unheroic Hamlet whose conscience is precisely his cowardice. Yet, his fear is not so far advanced as the fear in Kafka's burrow story. There the animal not only builds his defence underground, but he tries to build defences around his major defence, the burrow; his fear and isolation are so far

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[39] Dostoevsky, <u>White Nights and Other Stories</u>, p. 57. Cf. Ivan's remark to Alyosha: "I am a bug, and I recognize in all humility that I cannot understand why the world is arranged as it is." (<u>The Brothers Karamazov</u>, p. 256). The extreme instance of psycho-pathological morbidity is given in the character Svidrigailov who asks, "And what if there are only spiders there, or something of that sort ... what if eternity is one little room, like a bath house in the country, black and grimy and spiders in every corner, and that's all eternity is?" (<u>Crime and Punishment</u>, p. 263).

advanced that he fears anything and everything in nature. His diffuse fear can be illustrated by contrasting it with the concept of angst as it was understood by Kierkegaard. For Kierkegaard, the threats to personal existence come from within; possibility, Kierkegaard believed, was one's own responsibility.[40] Not so with Kafka; possibility has burst its natural confines; angst is existential in the deepest sense; it is dread arising not merely from possibility in oneself but in nature. The fault in existence is not so much individual and contingent as it is universal and completely irrational. Like the "underground man" who does not believe in the justice of his revenge, who is filled with doubts and uncertainties, the animal in his burrow surveys his defences and considers his plans without any confidence in them. "Suddenly I cannot comprehend my former plan, I can find no slightest trace of reason in what had seemed so reasonable ...."[41] Like the former, he punishes

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[40] It is true that Kierkegaard's angst was directed in part at existence as such, not merely at his personal existence. For example he writes: "The whole of existence frightens me ... everything is unintelligible to me, most of all myself; the whole of existence is poisoned in my sight, particularly myself." (The Journals, pp. 72-73.) The afterthoughts are the most significant parts of this passage in that they indicate the subsequent trend of his ethical-religious thought and action - away from the abstract and to the individual.

[41] Kafka, The Great Wall of China, p. 74.

himself for guilt that is felt but not known. "And I tear myself free from all my doubts and by broad daylight rush to the door, quite resolved to raise it now; but I cannot, I rush past it and fling myself into a thorn bush for some sin I do not know of."[42]

The fear, the self-torment, and the isolation are complete. Nothing like this abstract, diffuse fear has ever existed in literature; it is probable that it could never have existed at any other time or place then twentieth century Europe. Dostoevsky arrives on the scene of history when the urge to action is everywhere, and the principles of action are nowhere. What torments Dostoevsky is the question how men can act when no principles for action exist. Every intellectual in Russia, it seems, is writing a pamphlet on "Who is to Blame?" or "What is to be Done?" It is a time when men are conceiving the wildest plans for the most grandiose, heroic actions with the utmost confidence, and therefore without that humility which balances theory and practice. Kafka enters history shortly before the world explodes in an orgy of action, action against enemies, action against the structure of society, and even action against human nature itself. So fanatically certain had men become that an outside observer must have believed that some supernatural revelation had miraculously impressed itself on their bodies.

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[42] Ibid., p. 59.

THE DIRECT MAN

The "direct man", as Dostoevsky conceived him, is the antithesis of the "underground man"; rather than going mad from inaction the "direct man" is more likely to be going mad with action; he is Hamlet calling for revolution in Denmark and assassinating Claudius after the first appearance of the Ghost. With Hamlet, as David Daiches points out in his essay "Guilt and Justice in Shakespeare",[43] the whole tragedy turns on his being unable to find the appropriate action by which to restore the vision of the world sullied by his mother and Claudius. In a word, Hamlet, like the "underground man" wants his revenge but not without justice. In Lear, moral indignation without any possibility of action becomes so strong an emotion that madness is the result. King Lear and Hamlet are great tragedies of moral frustration because no action is capable of restoring to their heroes what they have lost. Daiches also says that the greater the moral sensitivity the greater will be the need for some kind of action, and the greater will be the sense of frustration when action dissolves (as it does with the "underground man") into mere dreams of revenge. But the trouble, says Daiches, with morally innocent characters like

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[43] David Daiches, Literary Essays (Oliver and Boyd, Edinburgh, 1956).

Hamlet is that they can never agree to accept a slightly improved world in place of the one they have lost; they seem to demand "all or nothing". Now, this is a demand which nowadays is often called irrational in the individual but reasonable in the collective, a fact which throws some light on the relation of justice to action in our day. Moral and "religious" heroes in the modern sense are precisely those who can not only find their enemies (better still the world's enemies) but can justify the type of revenge they choose. These men of action, no matter how sensitive their moral natures may be, always seem to be able to find a punishment to fit the crime and to find complete justice in the punishment, that is to say, in their revenge.

There are those who protest that some kind of action is always demanded of man, and that even to do evil is better than to do nothing. Even in damnation, they say, man may find his glory. But there must be a limit to the merit we apply to such damnation. This is especially true at the present time when our modern "heroes" are not content with going to their own perdition merely, but insist that whole multitudes go with them. If we are correct in assuming that a sense of guilt lies at the bottom of every moral decision, then it must be the case that men of action have somehow been able to dispose of their sense of guilt; they have somehow found the absolute certainty with which to

justify their actions. "To begin to act, you know, you must first have your mind completely at ease and no trace of doubt left in it."[44] What type of man is it, Dostoevsky asks, who can find the principles for action where none exist, and who can take revenge with a perfect sense of justice? In brief, he distinguishes two types of "men who know": first, there is the simple, direct, normal man whose principles are not cerebral in the least, but rather instinctual, almost purely physical; then there is the man who understands on the intellectual level, the rationalist or the scientist.

Dostoevsky, or rather the "underground man", would suggest that Rousseau's noble savage is noble because his sense of justice is confined to the law of talion; he who has no sophisticated sense of justice will never be bothered with remorse, will never become an "underground man". In this respect Dostoevsky's anthropology places him in opposition to a trend among certain scientists to see in evolution itself the clue to man's ethical development. If this were possible, then why is it, Dostoevsky would ask, that man has struggled so hard to escape from a level of consciousness where justice took the form of immediate and unthinking revenge and where a gnawing sense of guilt was unknown? Sir Arthur Keith would seem to agree with

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44 Dostoevsky, White Nights, p. 62.

Dostoevsky that the antithesis of the normal man is the man of acute consciousness, the "retort-made man",[45] the hapless mouse in his underground hole. He exactly describes the history of the "underground man": "Sooner or later the over-civilized mind detects the dual code in its make-up, becomes conscious of the contradictions involved, and so lands itself in a maze of worldly complexities."[46]

While in prison, Dostoevsky carefully observed this normal man unaffected by the pangs of conscience and always acting with complete unconcern for consequences. The prisoner Petrov is an excellent example of this type. "Men like Petrov are only ruled by reason till they have some strong desire. Then there is no obstacle on earth that can hinder them."[47] Stavrogin is, underneath his veneer of culture, a man who acts on the same principles of simple, unadorned justice. "... Nikolay Vsyevolodovitch's was one of those natures that knew nothing of fear .... If anyone had slapped him in the face, I should have expected him not to challenge his assailant to a duel, but to murder him on the spot."[48] Stavrogin confesses that fear is entirely

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45 Ibid., p. 56.

46 Sir Arthur Keith, Essays on Human Evolution (Watts and Co., London, 1946), p. 119.

47 Dostoevsky, The House of the Dead, p. 100.

48 Dostoevsky, The Possessed, p. 189.

alien to him: "I had never felt fear, and all my life, except in this one case, I never before nor after was afraid of anything...."[49] The absence of fear and doubt leads to uninhibited action.

> With people who know how to revenge themselves and to stand up for themselves in general, how is it done? Why, when they are possessed let us suppose, by the feeling of revenge, then for the time there is nothing else but that feeling left in their whole being. Such a gentleman simply dashes straight for his object like an infuriated bull with its horns down, and nothing but a wall will stop him.[50]

So much for the "direct man" whose approach to justice is not through a heavy veil of introspection, doubts and bad conscience but through immediate retaliation.

The second type of direct man, that is, of the man who knows, is the type possessed by an idea. Psychologically speaking there is a difference between these two in the way they reach the stage of action, but morally speaking they are linked together in that their ends are the same, namely those of justice, while their means are secondary. For example, in the following statement, we can see that even someone of intelligence, perhaps even of great moral conviction can achieve the same results as the simple, direct

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[49] Dostoevsky, Stavrogin's Confession and the Plan of the Life of a Great Sinner, p. 51.

[50] Dostoevsky, White Nights, p. 56.

man, though by a different route.

> Briefly, I conclude that, having something fixed, permanent, and overpowering in one's mind in which one is terribly absorbed, one is, as it were, removed by it from the whole world, and everything that happens, except the one great thing, slips by one. Even one's impressions are hardly formed correctly. And what matters most - one always has an excuse ....[51]

Having an "idea" and acting upon it with the absolute conviction of one's own rightness is the modern equivalent of acting from instinctive principles of justice. Just how this extraordinary step in the development of consciousness has been taken is a problem that even psychology has not solved, but philosophically and morally it is a step of prodigious significance. At bottom it must be related directly to the problem of guilt. The fear of existence which the "direct man" of older times subdued in himself was a physical fear; hence, his heightened sense of consciousness consisted in being certain that he was physically invincible. But here we are dealing with a case of intellectual, perhaps even "spiritual", invincibility, since under this conviction man's pride has almost no bounds. The conviction is that one is morally and intellectually above error, and that the action one commits oneself to is a necessary and therefore justifiable action. In this case one considers

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[51] Dostoevsky, A Raw Youth, tr. Constance Garnett, (William Heinemann, London, 1916), p. 91.

oneself to be inside a closed system, hermetically sealed off, as it were, from any imputations of guilt. Kierkegaard describes such a character as an abstractor from existence whose "loose trousers ... are very different from the strait jacket of the exister".[52] If it is true that existence itself makes one guilty, that one becomes guilty through existence, it must be the case that modern man finds his principles for action by abstracting his guilt from existence. This, at least, seems to be what Kierkegaard has in mind when he complains that the speculative philosopher is speculative to the extent that he removes himself from the sphere of moral responsibility, that is, from existence.

> No, to be in error or delusion is ... the thing they fear least. One may behold amazing examples which illustrate this fact on a prodigious scale. A thinker erects an immense building, a system, a system which embraces the whole of existence and world-history, etc. - and if we contemplate his personal life, we discover to our astonishment this terrible and ludicrous fact, that he himself personally does not live in this immense high-vaulted palace, but in a barn alongside of it, or in a dog kennel, or at most in the porter's lodge.[53]

The modern man of acute consciousness, who has suddenly found his principles of action outside himself, has succeeded

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[52] Kierkegaard, Concluding Unscientific Postscript, p. 469.

[53] Kierkegaard, The Sickness Unto Death, tr. W. Lowrie, (Oxford U.P., London, 1944), p. 68.

in explaining away his sense of guilt; he has, in effect, abstracted himself from existence. He ceases to be an "I", and instead transforms his consciousness into a consciousness of "we"; or he imagines that he has divined the secret of history, the order of existence, and frantically throws himself into the stream of history. Not to be included in history would be a fate worse than death. Theoretically, the expression for this recourse to action is: "away from the old, bad consciousness to a new and pure consciousness", but the covert, almost unconscious expression is: "backwards to a naive, natural consciousness". One of the most significant facts to be noted about the modern consciousness is the phenomenal ability of the conscience to overthrow itself, to negate itself in order to accomplish its demands. Thus, the most positive moral sentiments may be converted to their opposites; pity and humanitarian feelings may become converted to ruthless vindictiveness. Dostoevsky had this fact in mind when he declared that in an age of transition and scepticism there existed "the possibility of considering oneself not as a villain - in fact almost not being one and yet perpetrating incontestable villainies".[54]

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[54] Dostoevsky, Diary of a Writer, tr. Boris Brasol, (Scribner's, N.Y., 1949), Vol. I, p. 149. Cf. also this statement by Wordsworth in his preface to "The Borderers": "It has been a further object with me to shew that from abuses interwoven with the texture of society a bad man may be furnished with sophisms in support of his crimes which it would be difficult to answer". (p. 348). The abuses make it possible for him to press "truth and falsehood into the same service" so that it is, in fact, almost impossible to say whether he is a good or a bad man. (p. 346). The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth, ed. E. de Selincourt, Vol. I.

The alternative to this transvaluation of values is, of course, the life of the "underground man", the life of no action. Seen in this light the "new man" of action appears to be but a refined form of the natural, "direct man". Faced with the alternative of turning inward with its burden of guilt, the conscience seeks for a way out, it seeks to liberate guilt, usually in the manner which we have already discussed, that of seeking a scapegoat. The revolutionary transvaluation of values always seems to be preceded by a corresponding event in the mind of a revolutionary leader or thinker whose fundamental genius, so far from simply bringing order to a chaotic world, turns the chaotic elements of his own consciousness, particularly those of frustration and guilt, into an entirely new pattern of guilt and innocence. The fact that Marx, for example, "was obsessionally inclined to turn the existing order 'upside down' ..."[55] provides the clue to the inward revolution which precedes and prefigures the outward. Perhaps nothing in the entire history of thought or of man's consciousness is more remarkable than the manner in which the typically modern revolutionary genius is able to achieve for himself, the masses, and the guilt-bogged élite, the absolute, final solutions, which all are so desperately

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55 Barbu, Democracy and Dictatorship, p. 195.

seeking. If it were not that such a large part of the world immediately leaps with joy into this new vortex of activity it might be seen more clearly at the time how this peculiarly new type of genius consists in the marvellous ability to translate the myriad, chaotic problems of existence into a positive pattern. This faculty is called by Barbu the "esprit certitudien".

> Doubt in thinking, lack of opinion, as well as scruples in action are for [Hitler] amongst the greatest evils produced by modern democracy ... Not only has he an opinion but he expresses it with the strongest possible conviction as if the whole world testified to its truth.[56]

This suddenly achieved vortex of mental and physical activity is all the more remarkable because it is derived from a comparative vacuum, a mental state wherein no outward, tangible results of thought seem to be possible. An absolute abhorrence of such a vacuum is what drives the activist thinker to create a system in which all possible questions will answer themselves, nay more, in which the questions will never arise. Thus it is that Marx "conveys the impression that he knew the answer to all problems he deals with, before giving any thought to them. Matters which perplex anybody, Marx calls 'self-evident'."[57] The

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[56] Ibid., p. 153.

[57] Ibid., p. 215.

meaninglessness of modern existence and the resultant diffuse sense of guilt are together the soil from which spring up the most fanatically certain interpretations of existence, different perhaps in rationalization (or lack of it) but alike in their capacity for liberating the sense of guilt and therefore the need for action. If the poverty of philosophy is its failure to bring about changes in the world, then philosophy must be put to the service of liberating those inhibitory elements, namely, frustration and the sense of guilt, which prevent action upon the world. Should it be any wonder that in so many respects the mental and moral changes which ensue in the adherents of activist philosophies exactly correspond to the inward changes of their leaders and founders?[58]

That which an activist philosophy endeavours to provide above all is an excuse for action, or more precisely, a whole system of excuses. The purpose is to turn

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[58] E.g. "Marx can be considered as a unique case of frustrated and repressed personality." (p. 208). "Thoughts of aggression and persecution abound in his writings." (p. 213). "He more often projects [his aggression] on various aspects of the external world .... The discontent and the aggression resulting from his own failures were projected on to various aspects of the external world as injustice and hostility against himself." (Barbu, op. cit., p. 214). Cf. Bertrand Russell's statement that Marx's "thinking was almost entirely inspired by hatred and that his chief desire was to see his enemies punished". (Why I Oppose Communism, Phoenix House Ltd., London, 1956, pp. 11-12).

man's consciousness away from himself because in himself, by himself, he can find no certainty. Kierkegaard says that "In the accord of silence with the ideal, one word is lacking, the loss of which is not felt, for the thing it denotes does not exist: it is the word excuse".[59] But man without this vital accord is man without guidance and without principles for action; he is seeking desperately for an ultimate authority while living continually with the possibility that it may at last appear to him as an excuse for immediate action without the danger of incurring guilt. Such is the guise in which activist solutions to the problem of guilt make their appearance in our time.

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[59] Kierkegaard, Concluding Unscientific Postscript, p. 488.

CHAPTER VIII

GUILTY OF WHAT?

Certain biographical observations will help to elucidate the ways in which Kafka, Kierkegaard and Dostoevsky faced the problem of guilt. For example, if one asks the question, "Of what was Kafka guilty?" one begins to see something of the amazing complexity with which this question presented itself to Kafka. "Sorrow and joy, guilt and innocence, like two hands indissolubly clasped together; one would have to cut through flesh, blood and bones to part them."[1] It is much more than a question of what David Daiches calls "the ambiguity of innocence,"[2] a situation common to both Shakespeare and Dostoevsky, in which characters like Othello and Myshkin reach tragic heights not so much because of moral flaws, but because in the very nature of things, innocence has no defence against evil. Shakespeare, after all, had the advantage of writing in an age when a world order (a Christian world order, moreover) left no doubt that guilt was guilt and innocence was innocence even if the latter could occasionally come under the dominion

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[1] Kafka, Diary 1914-1923, p. 191.

[2] David Daiches, Literary Essays, p. 2. Kierkegaard also uses the expression "ambiguous innocence". He defines this as the essence of genuine tragedy because guilt and innocence can exist together in the same character. Ancestral guilt, for instance, may produce in the individual a consciousness of his guilty existence, and it was such a situation that Kierkegaard considered himself to be in through no guilty fault of his own. (Either/Or, p. 117).

of evil. "It was far easier [then] to be very wicked and think yourself so than to be a little wicked without a sense of sin."[3] If we could transpose this observation of Professor Tillyard's into a general formula for the world of morality as Dostoevsky might express it the phrase would run like this: It is far easier today to be very wicked and to think yourself innocent than to be really guiltless and think yourself innocent. The first half of this statement was the idea used by Dostoevsky in The Possessed. It reveals the possibility in times of spiritual indecision of doing evil in the name of good and of being convinced at the same time that one is actually good. The second half of the statement expresses the idea behind the tragedy of Myshkin, and the two together might be the formula for a perfect world of comedy were it not that such a world is even more tragic.

Kafka was too much preoccupied with the guilt of innocence to understand, as Dostoevsky did, the innocence of guilt. The hero of Kafka's novel America lives in a continual state of transition between willing the good and seeing results to the contrary mount up on all sides. In spite of himself he cannot really pass through life without leaving a guilty trail behind. It is characteristic of Karl that he is never in the least aggressive; only once in

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[3] E. M. W. Tillyard, The Elizabethan World Picture, (Chatto and Windus, London, 1943), p. 16.

the story does he positively assert himself. His good qualities, or perhaps his neutral qualities, always land him in trouble; his generosity and friendliness more than anything are disastrous.

As Georg Bendemann regards his father's ridiculous figure standing above him on the bed, the old man's final words to his son are: "An innocent child, yes, that you were, truly, but still more truly have you been a devilish human being! - And therefore take note: I sentence you to death by drowning!"[4] It is of no matter to Georg whether this punishment fits his dubious crimes or not, for the words are no sooner out of his father's mouth than Georg runs madly from the house, impelled towards the river and his death by drowning. In the story "A Country Doctor", the doctor is reduced to ruin and despair through a series of fantastic events that begin with his desire to reach a dying patient. Joseph K., the hero of The Trial, is arrested one morning while still in his bed, a singular procedure explained only by someone's having told lies about him. These characters, so far from being tragic in the ordinary sense, are unable at the very outset to control the least parts of their own destinies; they are overwhelmed by guilt from the first moment. One critic has referred to this as the most shocking of all concepts of guilt, "an initial,

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[4] Kafka, In the Penal Settlement, tr. Willa and Edwin Muir (Secker and Warburgh, London, 1949), p. 58.

almost pre-natal guilt"[5] which places responsibility irrespective of the action to which it logically belongs.

When it comes, therefore, to describing the origins of guilt in these stories of Kafka, one arrives immediately before a blank wall, or rather, on the contrary, before a limitless expanse through which one might trace guilt back indefinitely, as Kafka himself described it, until one reaches "the grey Original Sin."[6] Here we are as far removed as possible from, say, the romantic conscience of a Lord Jim who understands his guilt and sets about to restore his innocence as if it were a matter of balancing the scales through work, self-sacrifice and derring-do. The youthful determination of Jim once he is given the challange to restore his innocence is in marked contrast to the perpetual fear and bewilderment of Kafka's characters. To have a conscience is precisely to fear, to fear existence itself. Admittedly, and as one might expect, these characters are given sufficient plausibility to enable one to discover their flaws and venial sins. It is pointed out by some critics, for example, that Georg Bendemann is complacent and that he has neglected his old father in pursuit of his own advantage. Gregor Samsa seems to have lived a false existence, as does Joseph K., but just how they are to be

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[5] Angel Flores, ed. The Kafka Problem, (New Direction, New York, 1946), p. 81.

[6] Kafka, Letters to Milena, tr. Tania and James Stern, (Secker and Warburg, London, 1953), p. 193.

distinguished in this from other characters who are not changed into insects or called before inscrutable courts of law, it is difficult to say. Whatever the sins of Kafka's characters may be, one thing is clear - there is no intelligible relation between the offence and the punishment. It is ridiculous to attempt to enumerate the possible sins of Georg Bendemann when the outcome of his life is that in the face of his guilt he destroys himself. If George Bendemann, Joseph K. or any other hero of Kafka's is senselessly driven to death or punishment (and they nearly all are eventually) it is not because a particular human sin is being expiated, but because the character is infinitely guilty in his own eyes.

In trying to locate any particular guilt, we are always confronted with guilt itself, and in attempting to describe this guilt and how it arises, we again find nothing but the existence of a profoundly experienced but incomprehensible guilt. Nevertheless Kafka describes a situation not entirely devoid of meaning in respect to punishment. With one notable exception, namely, Gregor Samsa, Kafka's heroes are sentenced to death, or murdered, or tortured by some more or less definite human agency (as in "The Judgement" and in "The Penal Colony" where the old Commandant represents the highest authority), or by some mysterious, unattainable authority (as in The Trial and The Castle). That is to say, the punishment either issues ultimately from some particular agency or person, or the hero punishes himself in

trying to establish the identity of the authority before whom he presumes himself to be guilty.

But, if Kafka provides us with the sense of guilt behind existence, this was not for him an explanation; he may have been able to confirm for Heidegger and the French existentialists the tragedy of a world where God is dead, but from his own experience Kafka could learn nothing that could be said to offer a philosophical explanation of existence. Kafka's life both as man and artist can best be described as a constant striving wherein to stop and question guilt is tantamount to sinking deeper into the very guilt that everyone wades through in this life. In the words of the French critic, Claude-Edmonde Magny, "Kafka does not explain; he affirms. This is the fact. Es ist so."[7] Kafka confesses that he cannot understand how "one should consider it possible to argue about [guilt] as about any ordinary arithmetical problem which is so clear that it produces results for daily conduct ..."[8]

Since this life can be nothing more than a constant striving after redemption there would seem to be little time, if any, for what Martin Buber calls the life of dialogue, the meeting with the other; and it is true that all Kafka's strength came from within himself where only

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[7] Flores, The Kafka Problem, p. 79.

[8] Kafka, Letters to Milena, p. 193.

silence and monologue exist. Yet his very striving, his refusal to acknowledge defeat for himself (although we find almost nothing but defeat in what he wrote) suggests that his strength had its source in something besides silence and monologue. Compare, for example, the following statement of Kafka's with the belief of Heidegger that the life of monologue or the relation of the self to itself is the only essential relation.

> Humility provides everyone, even him who despairs in solitude, with the strongest relationship to his fellow man ... It can do this because it is the true language of prayer, at once adoration and the firmest of unions. The relationship to one's fellow man is the relationship of prayer, the relationship of striving; it is from prayer that one draws the strength for one's striving.[9]

Nevertheless, it would seem that Kafka's preoccupation with the True Way and the Law was determined more by Hebrew tradition than by any universal human need "to belong" in the strictly social sense, although this need was undoubtedly an important one in his life. All that he was denied of the communal life followed as a result of that original tragic denial, the love and acceptance of his father. In the "Letter to His Father", the element of fear stands out as the most influential emotion bearing upon the son's relation with his father, a relation moreover which always existed for Kafka. As the opening sentence of the letter clearly

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[9] Kafka, <u>Wedding Preparations in the Country</u>, p. 52.

indicates, Kafka had not outgrown this fear even at the age of thirty-seven: "Dearest Father, you asked me recently why I maintain I am afraid of you."[10] By reason of the very fear which called forth the question the son could not answer it.

As if in accordance with the natural reaction towards any object of fear Kafka once thought of entitling all his works The Attempt to Escape from Father. Such a reaction, continued as it was into adulthood, suggests the Freudian explanation that Kafka was not able, perhaps because of this excessive fear, to pass through the normal extension of the Oedipus-complex to the authority of the super-ego. Freudian theory in this case helps to provide a partial answer for the extreme isolation from human events which Kafka experienced, feeling himself, as it were, divided from ordinary human intercourse and from those normal social pursuits through which the super-ego, having taken "the place of the parental function ... guides" the individual.[11]

Buber informs us that "All religious reality begins with what Biblical religion calls the 'fear of God'."[12]

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[10] Ibid., p. 157.

[11] Sigmund Freud, New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis, tr. W. J. H. Sprott (Hogarth Press, London, 1933), p. 85.

[12] Martin Buber, Eclipse of God (Victor Gollancz, London, 1953), p. 50. Cf. also "... in order really to love God it is necessary to have feared God ..." (Kierkegaard, The Journals, p. 50).

But this fear is not, contrary to theological belief, a permanent thing, it is rather a "gate" through which man passes on his way to a spiritual condition enabling him to confront life fearlessly. "He loves [life] in the love of God, whom he has learned to love."[13] Obviously, such a condition is what Kafka strove to attain every day of his life, and was always to be denied because he could not pass through the gate of fear. The volume, Letters to Milena, written near the end of his life to a Jewess who was almost as unhappy in her married state as Kafka was in his celibacy attests to the pathological fear he daily experienced. "My nature," he writes, "is: Fear..."[14] What shall I do when instead of a heart this fear is beating in my body?"[15] Page after page he gives vent to this thought, that although his fear is horrible he could not live without it; he pours himself into it, he says "with rapture."[16] In the end, the reader is unable to distinguish Kafka's fear from his guilt; they go hand in hand through every page he writes.

To return to the problem of the limitless depth of man's guilt and the impossibility of describing any particular

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[13] Ibid., p. 52.

[14] Kafka, Letters to Milena, p. 71.

[15] Ibid., p. 85.

[16] Ibid., p. 106.

guilt to Kafka's characters, we find this to be a result of Kafka's tragic inability to overcome the initial, almost primitive fear that Buber describes. But in a world where God is absent there is never a goal to arrive at; one cannot overcome that which has no end. Kafka may have believed in the existence of a goal, but he never gives any indication of what it is or how to reach it.

The importance of Kafka's Jewish background cannot be overlooked; the authority of Hebrew tradition transmitted from father to son and the sense of belonging to a people chosen by a God of love and redemption were denied to him. As he himself wrote, he had not been given as a child the Christian tradition Kierkegaard received from his father, nor had he "caught the hem of the Jewish prayer-mantle" as the Zionists had.[17] For this reason he speaks of "the lack of ground underfoot, of air, of the commandment..."[18] Without these and without love Kafka experienced what were undoubtedly the most terrible torments of guilt known to our age.

Modern man can discover no ultimate moral authority, and therefore his guilt is intensely subjective and shows no regard to motive or action; it is inexpiable and therefore irrational; if it were expiable man would stand before God, confess and punish himself, but to whom does one confess?

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[17] Kafka, Wedding Preparations in the Country, p. 113.
[18] Loc. cit.

Who listens to the lamentations of the rabbi?[19] The inner commandment appears senseless, as if heard in a dream, incoherent and unintelligible, "for I don't know whose command it is and what he is aiming at ..."[20] Thus does Kafka describe in the alienation of his own spirit the problem of conscience for modern man. Still, it must be pointed out again that he affirms for us, as the basis of conscience and of guilt, the existence of a "voice", a "commandment" which is prior to and fundamentally independent of man's social condition. The opinion of Edwin Muir is that the admittedly important place of man within the community was for Kafka primarily a religious and moral problem, man's true place being determined not by secular but by divine law.[21] So far as we can learn from Kafka, the original and ultimate ground of man's guilt is not directly connected with the arrangement of society on earth, but this arrangement (or disarrangement) may be a symptom of the guilt so clearly experienced by man in these times.

For both Kierkegaard and Dostoevsky, pride comes at the head of all the host of sins. "But they will not attain to death"[22] is the judgement reserved for the proudest of the proud, those who, even in Hell, curse the God of life

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[19] Ibid., p. 326.

[20] Ibid., p. 106.

[21] Franz Kafka, The Great Wall of China and Other Pieces (Secker and Warburg, London, 1946), Introductory note, p. 9.

[22] Dostoevsky, The Brothers Karamazov, p. 106.

and cry aloud for his annihilation. "Faust," says Kierkegaard, "is personified doubt;"[23] he is the symbol of the individual intellect who storms heaven alone.[24] And yet in the last analysis it is not doubt, but rebellion against God that is at fault;[25] insubordination and repudiation of rightful authority are signs of the times, an observation Kierkegaard might reasonably have been expected to make in 1847. To the profoundly conservative mind any threat to stability on earth is a shaking of the foundations of all authority. The guilty man needs judgement above everything; therefore, the eclipse of God is for him a calamity of the worst kind. He is left without the possibility of either punishment or approbation, a situation which, spiritually speaking, can only be compared to original chaos. The first movement of confusion comes from the masses who demand a share of the authority exercised by the monarch. This is not to imply that Kierkegaard believed in the divine rule of kings; the whole movement is simply part of a still larger whole, including the generation and the age, which combines to overthrow not merely the established regime, but

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[23] Kierkegaard, The Journals, p. 5.

[24] Kierkegaard, Either/Or, p. 73.

[25] Kierkegaard, The Journals, p. 193. See also p. 222. This idea occurs frequently, particularly after 1848 when the new Danish constitution was granted. It is rebellion and not doubt, after all, which is the negation of obedience, and obedience had always been the "form" of his relation to his father, his studies and his religion. Cf. The Point of View For My Works as an Author, p. 137. "All doubt ... is just simply disobedience to God."

the source of all authority, God.[26] The religious counterpart of the materialistic masses who march to the barricades shouting "Liberty, Equality and Fraternity" is the age itself marching to the House of God and crying defiantly "We shall all be blessed together all right."[27]

The study of the sin of pride has a long history, and perhaps no century has added more to the religious and philosophical side of the question than our own. Emile Zola once observed that the greatest strength always lies with the single minded; and it is precisely this pride in strength which Dostoevsky subjects to his profound knowledge of character. There is ample reason to believe that in his description of such wayward young men as the Raw Youth and Raskolnikov, Dostoevsky returned to facts of extremely personal origin. During his school days when separated from his family he had lived in silent, morbid isolation from his fellow students; even his family life, before his formal education began, was largely devoid of social intercourse.[28] At the time of his emergence into literary circles which came with the writing of Poor Folk, Dostoevsky's pride had swollen to ludicrous extremes (" ... if I were to recount to you all my successes, I could not find enough

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[26] Ibid., p. 222.

[27] Ibid., p. 223.

[28] See Carr, Dostoevsky (George Allen and Unwin Ltd., London, 1931), pp. 13 and 18.

paper ...29). What thoughts and ideas possessed the youth's mind are not clear, but it seems evident that he was excited by ideas, and perhaps found one for himself by which he could justify his loneliness and isolation. In A Raw Youth we find a study of "possession" by the dream of power.

> Yes, I thirsted for power, I've thirsted for it all my life, power and solitude. ... almost from my earliest childhood, I could never imagine myself except in the foremost place, always and in every situation in life. ... [This] is the point of my idea ... that money is the one means by which the humblest nonentity may rise to the foremost place ... I only want what is obtained by power ... that is, the calm and solitary consciousness of strength![30]

Thus the strength of singlemindedness begins to make its appearance. The "idea" morally covers everything, all actions, no matter how revolting, are excused beforehand. The following excerpts from the projected Life of a Great Sinner indicate that Dostoevsky was planning a long tragedy founded on pride.

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29 Ibid., p. 29. Nearly all the letters to his brother prior to his arrest are painful to read, so filled with self praise are they. Nevertheless there is at times a redeeming note of objectivity: "I will frankly confess to you that I am quite intoxicated by my fame." Letters of Fyodor Michailovich Dostoevsky to His Family and Friends, tr. Ethel Colburn Mayne (Chatto and Windus, London, 1914), p. 32.

30 Dostoevsky, A Raw Youth, pp. 83 - 4.

> It is not this alone that isolates him from everybody, but really his dreams of power and his enormous height above everything... Money will solve all questions.[31]

> He began saving money from a vague idea.[32]

> He is sure that he will be the greatest of men. And in that way he behaves: he is the proudest of the proud and behaves with the greatest haughtiness towards people. ... Gold ... amassing money was suggested to him by a usurer, a terrible man, the antithesis of Tikhon.[33]

The hero of The Life is not to be taken as a portrait of the author, yet there is little doubt that in this last great novel Dostoevsky intended to make great confessions, to go deeper into his soul than ever before. There are whippings and floggings, a man is beaten to death, a lame girl is assaulted (as in the suppressed portion of The Possessed) and for a while, depravity is complete. Then comes a period of remorse followed again by depravity in what Freud calls the "Russian pattern", implying that Dostoevsky was only too familiar with "risings and fallings".[34]

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31 Dostoevsky, Stavrogin's Confession and The Plan of The Life of a Great Sinner, tr. S. S. Koteliansky and Virginia Woolf (Hogarth Press, Richmond, 1922), p. 93.

32 Ibid., p. 105.

33 Ibid., p. 113.

34 Freud, Collected Papers, Vol. V, p. 222.

And this is certainly true, provided we make a distinction between sins of the imagination and sins of fact. In both Dostoevsky and Kierkegaard there are to be found sins committed and expiated along with sins not committed and yet expiated. Not only do we not know what temptations Dostoevsky had in his heart and yet successfully overcame,[35] but we must remember that he witnessed extreme forms of suffering and brutality while in prison, and used this experience in the same way all imaginative writers do. Nor ought we to suppose that Dostoevsky merely describes what is peculiar to himself or to the Russian character. The universality of his psychological analysis has been far too firmly established for that accusation to be taken seriously.

The same character analysis also goes into the rough draft of Crime and Punishment.

> Raskolnikov's idea of tremendous pride, of haughtiness and contempt for society ... Despotism is his chief characteristic ... He wants to dominate but does not know with what means to achieve it. ... To get power and to become rich. The idea of murder came ready made into his head ....[36]

Although this picture of Raskolnikov's motives underwent certain developments as the writing progressed, Dostoevsky never altered his basic intention of revealing "the strength of singlemindedness", particularly among

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[35] Ibid., p. 222.

[36] Dostoevsky, New Dostoevsky Letters, tr. S. S. Koteliansky (The Mandrake Press, London, n.d), p. 40.

those whose ideas were conceived in the benighted spiritual atmosphere of the times. He calls them "incomplete" ideas,[37] strange, abortive notions that are taken for truth in the hazy but electrical air of intellectual Russia. Dostoevsky was always acutely aware of what is called the intellectual climate; his novels depend not on ingenuity for effect but on actuality, on the real events of the times. In his letters, for instance, he refers to the documentary evidence he has gathered in support of the bizarre details of The Brothers Karamazov.[38]

In the beginning of the novel Crime and Punishment we find a character who is "in the condition that overtakes some monomaniacs entirely concentrated upon one thing."[39] The first six chapters are given to a careful, step-by-step analysis of how seemingly natural events with exterior causes occur as if they had been made, by prearrangement, to coincide with the mental events within the character. Thus when Raskolnikov receives the letter from his mother and sees that she and Dounia are sacrificing their lives for him, he decides that something must be done immediately, done at once and done quickly.[40] This letter effectively settles the question of action; to delay action would be immoral at this point. Somewhat later his destiny turns

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[37] Ibid., p. 43.

[38] Ibid., p. 95.

[39] Dostoevsky, Crime and Punishment, p. 26.

[40] Ibid., p. 42.

upon his walking, quite unaccountably and against his custom, through the Hay Market where he overhears Lizaveta's conversation with the huckster and his wife. This "chance" event presents him with the very day and hour for the accomplishment of the idea he has been living with for the past month,[41] Only six weeks before, he had overheard a conversation about the old pawnbroker; the motive for the crime receives a forceful justification not only by reason of the conversation itself but because of its amazing coincidence.

> ... why had he happened to hear such a discussion on such ideas at the very moment when his own brain was just conceiving ... the very same ideas? And why just at the moment when he had brought away the embryo of his idea from the old woman, had he dropped at once upon a conversation about her? This coincidence always seemed strange to him. This trivial talk in a tavern had an immense influence on him in his later action; as though there had really been in it something preordained, some guiding hint...[42]

It is this subtle, more felt than understood, conviction that events are moving with his purpose that lends strength to his casuistry and makes the moral question superfluous. But more than this, it provides Raskolnikov with what he needs above everything else - for even the moral question

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[41] Ibid., p. 57.

[42] Ibid., p. 62.

is ancillary to this - the will to believe that what must be done can be done. There is no ideology at stake here, it is not a matter of action in the name of some lofty idea, but it is a question of will alone, "one has only to dare".[43] The crime is committed for himself alone. In the last analysis Raskolnikov is pitting himself directly against God, he even seems to have a presentiment that this is the case, for afterwards he reveals to Sonia that the devil has led him on, and that not the old lady was murdered by him, but he, Raskolnikov, murdered himself.[44]

But on the more conscious level of activity preceding the crime Raskolnikov succeeds in settling the moral question by the answer that his intention is not criminal. This is why he can allow himself the extraordinary omission of any carefully laid plan of operation. He considers not the material difficulties, but the psychological ones. Raskolnikov reasons that in the commission of any crime, the former difficulties are always the result a failure of will at the crucial moment, but since he is not involving himself in crime there can be no such failure. That this does indeed

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[43] Ibid., p. 377. The correctness of Dostoevsky's "genealogy of immorality" as it is traced from Raskolnikov to the revolutionists of The Possessed is confirmed by the experience of Arthur Koestler. In Darkness at Noon Koestler makes Ivanov criticize Raskolnikov as a criminal fool, not because he commits a murder, but because he does it without any ideological motive. Ivanov would suggest that if Raskolnikov had killed for the sake of the Party, his crime would have been justified, and the novel could not have been written.

[44] Ibid., p. 379.

become the case presents the author with the opportunity for a masterly analysis of conscience.

In his study of criminal psychology, Theodor Reik informs us that the history of criminology presents a number of perfect crimes.[45] As far as Dostoevsky's purposes are concerned it seems certain he wished to delineate from first to last a case in which the inevitable development of conscience is traced independently of the usual mechanical devices found in detective stories. Therefore, Raskolnikov's crime is the perfect crime; no one suspects him afterwards; no clues are left behind, and the novel must proceed along purely psychological lines until the voluntary recognition of the criminal's guilt brings about his regeneration. As it happens, only luck or accident enables him to leave the scene of the murder without detection. But Dostoevsky adds to the crime one highly significant sequel well known to criminal psychology - the return to the scene of the crime. Reik admits that this strange reaction cannot be entirely explained by psychology, although it seems clear that by this action the criminal is responding to a strong unconscious urge to betray himself and bring down the punishment his conscience demands.[46] Reik quotes the revealing remark made by a certain murderer - "Somebody pursues me and it is

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[45] Theodor Reik, <u>The Unknown Murderer</u>, tr. Dr. Katherine Jones (Hogarth Press, London, 1936), pp. 69-70.

[46] Ibid., pp. 88-9.

myself".[47] Surprisingly enough, the Furies do not spare even the most violent type of criminal; they attack him on a lower level of consciousness, or in the unconscious itself. Dostoevsky must have been aware of this psychological truth, for in The House of the Dead he makes the observation that nearly all the criminals were unaware of conscience pangs and remorse.[48] Yet we notice that he reserves his greatest sympathy and respect for precisely these men; his contempt, on the other hand, falls on quite another variety of criminal. Dostoevsky's attitude toward the sensualists Fyodor and Dmitri Karamazov is in contract to his deep-felt scorn for the revolutionary-minded Rakitin and Smerdyakov. The implications of this attitude become quite clear when we re-examine the development of pride in Raskolnikov. First in this process from crime to punishment comes a desire to dominate, to wield power. But there is the question of how to do this, as well as the necessity for some event which will release his enertia and present him with a cause for action. This is provided by his mother's letter; he is positively frenzied by the relief this letter affords, despite the fact that it contains nothing that is not in itself bad news. Next comes the conversation overheard in the Hay Market, a chance occurrence which inevitably brings to his mind another conversation he had chanced to

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[47] Ibid., p. 88.

[48] Dostoevsky, The House of the Dead, tr. Constance Garnett (William Heinemann, London, 1915), p. 13.

hear only six weeks before and which, acting upon an already superstitious mind, impresses him by its mysterious coincidence. Events seem to be moving with his purpose; he is literally being compelled by unknown forces to fashion a noose for the axe and to provide himself with a wooden pledge so that when the moment of action arrives these necessary tools for the crime will appear, at the right time, almost as if by magic, as if designed not by his own hands but by Providence. The impulse to power seems to contain as part of its nature a certain myth-making genius which creates a different world where events conform to the desires of the monomaniac. This dream-like world is the prelude to an even more difficult existence, for what Raskolnikov discovers after the murders is that to live as a murderer is to live in another world from ordinary men. It is from this world that the criminal's unconscious longing to confess and give himself up to justice cries out. Raskolnikov seems to have been a conception standing somewhere between the extreme criminals of <u>The House of the Dead</u> and the revolutionary murderers of <u>The Possessed</u>. Deadly chills pass over his soul, and he becomes suddenly aware, after telling a lie, that he has passed irrevocably into a world with its own laws where "he would never again be able to <u>speak</u> of anything to anyone".[49] Like "the mysterious visitor" in Zossima's story, he learns that "you can pass

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[49] Dostoevsky <u>Crime and Punishment</u>, p. 203.

through the world doing wrong, but there's no turning back."[50]

Yet, for the great heroes of Dostoevsky, as indeed for all great tragic heroes, light is not denied. Out of darkness comes light if only the image of God has not been destroyed. In the portraits of Father Zossima, Alyosha Karamazov and Myshkin, there is such vivid contrast with the depths of the heroes that it may well pay to look briefly at Dostoevsky's purest conceptions and to ask in what this purity consists. The answer is not difficult to find. In the same measure with which pride consumes the heroes, the pure characters actively cultivate humility, and the word cultivate has special significance since the earth and religion are mysteriously connected in Russian thought.

Two Russian critics of Dostoevsky, Nikolai Zernov and V. Ivanov, have written of the importance of the Mother Earth conception in Russian life. The whole culture and psychology of the people has been influenced by the vastness of sky and landscape,[51] and the earth is conceded a mystical attachment to the meaning of nature and the "Passion of Christ".[52] European critics on the contrary are accustomed to note the lack of a sense of space in Dostoevsky, a deficiency which they hold up against Tolstoi's large canvases. However just

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50 Dostoevsky, The Brothers Karamazov, p. 327.

51 Nikolai Zernov, Three Russian Prophets, (S. C. M. Press Ltd., London, 1944), p. 16.

52 Vyacheslav Ivanov, Freedom and the Tragic Life, tr. Norman Cameron (Harwill Press, London, 1952), p. 45.

this comparison may be, both writers recognized a spiritual force in the peasants precisely because of their bond with the earth. The word "deracinate", which has come to have great importance for contemporary social thought, could have conveyed only one thing to Tolstoi and Dostoevsky - uprootedness from the earth and therefore lack of faith. In his audience with Stavrogin, Father Tikhon whispers "you are uprooted, you do not believe."[53] Zossima cautions against even that pride which raises man above the animals; men defile the earth with their pride.[54] Myshkin, "the idiot", is always ready to forgive. Through his intense self-consciousness he is convinced that to hold any suspicion of anyone would be shameful and dishonourable. No more ironic title could have been given to Myshkin, for to be an idiot in this sense is to possess powers of self-reflection and self-criticism founded upon a true sense of guilt. Only against surroundings of violent self-punishment (as in Nastasya Fillippovna) and explosive guilt (as in Ippolit) could Myshkin's "idiocy" be appreciated. It only needs to be added that Dostoevsky could not have conceived the idea of Myshkin without the image of Christ before him.

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[53] Dostoevsky, <u>Stavrogin's Confession and The Plan of The Life of a Great Sinner</u>, p. 80.

[54] Dostoevsky, <u>The Brothers Karamazov</u>, p. 339.

CHAPTER IX

GUILT AND HUMOUR

On the surface, the connection between melancholy and wit is perhaps not so obscure as that between guilt and humour. In the first case, the examples are not infrequent in literature: Byron, Pope, Schopenhauer and Swift being obvious representatives of the bitter wit and satire school. But the intimate relation between Kierkegaard's guilt and his melancholy is not easily explained in terms of the wit, humour and irony he was able to weave into his literary productions. From an early age, according to a journal entry, he was aware of the power behind his wit which he used as a defence against the physically stronger boys of his age.[1] As time went on, he began to turn his wit against almost everything that crossed his path, so that eventually he became frightened of his own versalitity with wit. As a young man he had already begun to fight against the destructive tendencies of his wit. Lowrie informs us that he spoke "disparagingly not only of irony but of humour" at this time.[2] "Irony," he wrote in 1838, "is an abnormal growth; like the abnormally enlarged liver of the Strasburg goose it ends by killing the individual."[3] But irony is not so much the

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[1] Lowrie, Kierkegaard, p. 46.

[2] Ibid., p. 161.

[3] Kierkegaard, The Journals, p. 55.

cause as the effect of "abnormality" in the individual.

Freud discovered a close connection between wit production and neurotic diseases. In Lichtenberg he found an example of the wit created by hypochondria and other eccentricities; several of the jests analysed by Freud came from Lichtenberg's pen.[4] So in Kierkegaard's guilt and melancholy there may have been, to use Freud's term, the subjective determination of wit. Yet something essential is missing unless we take account of the positive way in which Kierkegaard understood his guilt, for as we shall have occasion to note, there is humour in Kafka also, but humour of a different sort. Just as his guilt was differently understood so was Kafka's humour differently expressed.

It is in the Concluding Postscript that Kierkegaard uses the concept of humour to elucidate the whole pathos of religious suffering, including the deepest element of that suffering: guilt. "Humour," we are told in that book, "comprehends guilt as a totality."[5] It is the peculiar nature of humour that is "discovers the comic"[6] in the human situation by juxtaposing its relativities against the

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[4] Sigmund Freud, Wit and Its Relation to the Unconscious (Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Company, English edition, n.d.), p. 218. Freud did not, however, maintain that a neurotic disease was a necessary condition for wit production. Kierkegaard was a staunch admirer of Lichtenberg and read him with great enthusiasm. See Kierkegaard's Journals, p. 49 for an expression of his admiration.

[5] Kierkegaard, Concluding Unscientific Postscript, p. 491.

[6] Ibid., p. 493. Cf. Freud, op. cit.: "Wit is made, while the comical is found..." (p. 289).

absolute, the total guilt. Seen horizontally, as it were, the human situation with its mock-heroics and pride has no room for the comic in the sense discovered by Kierkegaard. Only when the whole "comedy", the whole human situation is discovered to be resting upon an existential situation, namely, total guilt, is the comic manifest. It will be seen that Kierkegaard has simply applied the basic law of humour to this situation: "The law for the comical is quite simple: it exists wherever there is contradiction."[7] In this comical discovery of Kierkegaard's it is perhaps possible to see more clearly the essential meaning of the often repeated allusions to man's greatness and his insignificance, his sublime importance as well as his meanness, those Janus-like qualities which enable man to find tears in laughter and laughter in tears. And Freud himself refers to the "Janus-like double-facedness" of wit, a terminology which has more than one fruitful application,[8] as

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[7] Ibid., p. 466.

[8] Freud, op. cit., p. 382. Kierkegaard's understanding of humour was noticeably substantiated by Freud, especially in the final analysis that humour is a pleasure found, in its purest form, only in childhood. With reference to "the mechanism of humoristic pleasure" Freud says that humour in all of its manifestations is the striving for "the state of our childhood in which we did not know the comic, were incapable of wit, and did not need humour to make us happy." (p. 384). Thus Kierkegaard uses the example of humour which shows itself in a childlike longing for the past. "The humorist," he says, "possesses the childlike quality but is not possessed by it ..." Not childishness dominates the humorist, but a state of longing which recognizes in childhood its happiness. "Precisely because the pleasantry of humour consists in revocation ... it naturally is often a regression to childhood." (The Concluding Unscientific Postscript, pp. 490-91). However, humour also turns the longing for childhood itself to its own advantage and the melancholy longing for childhood is again humourously compared to the recollection of eternal guilt.

in the formula of Lipps quoted by Freud: "The comic is the greatness and smallness of the same"[9] or that of Melinand: "Ce qui fait rire c'est qui est à la fois, d'un côté, absurde et de l'autre, familier."[10] If it is true that the wit producer requires a foil to raise laughter in himself[11] then Kierkegaard needed a third person, his reader, in order to weep. "I too have fused tragedy and comedy: I make jokes, people laugh - I weep[12] ... I laugh with one face, I weep with another."[13]

In order to understand how it was possible for Kierkegaard to discover the comic in anything so apparently tragic as total guilt we need first inquire how the comic itself is evoked. Turning to Freud again we find that, among other theories of the comic, he mentions Kuno Fischer's insight that a force is needed to bring the comic situation to light, a force which he calls judgement and which produces the contrast known as wit. A further clarification of this principle in its aesthetic form leads to the conclusion that "wit is a <u>playful</u> judgement."[14] At this point we seem to be

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[9] Freud, <u>op</u>. <u>cit</u>., p. 383.

[10] Freud, <u>op</u>. <u>cit</u>., p. 382.

[11] Freud, <u>op</u>. <u>cit</u>., p. 241. "We can only suspect that ... we must impart our witticisms to others for the reason that we ourselves are unable to laugh over them."

[12] Kierkegaard, <u>The Journals</u>, p. 50.

[13] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 47.

[14] Freud, <u>op</u>. <u>cit</u>.,pp. 4-6. This opinion was also confirmed by La Rochefoucauld who wrote: "The making a Difference between <u>Wit</u> and <u>Judgement</u> is a <u>Vulgar Error</u>. <u>Judgement</u> is nothing else but the <u>exceeding Brightness</u> of <u>Wit</u> ..." (Maxim XVCIII).

approaching a clearer conception of Kierkegaardian wit; yet the idea of a "playful judgement" is not completely consistent with wit that so often tended toward irony, satire and even sarcasm. It is perhaps best to heed the warning of Arthur Koestler, in his analysis of the comic, that behind the emotions carried forth by the comic there are "mixed feelings," some concealed and others manifest.[15] In the case of Kierkegaard the idea of a pathetic, rather than a playful judgement, would seem to be more adequate, since it is precisely existential pathos which he illuminates through humour. It appears, therefore, that a missing link exists in the analysis thus far; wit is undoubtedly the result of some kind of judgement, but the judgement itself must be based upon a standard of judgement, an ultimate reference towards which all the incongruities and inconsistencies of wit are oriented. Since Kierkegaard found the greatest opportunities for the display of his wit within the religious sphere, it seems reasonable to suppose that this sphere presented him with the standards which he so brilliantly applied in his elucidation of what it is to be a Christian; and since (for him) practically no one of his contemporaries was a Christian, the incongruous all the more easily became the obvious.

We may now say that the recognition of the comic in the totality of guilt could only have been accomplished by

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[15] Koestler, Insight and Outlook, p. 116.

someone who clearly recognized that, ultimately, man can only be guilty before God. Only after this is perceived does it appear comic that the relativism of great and small among men should rest upon a situation (i.e., totality of guilt) which ought, in virtue of its sheer authority, to annihilate all qualitative differences among men. Thus, Kierkegaard's power of discovering the comic reflects the certainty of his standard of judgement. God not only exists, but His existence is so certain "that if God could forget [the world] it would instantly cease to be."[16] What an incomparable world for the production of wit, a world in which people are always and everywhere forgetting a God whose very awareness of them is the promise of their existence.

The question arises whether Kafka could have seen, as Kierkegaard did, the element of humour in the totality of guilt. In the novel The Metamorphosis, the protagonist, Gregor Samsa, awakes one morning to find himself "changed in his bed to some monstrous kind of vermin."[17] Nothing is

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[16] Kierkegaard, The Journals, p. 46. See also p. 184: "Ethics and religion are the only certainties." Kierkegaard makes this point in another way by suggesting that the Middle Ages had its humour too, particularly in virtue of the authority behind the Church. This also explains why "a section of the modern humorists became Catholics, desired once again to have a community, a foot-hold, which they could not find within themselves." (p. 47).

[17] Franz Kafka, The Metamorphosis, tr. A. L. Loyd (The Parton Press, London, 1937), p. 1.

said about Gregor's guilt; indeed he seems to have had, before his metamorphosis, fewer sins to account for than most commercial travellers. Yet, unless we assume that the author might have chosen an even more unfortunate transformation for his character, Gregor's guilt is certainly, in every sense of the term, total. It seems that a gulf which threatens to be almost impassable has opened up between Kafka's conception of guilt on the one hand and Kierkegaard's on the other. Kafka's sense of guilt goes downward and backward, downward aesthetically and psychologically, and backward morphologically. The only way in which Kierkegaard's conception may be compared with this is that his sense of guilt does travel backward in order to complete the eternal recollection of guilt, but at the same time the individual's relation to an eternal happiness increases. Strangely enough - and most conveniently for our comparison - Kierkegaard also uses the word metamorphosis to describe this change, but it is a change which - so far from being the irreversable, backward and downward metamorphosis of Kafka - is actually _humorously_ contrasted with "a specimen of an animal species."[18] This qualitative metamorphosis has its origin in the eternal consciousness of guilt, and for that very reason, humour is able to discover the contrast with animals. "For, religiously regarded, the species is a lower category than the

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[18] In the _Samlede Vaerker_, edition of 1925, Vol. VII, p. 544. The reference in the English edition is to p. 492.

individual ..."[19] Kafka, on the contrary, has made Gregor Samsa assume the shape of a loathsome bug as a penalty for his guilt. Critics have pointed out the ways in which Kafka identified himself with his characters, not merely in the ordinary sense of artistic empathy, but to the extent of forcing an unmistakable resemblance between the name of the character and the name Kafka, as in the use of Joseph K. or simply K. One notices the occasions in which the character's last name has five letters, neither more nor less, as in Samsa. After completing "The Judgement" Kafka remarked in his Diary that "Georg has the same number of letters as Franz [and] Bende [mann] has exactly the same number of letters as Kafka, and the vowel e occurs in the same places as does the vowel a in Kafka."[20] It is clear that wherever the insect or animal occurs in Kafka's writings, and in proportion to his identification with the character, the essential expression is one of unresolved guilt.

Although there may be something almost comic in the situation of an insect living as a son and brother in the midst of a normal family, or in the agitation and fear of an animal in his burrow, this is certainly not playful judgement, but rather self-laceration. The French writer, Daniel-Rops, contrasting Kafka's world with that of Kierkegaard or Pascal, finds that the former lacks a sense of

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[19] Kierkegaard, Concluding Unscientific Postscript, p. 492.

[20] Kafka, The Diaries 1910-1913, p. 279.

responsibility; guilt is carried to such absurd extremes that it means nothing, has no religious significance.[21] If this view is true it would seem that guilt in Kafka's world is so complete that it defeats itself, just as pain, if it is intense enough, will kill a man. On the other hand, most critics are convinced that Kafka has only carried responsibility to an extreme which in itself is consistent with an absurd world.

In order to perceive the humorously incongruous, a standard of judgement must be available to the humorist. If he is to see the humour in total guilt the humourist must believe that man is totally guilty, and that his guilt invariably stands in a definite relation to an equally definite subject. But for Kafka guilt is inexplicable, man is so completely guilty that no standard of judgement can be applied to him; he is guilty, and he can neither discover whence his guilt arises nor who condemns him. The law of guilt may be said to operate something like this:

> A singular judicial procedure. The condemned man is stabbed to death in his room by the executioner with no other person present. He is seated at his table finishing a letter in which he writes: O loved ones, O angels, at what height do you hover, unknowing, beyond the reach of my earthly hand ...[22]

Another critic, Edwin Berry Burgum, who approaches

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[21] Flores, The Kafka Problem, p. 191.

[22] Kafka, The Diaries 1914-1923, pp. 160-1.

Kafka from the political left, is convinced the normal reader will find "The Burrow" repulsive. This story, he believes, indicates that Kafka has approached the psychotic. Burgum must accept "The Burrow" as basically humorous in its absurdity if only to protect himself: "to take it as funny is to alienate one's self from contamination."[23]

The official biography of Kafka, however, describes occasions when Kafka's readings brought laughter to his friends; "a metaphysical smile so to speak" was produced among them because Kafka magnified the duality in life which is the subject matter of all humour.[24] His English, translator, Edwin Muir, also finds the basis of a serious and original humour in Kafka, a conception that agrees with the ideas put forth by the philosopher and friend of Kafka, Felix Weltsch. In his essay, "Religiöser Humor bei Franz Kafka," Weltsch recognizes an incompatible Duality in the world which man continually overlooks in his need for Unity. Kafka's "poetic humour" consists in pointing out this superficial Unity as a Duality in a way which conforms to the normal pattern for "jokes" as described by Freud, Bergson and others. But the humour of Kafka is neither witty, satiric nor jovial; it is bitterly serious.

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[23] Flores, The Kafka Problem, p. 303.

[24] Max Brod, The Biography of Franz Kafka, tr. G. Humphrey Roberts (Secker and Warburg, London, 1947), p. 105.

> Gewiss, es sind keine Witze and
> keine Spasse, aber er ist, so darf
> man wohl sagen, ein ernster, ein
> bitter ernster Humor, das Ernstnehmen
> der Zweiheit durch das Lacherlichmachen
> der oberflachlichen Einheit.[25]

Neither Kafka nor Kierkegaard would have thought of bringing their humour to bear against God; for Kafka, satire, when directed against religion or ethics, became a low form of humour; for Kierkegaard, satire was a weapon against the age, against mass psychology and against the Church. To a certain extent humour manifests itself in both writers because "existence is both comical and pathetic; pathetic because the striving is endless, comical because it is a deliberate distortion and debasement of self."[26] But if behind Kierkegaard's humour there is the certainty of hope and forgiveness in God, Kafka shows us the certainty of despair and absurdity combined with the utter seriousness of being in despair. The certainty of despair means the uncertainty of man's life, the shortness of life and the danger of losing one's way. Kierkegaard managed to triumph

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[25] Felix Weltsch, "Religiöser Humor bei Franz Kafka" in Franz Kafkas Glauben und Lehre, Eine Studie von Max Brod (Mondial-Verlag AG, Winterthur, 1948), p. 129. The situation here represented is also described by Max Brod in his biography of Kafka: "The eternal misunderstanding between God and man induces Kafka to represent the disproportion again and again in the picture of two worlds which can never, never understand one another ..." (p. 137).

[26] Flores, The Kafka Problem, p. 239. Apparently Thomas Mann also considered Kafka to be a religious humourist (see p. 428 for a reference to this).

over despair not because his life was longer (he died, like Kafka, at 42), but because he thoroughly understood the origin and meaning of his guilt and knew that it could be (and would be) resolved. Kafka remained certain only in his uncertainty, and this factor, if anything, created for him the possibility of now and then rising to the level of humour, but almost never of irony or satire. If the ironist must be certain, the satirist must be even more so. It is essential either for the ironist to know, or to know (like Socrates) that he doesn't know; a sense of firmness is in any case necessary for the ironist.[27] As for Kierkegaard's irony there are to be considered two significant things: his own statement that "In irony there is no sympathy, there is self-assurance",[28] and the fact that his irony grew exactly in proportion to his self-assurance. His journals seem to reveal a progression from playful humour and wit mingled with delicate imagination to a final stage where humour has been almost entirely replaced by vindictive satire. The words used to express his aggressive wit in the latter part of The Journals are seldom those that appear in

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[27] A situation of this sort may be said to be the basis of modern irony. Our irony might be said to be "based on the dualism and ambivalence which are the result of the interplay of a heightened skepticism with a heightened idealism, the result of a struggle between a more firm vision of the ideal, particularly of the social ideal, with a growing despair of achieving it." (The Kafka Problem, p. 443).

[28] Kierkegaard, Concluding Unscientific Postscript, p. 491.

the humorous entries of the first part. Words, for example, like "filth," disgusting," (perhaps the commonest), "Malicious," "loathsome," "stink," "vermin," can be found once or twice in the entries of the last year of The Journals. These are the words that replace the clever witticisms and humorous jibes of the first ten years of The Journals. Religious certainty seems to desiccate his natural tendency to humour, and sympathy becomes more and more rare.

It is interesting to remark therefore that humour in Kafka always maintains an equilibrium, never falling into maudlin self-pity on the one hand or aggressive wit on the other, but invariably remaining poetic, humane and (where it does become satirical) self-critical.[29] To some extent Kafka resembles Dostoevsky in this respect because neither of them knew absolute religious certainty, but always sought for it, and were poetic, sympathetic and humane almost in proportion to their uncertainty. It is sufficient to note, with Carr, that Dostoevsky possessed "the smallest possible capacity for sustained humour,"[30] that on one occasion the young writer precipitously fled from the company of taunts and jibes because (in his own words) "my weak nerves make it hard for me to tolerate and answer questions with a

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[29] Freud's examples of wit are largely dependent on Jewish lore, and since Kafka was a Jew, it is also interesting to note Freud's assertion that Jews are unsurpassed in their ability to make jokes at their own expense.

[30] Carr, Dostoevsky, p. 84.

double entendre, hard not to be infuriated by the mere fact of the double entendre, and most of all infuriated at my own inability to treat them as straightforward well-meant questions ..."[31] Wherever Dostoevsky is satirical or ironic (or attempts to be) we may be sure that he has an idea, that some strong conviction is finding expression, as in The Notes from Underground or in The Possessed.

Having seen that Kierkegaard was able to discover the comic in total guilt by virtue of his certain understanding of his own guilt, we turned to Kafka for an example of unresolved guilt, the tragic case where guilt divides a man against himself because it offers no certainty except the fact of guilt alone. Whereas Kierkegaard exercised a pathetic judgement in his humour only until he knew his guilt had been resolved by God, Kafka's humour may consistently be

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[31] Ibid., p. 36. It is noteworthy that Dostoevsky often referred with great admiration to Don Quixote. On the other hand we can be sure that he did not find the sorrowful knight merely funny. Carr points out that the Spanish classic had always been a powerful figure in Russian literature, and we do not need Freud's statement that Don Quixote is too humanly pathetic to be a consistent comic figure to see that what Dostoevsky admired in the knight was precisely the great ideal embodied in him. In a letter quoted by Carr (p. 205) Dostoevsky places Don Quixote at the very pinnacle of those difficult attempts in literature to create perfect men. At the time of the letter he is writing The Idiot under the conscious influence of the Christ of the gospels and Don Quixote (p. 206). In this letter there is this significant sentence: " The rousing of compassion is the secret of humour." Don Quixote is "the bitterest irony which man was capable of conceiving (p. 260) ... the grandest and saddest book conceived by the genius of man ..." (The Diary of a Writer, p. 836).

identified with pathos and despair. With Dostoevsky also there is no humour where guilt is concerned, but Dostoevsky may become satirical and ironic wherever he is convinced that someone is guilty through an action of which he disapproves. Otherwise, guilt drives both men to sympathy and tolerance. To hang themselves voluntarily on the tenterhooks of guilt, to look agonizingly for salvation but not to give way to any facile answer was the path of Dostoevsky and Kafka. If Dostoevsky rose to greater heights it was due both to his greater ability to understand his guilt and to his firm position in the Christian tradition.

To the extent that each writer was able to understand and resolve his guilt, he was able to make use of irony and satire; to the extent that his guilt remained an enigma he could, at best, reach the level of trenchant humour. Starting from this simple formula one might expect to trace the cource of religious certainty and its uses for humour and irony. Beginning with Kierkegaard, there is, at first, a superabundance of wit and appropriate irony, and at the same time, an awareness that wit is a destroyer which must be exercised with caution and control. The judiciousness of this opinion is part of a broader, more sympathetic and more poetic outlook which rests upon a strong, personal consciousness of guilt. Kierkegaard at this stage possesses all the essentials for irony - seriousness, keen intelligence, and a sympathy which accounts oneself as equal with the victims of one's irony. But with the increase of

religious certainty; particularly with the assurance that God had forgiven and forgotten his guilt, these qualities are stifled in Kierkegaard until at last the poet in him is dead, and only sarcasm and invective remain. The poetic as well as the moral world is a world of sympathy, without prejudice; it certainly cannot tolerate invective.

Dostoevsky's first published story, Poor Folk, is a piece of sheer, humanitarian sympathy. It is without any great idea, without touches of melodrama, and even without action; yet it is filled with pathos and sympathy. This story, in effect, pointed the general way for his subsequent thought, and it can be said that Dostoevsky never lost the original poetic impulse of Poor Folk. He always remained serious, in work after work, and even where he became dogmatic, as in The Possessed, he gave no sign of fanatical certainty. The very lack of dogmatic certainty is what preserves Dostoevsky's art, for if The Possessed is in any way inferior to the other great novels it is due to the writer's assertive tendencies. Of course, Dostoevsky is a writer of strong conviction; it is difficult to imagine a great poet without serious conviction, but to subject one's conviction to constant questioning, to live with doubt and never quite overcome a bad conscience is to remain, as far as possible, innocent of those tendencies that destroy one's integrity as an artist and thinker.

There is enough religious conviction for seriousness in Dostoevsky, conviction enough for occasional irony and

also satire, but there is not enough to destroy sympathy and turn his conviction into sarcasm or invective. His irony saves itself by turning its face not one way but several ways. All convictions, and especially religious convictions, which are apt to be emotional, need to be tempered by the awareness of alternatives. The thinker as well as the novelist must always turn himself round and round, exhibiting without shame just those aspects of his thought which are most threatened by alternatives.

This was the special faculty that Kierkegaard recognized as objectivity before one's own subjectivity, and it surely is a part of all great humour and irony. In Dostoevsky it may be discovered throughout his works. Even with a matter so attractive to him as the idea of a Russian God, he could level the alternative against himself. In The Possessed it is Shatov who carries the burden of many of Dostoevsky's personal ideas. When Shatov gives expression to this particular idea, Stavrogin accuses him of reducing God to "A simple attribute of nationality."[32]

In Kafka we find one whose humour, such as it was, depended upon a negative conviction, negative because it produced no catharsis for his fear and guilt. It has been said that Kafka was never a paradoxicalist, and if this is taken to mean that he differed from Kierkegaard in the uses

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[32] Dostoevsky, The Possessed, p. 234.

of humour, it must be so. The paradox, like the comic, is the discovery of the man who knows. Kafka is unable to see, like Kierkegaard, an infinite number of paradoxes which derive from one fundamental paradox; he sees only something like an infinite separation between himself and that which he desires. It is a case of paradox raised to its uttermost limits where all contrast is lost, and the incongruous becomes the incomprehensible. In this situation lies the bitter humour of Kafka and the comic quality of his world. "Such a world, a world about which nothing can be said that cannot in the same breath be as plausibly contradicted, is a quintessentially comic world."[33]

Yet, Kafka never fully accepted this world; his own creative life is evidence of this refusal to come to final terms with absurdity. Like Kierkegaard, like Ivan Karamazov, he would have refused a compromise; since the guilt was his, his also must be the punishment and the final atonement.

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[33] Vivas, Creation and Discovery, p. 43.

CHAPTER X

CONCLUSIONS

The semantic confusion now prevailing over the efforts to discover a common basis of understanding in regard to the problem of guilt would seem to derive from the mistaken assumption that the problem is reducible to specialized or academic concepts. Guilt, however, is not primarily a conceptual problem, but an existential problem. In asserting the existential priority of the sense of guilt, we thereby imply that this problem must ultimately be reduced to the level of individual existence. Concepts will be valid here only if they are developed from a study faithful to the facts of individual existence and avoiding the terminological temptations of the sciences as well as the activist temptations so characteristic of our time.[1] Philosophy should accept this task, but it must do so with humility. This means that it must renounce the desire to reach final, apocalyptic solutions; it must realize that every activist, ideological attempt to deal with the problem of guilt (and all activist philosophies are, at bottom, nothing else) is bound to fail tragically. Activist systems and ideologies are, by their nature, powerless to solve the problem of guilt

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[1] The correct approach to such a study was indicated by William James: "I think, therefore, that however particular questions connected with our individual destinies may be answered, it is only by acknowledging them as genuine questions, and living in the sphere of thought which they open up, that we become profound." (The Varieties of Religious Experience, p. 490).

because it exists on a level not reached by these planetary solutions. The very fact of modern man's isolation and inwardness means that he has turned instinctively in the direction of the true origin of guilt. In that place and on that level there is no vital contact with the merely social aspects of existence.

With the present burden of guilt weighing upon the contemporary world there would seem to be a very real possibility that political and social philosophies, world-views and ideologies will tend to be increasingly activist, either towards irrationality or super-rationality. Such activist philosophies demand scapegoats on which to release the guilt which is their motivating power. But they are unable to solve the problem. Not only do they fail to lift from man the burden of his guilt, but due to the violence and hatred they are capable of generating on a wide scale, these activist systems actually exacerbate an already guilt-tortured consciousness.

Yet, the tragedy of modern man is that he does not establish a vital contact within himself alone; the inner reality is as barren as the outer. Turning inward upon himself in response to an instinctive awareness, man nevertheless fails to reach that spiritual ground upon which his experience of love and freedom are founded. He hears the accusing call to become transformed; he feels the guilt, but he cannot answer. The first and essential call of the spiritual life is the call to transform oneself, to make oneself

better, but man can answer this call only in relation to a Being for whom he freely wills to change himself. Failing in his effort to establish this contact, and becoming impatient with the suffering required by the effort, man listens to the seductive sounds of another and different call, the call to change the world. But the call to change the world is only the secondary, not the primary call; it is not by itself a false call, but it becomes false if it is heard and accepted as the primary call. Meanwhile, man suffers in his isolation and despairs of finding again his freedom in the Being with whom he has his primary relation. If this Being is not present to man then this freedom is likewise absent; that God is dead or absent from the world means that freedom and love are absent, and this is what we observe everywhere in the world - the death of freedom and the absence of love. Even the problem of loving one's neighbour becomes irrelevant in the face of the basic problem of finding one's way again, out of this morass of shame and guilt, to self-respect and a love of life.

Concerning the relation of guilt to love, a psychiatrist recently said that "Beyond the region of neurosis, beyond the psychological altogether, the problem of guilt is the problem of love."[2] Guilty man, bereft of God, is unable to love. That dual nature of freedom by which man experiences his risings and fallings is crippled without its divine guarantee;

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[2] Karl Stern, The Third Revolution, p. 177.

the polarity of freedom is unbalanced so that man cannot emerge from himself except by the violent effort of revolution. The nether pole of freedom draws man down inside himself where only the darkness of possibility can be known. This is why freedom has become an unbearable torture in the modern world. On one level of existence, the masses of men and the élite are eager to relinquish this terrible freedom to an activist ideology and to a supreme Leader whose power guarantees it while on another level individual men use the last remnants of freedom to torture themselves and others. The totalitarian Leader could arise and flourish only in a world where men have ceased to love freedom, and where for that reason they have ceased to be men. Personal love could never have become such a subtle instrument of torture if freedom had not first become weakened. On every level of human relationships the reaction to freedom is the same - it is the assumption by man of the part of a god in relation to his fellow men.

Man has learned that there can be found through freedom the most exquisite avenues to self-torture; he has discovered, as only the ingeniousness of a guilty self can discover, that love and freedom can be perverted to mere techniques of power, and these techniques he applies against himself and others in a manner which clearly reflects his guilt and his anger at the absence of God. For as God in His absence has withdrawn his love for man, so man withholds his love for his fellow men, and in his isolation uses the gifts of

God to abuse himself and others. The guilt of being loveless, of being thrown into a hostile world, is both turned against the self and also used to destroy the innocence of others.

In this spiritual impasse man is weighed down by a sense of fear which may take either one of two common forms. On the one hand a large part of the world is isolated by its fear in the cul de sac of the individual self, while another part is isolated from reality by its naive faith in collective strength, or faith in history, or in reality itself. This also is an impasse born of fear; it is a reaction against fear which ends by denying the possibility of evil, either from within or from without. The last refuge of a tortured humanity is often in a "fairy tale" world, a world from which the sources of fear have been exorcized. (Only what "we" do counts; what the "others" may do is of no concern because history and truth are against them). It is this type of strength in fear that offers such a fertile field to the sowers of collective ideologies. But this is just what ought to be feared most: the possibility of losing oneself by abstracting oneself from existence. Ideologies of the future will present tremendous temptations since they are certain to exert an increasingly greater power over the minds and emotions of men. These ideologies will appear as secular systems of control, that is to say, in precisely the form of power which will appear to those united by fear in a "fairy tale"

world as the historical justification for that world. Thus, it will be a simple matter for certain men to persuade themselves that crimes which are committed by them or by their "side" are forgiven by history even before the crimes are conceived. Men will see in history, or in evolution, the judgement they need, for man cannot do without a judge.

If fear must exist in the world, and it seems that so long as an abstract consciousness of guilt exists there will be fear, then the problem of fear, which is closely related to the problem of guilt, consists in discovering methods of containing fear within the self. Fear is not necessarily harmful to the self. It may well be that fear and fear alone has taught man the essential knowledge of survival, the preservation of individual life and the life of the species. Fear has always given man the knowledge to survive in a hostile world, and fear is undoubtedly in the world now for that purpose. Fear may not be pleasant, but it is a necessary condition of survival. Under certain circumstances fear may be a realistic response to an existing threat to personal survival. If any type of fear can be called realistic it is that direct form of fear which rises in defence of the self in order to preserve the self as an individual self. Although in our time man is not able to resolve the impasse of inwardness, the true instinct of inwardness is a response to a state of danger or of helplessness.

This danger appears in every conceivable quarter of

of existence; never before has there been such an utter loss of individuality as in our time; never before has the threat of personal annihilation and of death been so real. Against this diffuse threat to its existence the self reacts with a diffuse fear by moving deeper in that direction whence it has always found security and religious reality. Moreover, by this movement of inwardness the self preserves at least something of that which is most vital to its survival, namely, freedom, the freedom of the self to be its self and to discover by its self the way out of its impasse.[3] Fear then, in so far as it is identical with self-preservation is also related to the religious impulse and to the love of life.[4] The inward movement of the self is related to a love of life, whereas the outward, activist movements of our time lead to a rejection of life and of reality. That inwardness corresponds to love of life rather than the opposite is shown negatively by the impulse to suicide which may occur among those who bear their guilt passively rather than actively. Here, the impulse is to destroy only self-consciousness, not the reality behind consciousness; aggression and anger are directed not against life itself, but against

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[3] "The thing is to discover by oneself the whole possibility of danger, and by oneself to discover every instant its reality ...." (Kierkegaard, Stages on Life's Way, p. 425). Both Kierkegaard and Dostoevsky are absolutely agreed that the essence of morality is to discover guilt by oneself and to punish oneself for this guilt.

[4] Cf. William James's reference to Bender's statement in his Wesen der Religion: "Religion is that activity of the human impulse towards self-preservation ...." (The Varieties of Religious Experience, p. 497).

one's failure to achieve a complete life. Such is the existential situation in which murder and suicide have come to be philosophical problems of the greatest magnitude. By the act of inwardness man does not reject either reality or life; that which is rejected is the temptation to become a god, to assume the right of punishment in relation to the world and to one's fellow men. Inwardness of the self is none other than the affirmation that God must be re-discovered if men are ever to become individual men with respect for each other and for life.

The powerful, activist temptations existing in the modern consciousness can be clearly seen in the belief that man must completely overturn his values, must put away his old gods altogether, and create a new morality. But surely it is not given to man to create in this way. Man has never created his moral values, nor has he created his gods; he has only discovered them. Moral regeneration will begin with the rediscovery of God because only by discovery in this case can the freedom of the self be preserved. Our study of guilt has shown that it is the <u>free</u> act of limiting the possibilities of aggression and hatred inherent in human nature which is the essence of the consciousness of moral reality. When the ambivalence of the two primary emotions was first resolved into an awareness of guilt, the first moral advance was made. Inward reality modified itself consciously and made its first step upward. Such is the consciousness of true moral victory as man has always

experienced it.

The act of inwardness is therefore the attempt of the self to rediscover moral reality by itself in freedom, and it is at the same time the rejection of the temptation to destroy outward reality. What is rejected, in effect, is the insane conviction that moral victory can only mean victory over the outer reality. That moral consciousness and a sense of moral victory can only be experienced through changing the outer reality is, we assert, a profound delusion arising out of a feeling of contempt and even of hatred for that reality. We assert that the only real moral victory given to man is the victory over his own individual nature; the consciousness of this victory is itself the assurance of moral reality; this is the true victory, all else is delusion. If this victory is a kind of secret, egoistic hedonism, it is at least opposed to that hedonism of personal superiority which is fed by the sensation of new desires and the kaleidoscope of events. For this is nothing more than the hedonism of moral superiority based on the identification of consciousness with action. Consciousness here has become no more than a synaptic centre where new sensations succeed each other in a tumultuous influx, and where the illusion of progress is the justification for the unending rush of new varieties of sensation. The onrush of new objects to destroy or conquer helps to create a consciousness which cannot afford to look back or inward upon itself because this would mean doubt of one's superiority.

Inwardness then is the instinctive journey of the self to ground itself "in the Power which posited it."[5] By this movement the self renounces the prerogatives of an angry god in relation to the world, and instead declares that God must be rediscovered, that God must be reborn in us before we can be reborn as men. If those ancient mythological motifs of spiritual rebirth - the night journey and the descent of the hero - have any meaning for modern man it is that man, in order to be an individual man again, must rediscover God. For the great heroes of the universal myths neither created gods nor became gods themselves, but they became heroes when the god was reborn in them.[6]

That activist temptations have made large incursions in the modern consciousness can also be seen in the distrust of all purely individualist solutions.[7] One notices today a certain antipathy, even a disgust, for the fact of individual conversion. According to the activist doctrines of our day one cannot appropriate truth inwardly; truth must be like a stone wall, absolutely material, and one must have run full tilt against it in order to appropriate it. This is the way in which a large part of modern man

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[5] Kierkegaard, The Sickness Unto Death, p. 19.

[6] Jung, Symbols of Transformation, pp. 335-6.

[7] Compare, e.g., Kierkegaard's motto to The Concept of Dread: "The age of distinctions is past and gone, the System has overcome it. He who in our age loves distinctions is an eccentric man whose soul clings to that which has long vanished."

demands to be converted. What is particularly helpful after running into a stone wall nowadays is to discover that it corresponds to a universal law valid for all time. It is almost a delight just to pick oneself off the ground and run at the wall again in order to feel its solidity. In the absence of an absolute moral authority, freedom is a source of fear which sends the individual self in terror toward whatever is solid and mechanical. The idealist's need for an inward certainty has thus become the materialist's need for an outward certainty. It is a matter of spiritual economy, so to speak, a matter of what can be afforded at a given time.

The need for certainty is, at bottom, the need for judgement; man cannot do without a judge or without judgement. But what will be the nature of this judgement for which man yearns? The activist, totalitarian solutions of our time suggest that judgement is to be wrenched from the possession of heaven and brought down to earth; man will deny to God the right of judgement and of punishment by creating with violence and redirecting by force that essentially vertical relationship which stands behind his experience of the upward and downward way. The unprecedented violence of the modern world is in direct proportion to the magnitude of the task of reforging the pattern of guilt and innocence. Freedom, which is inseparable from the possibility of an upward and downward way, is the first to suffer

in this violent attack. Even without the craving for immediate action and immediate results, what can be the effect of this determination to reduce all human problems to scientific, earth-bound problems? Does not man require something above society, something "More" (to use James's term) than society? May it not be the case that man's fundamental difficulty is that he cannot find his place in the world, in the universe? Man is shaped by important influences which are not in the least social; his primary orientation is spiritual rather than social. There is, as Berdyaev has said "a spiritual principle in the individual which does not depend on the community."[8] Is this not the reason why Sir Walter Moberly, Arthur Koestler, Lewis Mumford, and Martin Buber believe that a change must come from within, from the depths? "Only in one place can an immediate renewal begin: that is within the person ... Our first need is not for organization but for orientation: a change in direction and attitude."[9] Man has an undeniable spiritual sense which tells him that judgement does not originate in society, but has its source outside and above society. Society itself is subject to this judgement, and, therefore, man's ultimate faith can only be in something absolute, something eternal.[10]

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[8] Nicolas Berdyaev, The Origin of Russian Communism, tr. R. M. French (Geoffrey Bles: The Centenary Press, London, 1937), p. 184.

[9] Lewis Mumford, The Condition of Man (Martin Secker and Warburg Ltd., London, 1944), pp. 421-23.

[10] Cf. William James's statement that "only by an All-knower can we finally be judged." (The Varieties of Religious Experience, p. 136).

Dostoevsky and Kierkegaard are never in doubt about the origin of moral ideals; there is complete agreement between them that man's largest moral aspirations, his utopian dreams, and his yearning for universal moral perfection have their humble beginning in the individual desire for self-perfection. Dostoevsky would say that these universal moral aspirations could not possibly exist independently of the desire for personal self-perfection. Kierkegaard, for his part, would deny that man's primary orientation is to the universal, that is, to a group consciousness no matter how all-inclusive. Rather, man's relation to the universal is determined by his relation to that which is above the universal, but which is yet, to man, more directly known than the universal. Our study of the problem of guilt has given us no reason to doubt the general truth of these hypothetical statements. We would, in fact, go even farther and state that a purely social conscience is a delusion; it does not exist. Quite probably a strictly earth-bound orientation of the conscience will never exist. An exclusively terrestrial, natural and, in this sense, antonomous conscience would seem to belong to the millennium. Taken simply as a popular, enthusiastic doctrine, the social conscience is a mirage, a passionate delusion which arose in response to man's desperate need to focus his guilt in relation to something concrete, observable and historical. It was a delusion gratefully accepted by a guilty consciousness as a providential

stick with which to beat itself and so satisfy its need for expiation, after which the same consciousness used the same stick to belabour the enemies of society while congratulating itself on being saved. True guilt, that is, guilt which is the self-questioning and self-accusing aspect of consciousness cannot exist on a merely natural plane; it cannot exist as a simple, earth-bound, linear relationship to the one, the individual, no more than to the many, the class, the universal. That part of the pattern of guilt-innocence which the consciousness experiences as social guilt does indeed legitimately exist, but only as a refraction, as a deflection, from the fundamental orientation of this pattern.

The emergence in our time of totalitarian methods of control signifies the attempt to reforge the pattern of guilt-innocence, a task whose violence and magnitude are clearly seen in the co-existence of crimes so incredibly vast that they pass beyond the limits of guilt and innocence and deprive those concepts of objective meaning. Yet, even if man is able, through terror and the threat of annihilation from his own kind, to so revolutionize the guilt pattern of his consciousness that guilt and innocence are at last purged of mystery and the vagueness of otherworldliness, even then, will man rid the earth of gods? Are not the words of the Grand Inquisitor manifestly true in our time? "And so it will be to the end of the world, even when gods disappear from the earth men will fall down before idols just the same."[11] Only

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11 Dostoevsky, The Brothers Karamazov, p. 268.

the new idols will not be clay, but flesh and blood and iron and steel; and flesh and blood alone may decree the answer to the universal question: "Who are the guilty?" while iron and steel will inflict the punishment.

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